



Executive
14 January 2013

**Report from the Director of Strategy,
Partnerships and Improvement and
Director of Children and Families**

Wards Affected:

Brent Working with Families Strategy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Working with Families project aims to fundamentally improve the way that Brent Council and its partners identify and deliver services to the borough's most vulnerable families. Underpinned by the national Troubled Families Programme, the project recognises that families and agencies can realise significant benefits from changing the way that services are delivered to families with complex needs. These benefits can only be achieved as a result of a whole systems change, a significant shift in attitude and approach, including a shift to a family focus, and genuine partnership working across agencies.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Executive endorses:
- the Working with Families Strategy in Appendix 1;
 - the high level action plan in Appendix 2.

3.0 Project Summary

Policy Context

- 3.1 The Working with Families project has been designed to respond to a number of national policy drivers (namely the DCLG's Troubled Families Programme, and the new focus on the delivery of 'Early Help' services that has emerged from DfE). The project however also features prominently within the Brent Children's Partnership 'Plan for Children and Families in Brent 2012-15' and

promises to address a number of local policy issues to generate sustainable improvements. These include:

- Building upon existing provision to ensure a more robust and coordinated range of early help services across the borough that are easier to navigate for both practitioners and families.
- Carrying out more effective and targeted work with families to minimise the likelihood of escalation and reduce reliance upon expensive statutory interventions. This will also enable better use of scarce public resource by ensuring that the interventions that 'work' are prioritised and that duplication in the system is eradicated.
- Maximising a multi-disciplinary/multi-agency approach to family help. This will build a fuller picture of the family situation and address the 'root' issue/s within the family to break the cycle of intergenerational deprivation. We must recognise that often no one service or agency is able to truly 'fix' complex family situations.

High-level objectives

3.2 The background and detailed objectives of the Working with Families project are summarised in the draft strategy attached as Appendix 1. The high-level objectives of the project are however to put in place a service for families in Brent that:

- Is **family focused** and addresses **all the dimensions of need** – including unemployment, housing, parent capacity and behaviours, child and young person's development, health and behaviour.
- Provides for a range of integrated and **multi-agency** support services to work with and support families in need, with appropriate **step-up and step-down** arrangements that can provide a continuum of care across the spectrum of need.
- Ensures that services are responsive, timely and relevant through improved and efficient access arrangements and information sharing across agencies.
- Increases the resource base for **early help** and provides savings by diverting children and young people on the edge of care from entering the care system through approaches that help to meet the needs of children and young people whilst remaining with their families.
- Meets Brent's commitment to the national Troubled Families Programme by working with at least 810 of the borough's most vulnerable families by March 2015.
- Will be capable of generating significant savings across Brent public services.

Summary of approach

- 3.3 The draft strategy proposes that the objectives outlined above be achieved through the delivery of three separate but inextricably linked strands of work. These are:
- Work stream 1: To develop a **Multi-Agency Front Door (incorporating a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)** for Brent by July 2013.
 - Work stream 2: To develop a **family support service** with an integrated **short term Crisis Intervention Service** by April 2013, working with families with children of all ages.
 - Work stream 3: To develop an **aligned services strategy** by January 2013 in order to improve and strengthen a wider range of 'aligned family support services' across services and partners.
- 3.4 These work streams have been designed to deliver whole systems change in the way that services are delivered to families in the borough – from the first point of contact, to the design and delivery of support packages, and more widely to ensure that other services that deliver critical support to families are integrated and aligned. This service re-design will realise significant efficiency savings for the council and partners over time whilst fundamentally improving the way that services are delivered to families.
- 3.5 It is intended that this project will also enable Brent to work with the 810 'Troubled Families' over a three year period. As part of the project, work is being carried out to ensure that robust monitoring systems are put in place to track family improvements relating to national Troubled Families criteria in order to maximise potential Payment by Results funding from central government. The project also sets out to take a broader 'outcomes based approach' to measure improvements and better understand 'what works' when working with families.
- 3.6 Additional detail relating to each of the three strands of work is outlined below. These work stream descriptions should be read in conjunction with the Working with Families action plan attached as Appendix 2.

4.0 Work stream 1: Multi-agency front door/ Multi-agency safeguarding hub:

4.1 The Multi-agency Front door will:

- Act as a single point of contact for professionals and members of the public where there are concerns about a child or young person and their family that requires a co-ordinated response.
- Simplify pathways into services and provide an accessible and more creative approach to pathways out.
- Take a multi-agency/disciplinary view across the whole family to build a fuller picture of family circumstance and levels of need

- Result in better informed and speedier decision making about the level of support required and improve the safeguarding of children in Brent.

- 4.2 The overall role of the Multi-agency Front Door is to provide a triage service, screening all contacts, then filtering out contacts which do not need a response; signposting professionals or families to other services which will best meet their needs; or passing the referrals to a service or team which is best positioned to meet the needs of the family.
- 4.3 The Multi-Agency Front Door will be able look at the needs of a family in a holistic way and generate a multi-agency response. Members of the team will be fully aware of the range of services available to meet the needs of families and can offer a creative response. It will provide a much more accessible service for professionals or the public who are trying to gain support for families or who have concerns about them. They will no longer have to consider whether or not a family's needs meet social care thresholds, as the Multi-Agency Front Door will be able to determine who is best placed to meet family needs.
- 4.4 The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, or MASH, is a process which sits *within* the wider Multi-Agency Front Door. This way of working is being supported by all key agencies and is being rolled out across London over the next year. A MASH consists of an information-gathering process within a secure environment, which enables information to be gathered about all family members where there are concerns about a child's welfare. Police and social workers screen all new contacts, and information about those given a Red or Amber rating will be gathered by all multi-agency partners. Families with lower-level needs can be passed directly to services for support. The process will lead to better-informed and speedier decision-making and will improve the safeguarding of children in Brent.
- 4.5 The plan for the Multi-Agency Front Door will be ambitious and comprehensive. Once good practice has been embedded relating to the MASH, its role will expand as part of a planned and phased approach. Ideas under consideration include broadening the range of services that the Multi-Agency Front Door can access, such as debt counselling, preparation for employment, or floating housing support. Advice and information for families could be accessed through a 'golden telephone number'. Professionals may wish to seek advice if they have concerns about a family.
- 4.6 The service will be launched on the move into the new Civic Centre, as it is dependent on the installation of secure cabling for police data systems. The planned start date is July 2013.

- 4.7 The core agencies who have committed their involvement to the Multi-Agency Front Door and MASH are:
- Housing
 - Youth Offending, Youth and Connexions Integrated Services
 - Health
 - Early Help Family Support
 - Police (Public Protection Desk)
 - Education
 - Children's Social Care
 - Probation
- 4.8 There are also plans to locate the Adult Social Services safeguarding functions with the Multi-Agency Front Door, and ways of achieving this are being further explored. This will be a more innovative approach than the model generally being established in London.
- 4.9 The staffing contribution of some of the core agencies has been confirmed. The detail of the social care contribution is being further explored, and the balance between the work taken on by the Multi-Agency Front Door and the work that will continue to be carried out by the social care locality teams is being assessed. In order to ensure children remain fully safeguarded while the new system is becoming embedded, an additional team manager post and an additional deputy team manager post are being funded during 2013/14 from Troubled Families grant. This will also enable an accurate assessment of the impact of the Multi-Agency Front Door and the full implementation of the Early Help Family Support Teams on the volume of work moving through to children's social care.
- 4.10 Accommodation arrangements within the Civic Centre have been agreed. Detailed planning is taking place to ensure access to police and health IT systems. A project implementation group with representation from all agencies is taking forward an implementation plan, including agreeing protocols; information-sharing agreements; table-top exercises to ensure consistency of response and decision-making; and developing an understanding about the roles and responsibilities and key priorities of each agency.
- 4.11 The activities required to set up the Multi-agency Front Door and MASH are listed in the high level action plan at Appendix 2.
- 5.0 Work stream 2: Early Help Family Support Service with integrated Crisis Intervention:**
- 5.1 The Early Help Family Support service will:

- Meet the needs of vulnerable families in Brent, by working with them to tackle underlying problems and build their resilience;
- Rise to the challenge of the government's Troubled Families agenda, delivering improved outcomes for families and maximising Brent's income from the Payment by Results funding;
- Reduce the workload pressures on social work services by offering alternative ways to support to families;
- Reduce the number of children and young people in Brent coming in to the care system and the resulting cost to the council;
- Improve outcomes for children and young people in line with *The Plan for Children & Families in Brent*

5.2 This service will receive referrals from the Multi-Agency Front Door and put together bespoke packages of support for families tailored to their types and levels of need.

5.3 Using existing resources and 'Troubled Families' grant available over the next three years, we are creating an Early Help Family Support service employing between 25 and 30 family key workers to work directly with between 700 and 800 'troubled' and vulnerable families over the next three years to: support them into work; reduce their level of criminal or anti-social behaviour; improve their children's attendance at school; and reduce their impact on social care and other public services.

5.4 The key worker role involves:

- Working as part of a multi-disciplinary team around the family;
- Taking a whole family approach, including strengths-based family assessments;
- Building relationships in an assertive and persistent key worker style, engaging the child/ren and their family;
- Delivering evidence-based solutions and coordinating the support needed from other agencies;
- Putting in place robust family agreements that include sanctions and rewards;
- Ensuring an intensive, flexible response that includes support outside traditional office hours;
- Working in a style that empowers families and helps them to develop the capacity to resolve their own problems.

5.5 This service will be supplemented by a further team of up to 14 staff specialising in tackling family crisis and safely diverting up to 100 families per year from having their children and young people enter the care system.

5.6 This team will build on the current Crisis Intervention Support Team which already works successfully to divert young people over the age of 10 from entering the care system and to support the return to their family of a small

number of those young people voluntarily accommodated - succeeding with approximately 75% of all cases referred to it. This team will be further developed to work with families with younger children facing care proceedings using part of Troubled Families grant.

- 5.7 As of December 7th 2012, 15 key workers are in post, their training is underway (and will be on-going) and the first families from within the Troubled Families 'cohort' are already being contacted and supported as are those families whose cases are being 'stepped-down' from social care support to the new service. The activities required to complete the development of the Early Help Family Support Service and re-model the Crisis Intervention Support Team are listed in the high level action plan at Appendix 2.

6.0 Work stream 3: Aligned Services Strategy

- 6.1 The Early Help Aligned Services Strategy will support the successful delivery of the Early Help Family Support Service and the Multi-Agency Front Door. The development of the Strategy is integral to the success of the new service model and recognises that a range of specialist support will be needed to ensure that vulnerable families get the right help, at the right time, from a range of agencies. In practice, aligned services will offer specialist support around problems/issues related to:

- Child development, including behavioural and emotional problems and special educational needs
- Truancy and school attendance
- Substance misuse
- Mental and physical health problems
- Sexual health
- Poor quality and insecure housing
- Employment and training
- Criminal activity and anti-social behaviour, including tackling gang activity
- Domestic abuse
- Debt and welfare benefits advice

- 6.2 Services are defined as aligned services if **they provide direct support to families, children and young people to help them address their problems over a period of time and/or offer on-going diversionary support.** The table attached at Appendix 3 provides an overview of services in Brent that fall within the scope of the Strategy, grouped under seven thematic headings. A number of services provided by the voluntary and community sector in Brent will also support work in these areas and their contribution will be addressed as more detailed re-alignment work is taken forward.

6.3 Development of the Strategy has helped to identify needs, gaps and opportunities for increasing the focus on early help and prevention, within the context of on-going work across the Council and partner agencies and the wider policy context. This has resulted in a number of proposals to:

- Strengthen the focus on prevention through re-commissioning or re-designing services;
- Improve coordination of activity through the co-location of specialist staff within the Early Help Family Support Service or more clearly defined hub and spoke arrangements;
- Remove duplication of activity and develop stronger strategic frameworks to support service and project development;
- Improve information sharing and service user pathway and referral arrangements; and
- Ensure that policy flexibilities can be used to support vulnerable families.

6.4 This strategy will build on the inter-agency work to support families which has been developed in the borough's Children's Centres. A key part of the aligned services strand of work will be to ensure that the use of the physical facilities and the services they offer to families are optimised and reach the families where the greatest difference can be made.

6.5 The strategy will be finalised early in 2013 and an action plan will then be developed to take forward agreed recommendations.

7.0 Managing Performance and Monitoring Outcomes

7.1 **Performance management** - When fully operational, the Early Help Family Support service will have the capacity to work with up to 350 families per year across the range of needs. There will be a clear focus on achieving the outcomes for families expected for 'troubled families' whether the family is part of the cohort or not, alongside preventing the family progressing along the continuum of need (and thus becoming more expensive to public services). The Troubled Families Co-ordinator will have an on-going responsibility for monitoring the performance and impact of the service. This includes ensuring that the service continues to focus on getting the balance right in the range of families it is working with and holding partners and aligned services to account in playing their part in the new service.

7.2 The principal means of doing this will be via the service plan for the Early Help Family Support service which will spell out targets and performance measures to achieve this balance across the service as a whole. There will be a specific focus on monitoring family profiles/characteristics to ensure that the service

design and delivery is constantly being informed by a detailed understanding of its clients.

- 7.3 **Monitoring outcomes for families** - All Early Help Family Support staff will use the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) as the basis for monitoring, recording and reviewing progress and outcomes with families. For families who meet the Troubled Families criteria, outcomes specifically in relation to the payment by results criteria and DCLG Troubled Families national evaluation criteria will also be monitored via a standard quarterly reporting cycle. Claims for payments can be made twice yearly for any families who have achieved the payment by results outcomes defined by DCLG.
- 7.4 Some families will qualify for Troubled Families Payment by Results because they meet criteria from a 'basket of local criteria'¹ in addition to at least two national Troubled Families criteria. The CAF will be used to as the basis for collecting and reporting progress and the delivery of change in relation to these 'local criteria'.
- 7.5 In order to maximise the impact made, the Early Help Family support Service will also work with Families who do not meet the Troubled Families Payment by Results criteria but who still have multiple and complex needs as defined by the basket of local criteria. The CAF will also be used to as the basis for collecting and reporting progress for this group of families.
- 7.6 Finally, the additional impact of the redesigned Crisis Intervention service will be judged on both outcomes for families (as above) and on the reduced numbers of children and young people coming into care (see financial profiles below).
- 7.7 The work to establish the systems required for monitoring outcomes specific to Troubled Families is underway, with final proposals due for approval by the Strategic Board in February 2013.

8.0 Financial Implications

¹ These are Brent has taken a 'basket of measures' approach, which includes:

- Families with children on the 'edge of care' in last 12 months
- Substance and/or alcohol misuse, domestic abuse or mental health needs identified in the family in last 12 months
- The household will lose at least £50 per week due to welfare benefit caps
- Child or young person is on the special educational needs register and/or accessing education through Brent Tuition Service
- A young person is part of a gang or has pro criminal/offending associates
- Parental illness, disability or infirmity is limiting day-to-day functioning
- Family members with criminal/offending history

- 8.1 The aim of Working with Families is to use existing mainstream budgets together with funding from government for the Troubled Families Programme to drive the sustainable change set out above. By targeting these funds at early help services, the intention will be to reduce the costs the council and partners would otherwise incur on families benefiting from the early help.
- 8.2 Funding for interventions as part of the Working with Families initiative is estimated at between £2.155m and £3.105m over three years depending on the extent to which targets as part of the government's Troubled Families programme are achieved. Funding consists of the following:
- a. Troubled Families grant of between £2.05m and £3m consisting of:
 - £300k over three years toward co-ordination of the Troubled Families Programme;
 - An estimated £1.75m over three years as attachment fees for working with 810 families²;
 - A potential additional £950k total reward grant if all Troubled Families targets are hit.
 - b. Funding of £105k of grant/contributions received in 2011/12 and which has been carried forward in the council's accounts for this purpose.
- 8.3 The funding will be used to meet the costs of:
- a. co-ordination of the programme;
 - b. setting up the Multi-agency Front Door;³
 - c. Additional Family Support Workers over 3 years;
 - d. Additional interventions to deliver Working with Families outcomes with particular focus on preventing children becoming looked after.
- 8.4 The funding set out above is time limited and is only a fraction of the total funding that goes into work with Troubled Families and other families with complex needs. The Working with Families programme is therefore looking at how other services within the council and provided by partners can be better aligned so that resources across the public sector can be better targeted at achieving improved outcomes for Troubled Families and other families with complex needs.

² Attachment fee is £3,200 per family in 2012/13, £2,400 per family in 2013/14, and £1,600 per family in 2014/15 and applies to 5/6ths of the total number of families. The £1.75m total is based on the current profile for working with families in the Troubled Families cohort

³ This does not include the cost of putting in secure communications links to the Civic Centre which is being funded from police funds. Details of funding of on-going costs of the MAFD are in the separate paper on the MAFD on this agenda.

- 8.5 A key component of the council's approach to addressing the budget challenges it faces is to manage demand for services by early intervention and other policy initiatives. From the council's point of view, the Working with Families project is a key component of that approach, with particular emphasis on reducing costs of children in care and, following transfer of responsibilities from the Youth Justice Board, children on remand. National research evidence suggests indicates that these are likely to be medium to long term cost reductions.
- 8.6 The council has been successful at managing the overall costs of children's placements which have reduced in recent years, whilst there has been an 8.5% increase in the total number of children in the Brent care system between 2009-2011. Total spending on placements reduced from £19.003m in 2009/10 to £18.357m in 2011/12. The current forecast for 2012/13 is spending of £16.127m, which after taking account of the transfer of £2.050m of costs to the adults' transitions team, would be a reduction compared to 2011/12 of £180k.
- 8.7 The aim of Working with Families interventions, together with other work with West London Alliance councils to reduce the cost of children's placements, is that these costs will continue to come down in future years. The council's current medium term financial strategy includes savings of £0.7m in 2013/14 from this work. Further savings were included for future years.
- 8.8 A revised assessment has now been carried out of the savings that can reasonably be forecast at this stage, taking account of savings already delivered, pressures on the placements budget, and the interventions through the Working with Families and WLA procurement projects. Forecast savings on this basis are £385k in 2013/14 which is £315k less than included in the medium term financial strategy. Given pressures on the placements budget, this is still ambitious (a cash reduction in an area with increasing budget pressures) so achievement will required careful monitoring.
- 8.9 This does not include savings from work on aligned services. A target was included in the budget strategy for a £300k per annum saving from the review of services to young people. It became clear as part of this work that the potential to deliver these savings needed to be looked at in the context of the overall way that services to young people support achievement of the prevention agenda and therefore has been incorporated in the aligned services work stream of the Working with Families project.

9.0 Legal Implications

The Working with Families initiative supports the discharge of the Local Authority's duties under s17 Children Act 1989 and sections 10 and 11 Children Act 2004.

10.0 Diversity Implications

The project team are currently in the process of carrying out a predictive Equalities Impact Assessment of the proposed approach. The completion of this exercise is dependent upon the successful collection and recording of data relating to the first year cohort of 'Troubled Families'. This work is currently being completed and the full diversity implications for the project will be set out at this point.

11.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

It is likely that there will be staffing and accommodation implications relating to all three of the strands of work outlined above. The detail of this will be worked out by the project team.

Background Papers

Appendix 1) Brent Working with Families Strategy (Draft)
Appendix 2) Working with Families Action Plan
Appendix 3) Services in scope of the Aligned Services Strategy

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BRENT WORKING WITH FAMILIES STRATEGY



INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Working with Families Initiative aims to change fundamentally the way that Brent Council and its partners identify and deliver services to its most vulnerable families. Underpinned by the national Troubled Families Programme, the Initiative recognises that families and agencies can realise significant benefits from changing the way that services are provided to families with complex needs. These benefits can only be achieved as a result of a whole systems change, a significant shift in attitude and approach (including a shift to a family focus) and genuine partnership working across agencies.

NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.2 Central Government has identified a number of factors that define families as having multiple complex problems. As part of the Troubled Families programme it has identified that there is a target group of 810 such families in Brent. These families cause high costs to the public purse.
- 1.3 Central Government has chosen, as part of the Troubled Families Payment by Results (PbR) model, to focus on households who:
- Are involved in crime and anti-social behaviour
 - Have children not in school
 - Have an adult on out of work benefits.
- 1.4 In addition, central Government has allowed each local authority to add local criteria. Brent has chosen a basket of local criteria that is the local element of the Payment by Results financial framework. The basket comprises:
- a. Edge of care (this includes families accessing the crisis intervention service, that have been subject to a child protection investigation, children with a Child Protection Plan which has ceased, where substance misuse/domestic abuse/mental health has been identified through engagement with Social Care).
 - b. Families where there are substance and/or alcohol misuse, domestic abuse or mental health needs in the family (e.g. there is a resident family member with schizophrenia, Police notification re domestic abuse, accessing Addaction services).
 - c. The household will lose at least £50 per week arising from the housing benefit cap.
 - d. Child or young person is on the SEN register and/or accessing education through Brent Tuition Service.
 - e. Young person is part of a gang or has pro criminal/offending associates.
 - f. Parental illness, disability or infirmity is limiting day to day functioning.
 - g. Family members with criminal/offending history.

BRENT VISION

- 2.1 The vision underpinning the Working with Families Initiative is that the Council, with our partners, will assist families with children and young people in need to ensure they enjoy a good quality of life and develop as confidently and responsibly as possible, to:
- Improve the **educational outcomes** with a particular focus on improving school attendance
 - Promote the **positive well-being** of families
 - Recognise the importance of **employment, housing** and preventing **crime and anti-social behaviour**
 - **Develop resilience** in families and facilitate their inclusion and active involvement in their communities
 - Focus particular support on those families **where the children's or young people's life chances are the poorest.**
- 2.2 Putting this vision into practice will change the way in which public services in Brent work with families with multiple complex problems. It is not simply concerned with creating an additional externally funded project to tag on to existing provision, nor is it focused solely on meeting the requirements of the Troubled Families programme. It is about working to end the inter-generational cycle of vulnerability and exclusion that families experience and the inter-generational failure of successive programmes and initiatives to support these families.
- 2.3 We will need to:
- Set priorities for meeting the needs of families with complex/multiple problems to ensure that the right families get the right support at the right time from staff with the right skills to work with them effectively.
 - Be family focused and address all the dimensions of need – including unemployment, housing, parent capacity and behaviours, child and young person's development, health and behaviour.
 - Provide for a range of integrated and multi-agency support services to work with and support families in need, with appropriate step-up and step-down arrangements that can provide a continuum of care across the spectrum of need.
 - Ensure that services are responsive, timely and relevant through improved and efficient access arrangements
 - Increase the resource base for early intervention and provide savings by diverting children and young people on the edge of care from entering the care system through approaches that help to meet the needs of children and young people whilst remaining with their families
- 2.4 In moving from strategy to development and delivery, we will -
- Build on existing local strengths and good practice and promote buy in from key partners

- Shape our approach to meet the Brent operating context
- Ensure that any detailed proposals we make are evidence-based
- Understand and develop staff skills to deliver new approaches and services; and ensure they are appropriately supported to understand complex family needs and achieve good impact
- Support streamlined and effective contact/referral/assessment processes for families
- Ensure that there is a wide menu of services for practitioners to draw upon when working with families, with a guarantee of access to the services they need
- Ensure children's needs are kept at the forefront when working with the whole family
- Ensure that services meet the whole range of needs, from early help to tackle emerging problems for families; through to intensive support for families with entrenched problems and high level support in times of crisis. Child protection support will be drawn in if needed.
- Understand the range and focus of voluntary and community sector organisations (wherever they are based) and view them as potential providers and partners
- Ensure that proposed performance management arrangements will measure impact
- Support improving the performance of managers
- Ensure that we identify ways in which all relevant services and partners could contribute staff and resources.

2.5 The future model will enable:

- a single point of contact for all concerns any agency or individual has about a family with children and a prioritisation of access to services for the most vulnerable families
- a reduced and more focused level of assessment of families (at reduced cost)
- greater co-ordination of effort, led by a Family Key Worker
- a wider range of roles, services and professions seeing themselves (and being trained and supported) as part of the 'families workforce'
- reduced numbers of children in care
- services other than children's social care to be more directly involved in supporting vulnerable families
- financial savings

A WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH

3.1 Although the Children and Families Department of Brent Council are central to the delivery of this initiative, their services cannot achieve the change for families we are seeking without new forms of collaboration with other council services and with the services of partners. This is the 'whole system' aspect of this initiative.

3.2 The Working with Families initiative recognises that a wide range of issues may affect family functioning and therefore a wide range of support will need to be drawn together to meet the needs of all individual members of the family. This approach will involve a huge cultural shift amongst all agencies and services across the sectors who work with families in Brent, who will need to consider how they can target their services to meet the needs of vulnerable

families. The Working with Families initiative will therefore need sign-up and commitment from all Brent agencies so that appropriate expertise and capacity can be realigned to meet the needs of vulnerable families.

- 3.3** Issues affecting adults within the family, such as domestic violence; substance misuse; crime; mental and physical ill-health; debt and other financial problems; housing problems and lack of employment will need to be specifically addressed with appropriate expertise and a range of provision. These issues need to be addressed to improve parenting capacity and family functioning, enable families to become self-sufficient and to bring up their children successfully without the need for outside intervention. Addressing these issues for parents and carers will have a significant impact on improving outcomes for their children. The model will therefore need to ensure a guarantee of service from the range of agencies in Brent currently working with adults, whether through the provision of service or through specifically identified members of staff.
- 3.4 The fragmented nature of much of the activity across Brent makes it highly likely that there is both duplication and overlap – duplication because contact and assessment is taking place multiple times across multiple services in isolation from one another; overlap because of different services seeking to impact on the same underlying problems from separate starting points. This approach is not sustainable in an era of ever scarcer resources. Co-ordination of effort and improved collaboration has to become the norm and in some cases the level of joint working needs to move further and faster.

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

- 4.1 Based on the available evidence and the learning from successful approaches elsewhere, we have identified the essential elements that need to be in place for successful service delivery. These will therefore be key features of all the approaches we adopt. These comprise:
- **A multi-agency whole family approach including strengths-based family assessments**
 - **Robust family agreements and plans that include sanctions and rewards**
 - **An intensive, flexible response that allows for support outside traditional working hours**
 - **An 'assertive' and 'persistent' family key worker role**
 - **A focus on improved parenting (outcomes) and the use of evidence-based interventions**
 - **A highly-skilled and well-supported family key worker team**

THE STRATEGIC COMPONENTS

4.2 The three components of the Working with Families Strategy are:

- STRATEGIC COMPONENT 1: The development of an effective multi-agency front door service that prioritises contacts and referrals, facilitates effective access for families in need and links them in a responsive and efficient way to appropriate help;
- STRATEGIC COMPONENT 2: The creation a range of integrated multi-agency family support services to work with and support families in need with appropriate step-up and step-down arrangements that can provide a continuum of care across the needs spectrum;
- STRATEGIC COMPONENT 3: improve/develop the organisation and delivery of services to families with children or young people on the edge of care to:
 - Ensure the maximum protection for children and young people from abuse and harm and
 - Avoid, when appropriate, the need for these children/young people to come into care, and thereby reduce costs, whilst, at the same time
 - Meet their needs effectively and have robust step-down arrangements as the situation improves.

OUR AGREED APPROACH

A MULTI-AGENCY 'FRONT DOOR' INCORPORATING A MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB (MASH)

5.1 Brent, alongside all London Boroughs, is committed to the introduction of a MASH in 2013. The following model outlines the five key components of a MASH:

- All notifications about safeguarding and promoting welfare of children go through the MASH process
- Core agencies are co-located
- There is a firewall to ensure client confidentiality
- An agreed process for analysing and assessing risk, based on information gathered
- A process to identify victims and emerging harm.

5.2 The core agencies or services to be involved in the MASH process are:

- Children's social care
- Police (Public Protection Desk)
- Health
- Education
- Probation
- Housing
- Youth Offending Service

- 5.3 This basic MASH model would be able to provide a streamlined route into services supporting families across different levels of need. Decision-making would be based upon the principle of meeting family needs at the earliest stage, and at the lowest level of intervention required.
- 5.4 The additional elements of a Multi-Agency Front Door (MAFD) are listed below and show the potential range of functions that could be incorporated. The merits of each element can be considered individually, and those agreed upon could be implemented together, with a big bang approach, or introduced incrementally in a planned, phased way. These elements include:
- Widening the range of services involved in the MAFD, either on a co-located, virtual, or part-time basis. This could include the CAF co-ordinator; Early Years, adult social care; drugs and alcohol services; voluntary sector partners; Revenues and Benefits; additional children and families services.
 - Involving other services around the MAFD as part of an information giving and advice hub, accessed through a 'golden telephone number'. This could include a Children and Families Information Service, providing advice on pre-school provision and a range of other services and activities. A linked website providing a range of information about services for families would benefit both families and professionals. The service could also provide advice to professionals.
 - The MAFD could also benefit other agencies that need to undertake assessments by facilitating information-gathering. One example may be CAFCASS (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service), in undertaking both private and public family proceedings.
 - Broadening the range of agencies that the MAFD can refer onto, particularly those beyond the social care/early help sphere, e.g. debt counselling; preparation for employment; and floating or accommodation-based housing support.
 - The MAFD could take a more proactive approach in planning interventions with families with complex needs rather than simply passing a referral to a relevant team. MAFD representatives would decide which services should be involved in working as a team around a particular family, nominate a lead professional, and put those services together, with agreed measurable objectives.
 - Services could approach the Multi-Agency Front Door to build a 'Team Around a Family' approach. For example, if the Youth Offending Service when working with a young person becomes aware of complex needs within the wider family, including parents and younger siblings, this approach would assist in meeting the range of needs and better supporting the young person.
 - The opportunities presented by this way of working could lead to changes to receiving teams, e.g. aligning some of the duty and assessment roles in children's social care more closely with the Multi-Agency Front Door and co-location of the police Child Abuse Investigation Team Referral Desk.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

- 5.5 This service will employ teams of Family Support Workers to work with families with multiple complex needs to provide early help at the point at which problems first arise, intensive support (for those families where problems are long-standing and chronic) and a crisis intervention service to divert children and young people from entering the care system or to assist their step-down from being in care.
- 5.6 The role of the Family Key Worker will involve targeted and intensive support to families experiencing complex and multiple issues through sustained intervention using whole family assessment and utilising partner agencies to effect and sustain positive change for the family, individual members and the community around them.
- 5.7 The service will offer support to families with a range of needs at different levels of involvement
- The Intensive Help service focuses on the most troubled high risk, high cost families. The Early Help team also works with families who may need less intensive support but who nevertheless have multiple problems, including domestic violence, mental health and school attendance concerns. The range of interventions includes targeted one-to-one support (e.g. delivery of parenting programmes, group work and specialist workshops, practical support in the home, accompanying parents to attend another service) but can also provide drop in services ('quick help') and signposting.
 - The Early Help team, in addressing problems as they first emerge, would benefit, for example, young or isolated parents who may need practical and emotional support at an early stage. By strengthening attachment and building parenting skills, such a service may well achieve the longer-term impact of building family resilience and avoiding the need for care at a later stage. However, the intensive level of support is most likely to be required where children are deemed to be on the edge of care.
- 5.8 The Family Key Workers will need to be able to assemble packages of support for members of the family from a wide range of other services and agencies. These are what are described in this strategy as aligned services.

EDGE OF CARE IN BRENT

- 5.9 The need to design a new multi-agency Edge of Care Service in Brent is pressing. There is a significant deficit in the level of support to the families with children on the edge of care from other services and from other agencies whose interventions provide support to the parents and possibly other siblings. The principles of the Working with Families initiative (that all approaches should be multi-agency and applied to work with the family as a whole) do not currently apply to 'edge of care' services in any systematic or structured way.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF 'EDGE OF CARE' FAMILIES

5.10 Work has been undertaken to identify the characteristics and circumstances of those families whose children came into care in 2011/12. The key characteristics identified are:

- Serious and persistent levels of domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental ill-health
- Parent (or parents) who were in care
- Siblings of children or young people already in care
- Parents of a child already in care, but with other resident children
- Parent (or parents) who have been in prison
- Parents with learning difficulties
- Severe and persisting debt - often involving door-step lending/loan sharks
- Gang-affected and gang-involved
- Poor quality/insecure housing.

5.11 For the edge of care services to be fully integrated with the two levels of early help model, a third element would need to be introduced - a short-term Crisis Intervention Service. This would fulfil the role set out in the models above, of providing intensive support during a crisis, to avoid a child entering the care system, or returning them home as soon as safely possible.

ALIGNED SERVICES

5.12 We have emphasised throughout that a whole system approach is critical to the success of the Working with Families Initiative. The system, however, is greater than establishing a multi-agency front door, the deployment of early help/family support services and a focus on edge of care. We have found in looking at successful Early Help/Family Support Services (EH/FSS) in other areas a well developed set of working relationships between the EH/FSS and other services they need to work closely with. We have described these in this report as 'Aligned Services' and which of these are involved with one or more members of the family may be critical to the success of the Early Help approach.

HOW ALIGNED SERVICES ARE DEFINED

5.13 There is a need to examine how these aligned services can best support a focus on children, young people and their families who are at risk/vulnerable, within a reducing resource envelope. This may involve considering both alternative means of delivering services and the content/scope of their existing service offer. For example, there may be scope to re-commission mental health services in new ways, realign Supporting People contracts and or consider full service re-configuration e.g. development of an integrated youth service model with a stronger casework/case management model to ensure effective 121 support for young people, or a merging of Care Leaver services with those elements of the Supporting People programme supporting young/vulnerable tenants.

5.14 A service identified as an aligned service would be required to give a guarantee of service availability to the relevant member of the family (brokered via the Family Key Worker). This will present a number of challenges to existing thresholds and eligibility levels in services where there is a gatekeeping role to limit access.

5.15 Aligned services are likely to include, although some of these may also feature in the core components of Early Help/Family Support:

- Youth services (council, other agency and voluntary sector provision)
- Youth Offending Team
- Education Welfare Officers
- Basic skills, training and employment services
- Behaviour support services (primary schools)
- Pre exclusion support
- Intensive NEET services
- Housing Needs
- Start Plus, plus housing related support projects
- Aspects of Supporting People
- Alternative Education (PRUs and BETs)
- School based counselling and parent support services
- Health visitors
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Adult Mental Health services
- Adults with disability services
- Substance misuse services
- Sexual health services
- Other voluntary sector provision e.g. welfare benefits and debt advice services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

COST TO THE PUBLIC PURSE

6.1 From a financial point of view, the cost to the public purse of dealing with Troubled Families is significant. Government data collected in October and November 2011 estimated that £9 billion is spent annually on the 120,000 most troubled families. That works out as an average of £75,000 per family per year. Of this, £8 billion is spent on reacting to the troubles of these families with just £1 billion being spent trying to turn around their lives in a targeted, positive way.

6.2 Examples of the average national costs of individual interventions with families

Housing	Eviction proceedings = £13,000 for 1 eviction
Schools	Pupil Referral Unit = £15,000 for 1 child for 1 year
Care	Foster placement = £40,000 for 1 child for 1 year Residential care home = £130,000 for 1 child for 1 year
Drug rehabilitation	Treatment and support costs = £35,000 per adult
Prison/Young Offenders Institution	£52,000 per person per year

6.3 In addition, it is estimated that all forms of Anti-Social Behaviour cost the public sector in London £1.8m per day (*London Councils figures from 2010*).

6.4 The impact, as evidenced for example in the Allen report, is that the savings from working with families with young children are achieved in the medium to long term; the children as they become young people do not require intensive and more costly interventions. This is supported by the evaluation of Think Family Pathfinder projects which has shown in 75% of cases a positive rate of return for every £1 invested in preventative services.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE STRATEGY

6.5 The total resource available from central Government towards the delivery of the Troubled Families Programme equates to £2m over 36 months.

6.6 We have worked on the basis that:

- There are currently 26 key workers (plus 2 co-ordinator posts) for which funding has been identified in mainstream budgets
- An additional 4 posts are potentially being made available from public health to support the Family Support Service
- There is £600k per annum for three years funding from the Troubled Families grant, of which:
 - £400k per annum will be used to recruit a further 10 Family Key Workers;
 - The balance of £200k per annum will be used to create specialist support for edge of care services
 - A balance of £200k of the Troubled Families grant will be used as a one-off contribution to set up costs for the Multi-Agency Front Door.

MAFD/MASH

6.7 The key costs in relation to the MASH/MAFD are staffing, IT and accommodation. The costs of cabling and IT requirements into the new Civic Centre to meet required data protection requirements of the MASH have been identified through funding from the Mayor of London’s office. Further discussions would need to take place with agencies about accommodation and office equipment costs. Staff resources would mainly be achieved by reallocation of existing managers or practitioners from their existing duties, i.e. it is ‘instead

of' not 'as well as'. The contribution of each agency, whether in cash or kind, would need to be costed so that the commitment of agencies to this way of working can be demonstrated.

6.8 Consideration would also need to be given to existing service pressures. Although transfer of existing resources may be a medium-term objective, it may be necessary to provide an injection of additional staffing resources to give the Multi-Agency Front Door a successful start. In particular, additional social care staff will be needed to maintain existing locality duty services and staff the Multi-Agency Front Door for a transitional period (of say 3 months) to ensure children remain safeguarded as the new services become embedded. We propose that a one-off sum of £200k from the Troubled Families grant is made available for this.

6.9 Visits to other agencies highlighted the importance of ensuring the right staff resources are put in place. In particular:

- Individual agency representatives need to be at an appropriate level of seniority to direct or influence staff within their own agencies
- Continuing close links with operational practice are beneficial - for example, by two managers combining the Multi-Agency Front Door role with continuing operational management or through staff rotation for fixed periods
- Managers and practitioners need a high level of skill to meet the challenges of representing their services at the front-line level, contributing to accurate and sound decision-making on safeguarding and contributing to new ways of working.

6.10 The table below identifies the potential staffing resources for a Multi-Agency Front Door, based on models seen elsewhere and adapted to Brent circumstances. Again, this provides an example only. Most of the costs of these staff are expected to be met from existing resources (apart from some transitional arrangements).

Agency	Role	FTE
Social Care	Head of Service	1
Social Care	Screening Team Manager	1
Social Care	Screening Practice Manager	1
Social Care	Screening Social Workers	4
Health	Health Visitor Manager	2
Education	Education Welfare Officer	1
Housing	Housing Officer	1
Probation	Probation Officer	1
YOS	YOS Officer	1
Police	Police PPD	1
Police	Police Researchers	1
Police	Sergeant	1
Total		16

DELIVERY OF EARLY HELP AND INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES TO FAMILIES

6.11 Using existing resources and 'Troubled Families' grant available over the next three years, we are creating an Early Help Family Support service employing between 25 and 30 family key workers to work directly with between 700 and 800 'troubled' and vulnerable families over the next three years to: support them into work; reduce their level of criminal or anti-social behaviour; improve their children's attendance at school; and reduce their impact on social care and other public services. This service will be supplemented by a further team of up to 14 staff specialising in tackling family crisis and safely diverting up to 100 families per year from having their children and young people enter the care system.

OTHER ASSUMPTIONS:

6.12 We have made the following additional assumptions:

- Aligned services will be reconfigured in such a way that access to support from them will be managed within existing resources
- No additional resources from partners have been assumed in this model, but will continue to be sought.

DELIVERING SAVINGS

6.13 In terms of developing firmer proposals for sharing costs and considering the longer-term sustainability of new service models, different types of savings will need to be considered. The first and most obvious are the **directly cashable savings** released by spending less on certain services, activities and staff; the second, rather longer term set of savings relate to **costs avoided** by reduced levels of demand, which may offer future cashable savings, or provide the means to redeploy resources to other priorities or may simply mean that resource levels can be held at current levels; finally, there are '**efficiency gains**' which are not in themselves savings but offer 'more for less' by improving the productivity and value for money of current staff resources.

6.14 Future work will be needed across services and partners in Brent to develop and agree common approaches to savings and cost benefits resulting from this initiative. For example in relation to the 'invest to save' principle, if one partner invests but another saves there will need to be an agreed process for those savings to be shared.

NEXT STEPS

7.1 This strategy will be of no relevance unless the approaches set out within it are translated into the delivery of services resulting in improved outcomes for families. In order to achieve that, the focus of efforts to implement the strategy will be on:

- Achieving buy-in from key internal and external stakeholders

- Providing clarity about what the services are trying to achieve with families and what should be the means of delivery
- Designing and implementing the new approaches in partnership with operational managers and staff
- The development of an evaluation framework to measure outcomes
- The development of a framework for consideration of costs and savings
- The implications of this strategy for aligned services and those who work in them
- Deciding the most appropriate management structure to ensure that the service is managed for performance
- Achieving short term cost savings where appropriate.

Appendix 2

Working with Families: High – level action plan

Work stream 1: Multi-agency front door/MASH

Activity/task	Target Date	Notes
Establish MASH parameters with police representatives	Completed	Parameters agreed with Brent and with London-wide police representatives
Establish multi-agency MASH/MAFD task group, draft terms of reference and gain commitment from all agencies	Completed	Meetings held at 3-weekly intervals from 24.10.12, chaired by Fiona Ledden, Head of Legal Services and Procurement. Good representation across agencies. Terms of reference agreed.
Develop service design/specification for the MASH/MAFD, with initial costs and partner commitments	Completed	Outline service design produced and agreed by task group meeting on 4.12.12
Update report on progress/initial service design to Working with Families Strategy Board	Completed	Initial service design approved by Strategy Board
Learn from good practice elsewhere to ensure that all governance and delivery elements covered, including: - set-up – physical space and IT requirements - data-sharing and confidentiality - systems development	January 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement reached on physical space November 12 • IT requirements flagged up with all parties –implementation planning now in place • Data-sharing and confidentiality will be informed by London-wide process to be available shortly • Systems and protocols to be put in place February – June 2013
Stakeholder consultation and soundings on detail of proposed model	January 2013	To be undertaken in January 2013, through project group members cascading to their services and through Community Event 9.1.13.
Final proposal to Strategy Board, including implementation plan covering detailed staffing, costs and progress on development of IT, operational processes/tools and information sharing protocols	February 2013	Final proposal to be presented, and will contain detailed staffing arrangements for the MAFD/MASH, to include areas to be finalised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social care • Business support • Adult safeguarding team Plus update on all other areas
Update report on progress on implementation and future phasing of services to Strategy Board	April .2013	Report to be presented
Delivery of operational plan, including further development of tools/protocols and IT systems as required; and further phasing	June 2013	Operational plan to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full protocols re working as a multi-agency team • Operational protocols

Meeting
Date

Version no.
Date

Activity/task	Target Date	Notes
proposals		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information-sharing agreements • Installation of IT systems and changes; including staff training • Table-top training exercises to ensure a consistent approach to concerns and thresholds; shared awareness of the role, responsibilities and key targets of each agency; and knowledge of services and other resources
Go live of new MASH/MAFD	July 2013	

Work stream 2: Early help Family Support Service and Crisis Intervention Support Service

Activity/task	Target Date	Notes
Early Help Family Support Service design approved by Working with Families Strategy Board	Completed	Strategy Board approved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Help Family Support Service design • A basis for redesigning and integrating crisis intervention support
Development of processes and operational framework	September 2012– and on-going	This includes development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key worker job description and person specification • Operational processes, practices and tools • Training and induction plan/process for new staff and staff transitioning into the service
Recruitment and training of staff	September 2012 – and on-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of staff who meet requirements and are able to work with families with children across a range of age groups • First all staff development day took place on November 20th
Working with Troubled Families	From November 2012 From December 2012	First group of families from with the Troubled Families cohort affected by the benefits cap and living in temporary accommodation contacted and additional support in place Further engagement by key workers with additional families in the Troubled Families cohort –e.g. wider group affected by the benefit cap; those in contact with the Youth Offending Service; and those where there appears to be no engagement with services at all

Activity/task	Target Date	Notes
Access to aligned services	From April 2013	Improvement in pathways and processes for gaining access to aligned services for the family (once the Strategy for Aligned services has been agreed and timescales within it for implementation are clear)
Redesign of Crisis Intervention arrangements	January to March 2013	Redesign will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further detail on design to ensure seamless service with Early Help • Development of operational processes and staffing requirements • Identification of changes required to existing commissioned services and additional specialist services that may need to be commissioned • Consultation on new arrangements with staff in existing Crisis Intervention Team • Implementation of changes to structure plus recruitment to any new roles • Training and development of staff on intervention approaches to be used • Development of an evaluation framework for the service
Full operation of Early Help and Crisis Intervention Support Service	April 2013	

Work stream 3: Aligned services

The aligned services strategy will be completed in January 2013 and an action plan to implement the recommendations outlined within it will be constructed and taken forward by the Working with Families Strategic board after this point.

Services in scope of the Aligned Services Strategy:

Theme	Aligned Services and Programmes	
Education Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative Education (including pupil referral units and Brent Education Tuition Service) • School Based Pastoral Support • Education Welfare Officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour Support Services • Pre Exclusions Team • Right Track Project (fixed term exclusions) • Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Service
Health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Mental Health • Adult Social Care (Disability) • Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services • Substance Misuse Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Health Services • Health Visitors • Children’s Centres • Health Child Early Years Programme
Housing and Housing Related Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Needs Service • Start Plus (Supported Housing) • Supporting People funded floating support and supported accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti Social Behaviour and Tenancy Management Services (Brent housing providers)
Employment and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Programme • Job Centre Plus • Brent Connexions • Brent Adult and Community education Service (BACES) • Other community employment and training projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESF Families Programme • Brent Navigator Programme • Brent in 2 Work • Intensive NEET Team • Looked after Children Education Team • Youth Offending Service Education Team • CNWL Mental Health Trust Employment and Welfare Support Team
Criminal Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Offending Service • Probation Service • Independent Domestic Violence Advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Offender Management Programme • Safe and Secure Programme
Advice and Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenues and Benefits • Citizen’s Advice Bureaux • Brent Private Tenants’ Rights Group • Brent Disabled Person’s Rights Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent Legal Aid Centre • Brent Irish Advisory Service (BIAS) • Children & Family Information Service • Brent Credit Unions (x4)
Other diversionary and support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent Youth Service • Homework Clubs • Reading Support (Libraries) • Extended Schools Provision (after school clubs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Sports and Arts Services for Young People • NHS Early Intervention & Prevention Service (Young Addaction) • Voluntary and Community Provision for Young People