



# Croydon Partnership Early Help Network Delivery Plan 2019 – 2021

Our ambition is that all children and young people in Croydon will be safe, healthy and happy, and will aspire to be the best they can be. The future is theirs.



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# FOREWORD

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Last year we published the Croydon Partnership Early Help Strategy (2018 -2020). At the time of publication we made a commitment to review that strategy within 12 months as we were mindful that our vision was ambitious and, as such, would continue to evolve.

Over the last year we have made great strides on our preventative journey. As a partnership we have moved away from a set of ambitions to a visible transformation programme of early help services delivered in and around local communities by a network of providers, including the Council's own Family Solutions Service. To recognise this shift, we have renamed our strategy the **Croydon Partnership Early Help Network Delivery Plan**.

This Delivery Plan is built on an integrated multi-agency approach, an appropriate and consistent application of 'thresholds' and an alignment of agencies resources. As described in Working Together Guidance, delivery of effective early help to keep children safe is not a single agency's responsibility; it requires a whole family approach owned by all stakeholders, working in partnership with children and their families. This includes schools, health, police, probation, children social care, services for adults, voluntary, faith and community organisations, private organisations and the wider public.

We believe families are best placed to understand, care for and nurture their children. However, nationally it is estimated that around 30% of children and young people will, at some stage, experience difficulties. If addressed early enough, through effective early intervention, we can not only empower children and families to regain control of their circumstances but also prevent escalation into costly statutory services. Our determination to improve services for children young people in need of help and protection is clearly set out in our Corporate Plan 2018-2022<sup>1</sup>. The considerable political support for continued improvement was recognised by Ofsted in the July 2019 monitoring visit<sup>2</sup> including the evidence of significant financial investment to support wholesale change. We are continuing to invest in and improve services for children and young people who are in need of help and protection. All our major partners such as police, health services, voluntary organisations, faith groups and schools are signed up to making children and young people their priority. We are bringing services closer to children and families in our localities, building alliances with partners and providers to intervene at an earlier stage and address issues before they become problems.

The moral and financial argument for moving to preventative services is powerful. Professor Munro, in her review of the Child Protection system (2011), acknowledged the growing body of evidence based research that confirms preventative services can do more to reduce neglect and abuse than reactive services. They are not only cheaper, but more effective than reactive services and a great deal more effective in improving life chances of children, young people and families and reducing inequalities. We hope you will continue to work with us in building strong foundations for the future.



**Councillor Alisa Fleming**  
*Cabinet Member for Children and Families*



**Robert Henderson**  
*Executive Director for Children, Families and Education &  
Chair of Croydon Partnership Early Help Steering Group*

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<sup>1</sup> Croydon Council Corporate Plan: [www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/policies/corpplans/](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/policies/corpplans/)

<sup>2</sup> July 2019 Ofsted Monitoring visit letter <https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50097925a>



# 1. PREFACE

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In July 2018, the Government published revised statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children**: a guidance to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Working Together sets out the legal requirements that health professionals, social workers, police, education professionals and others working with children must follow. The guidance emphasises that effective support and safeguarding for children and young people is the responsibility of all professionals working with children and young people and provides advice in support to sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2014, where the primary duties for all agencies are set out.

Working Together reminds us that “Nothing is more important than children’s welfare. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support as soon as a need is identified. We want a system that responds to the needs and interests of children and families not the other way around. In such a system, practitioners (individuals who work with children and their families in any capacity) will be clear about what is required of them individually and how they need to work together in partnership with others.”

Working Together is defined as statutory guidance and therefore all professionals working with children, young people and families should make time to read the document. Local arrangements to implement the requirements should be prioritised by leaders and senior managers in every agency with responsibilities for children, young people, families and carers to enable them to safeguard children and to act in their best interests.

Our Delivery Plan has been developed by the Croydon Partnership Early Help Steering group. It demonstrates the close partnership working amongst our growing network of early help providers who are delivering preventative interventions alongside the Council’s locality based Family Solutions Service which works more intensively with families with multiple problems.

This plan should be read in conjunction with the **Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership Threshold Guidance** and Working Together 2018 guidance.



## 2. INTRODUCTION

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Croydon is one of the largest London boroughs with a population of nearly 100,000 children under 18 years with the largest population (38,000) of young people aged 10 to 17 years of all the London boroughs. Approximately 23% of children in the borough are living in low income families. Children from minority ethnic groups account for 58% of all children living in the area, compared to 21% in the country as a whole.

We believe that children should grow and achieve within their own families when it is in their best interest and is safe for them to do so. The majority of children and families are strong and resilient and have good networks and resources to meet their needs. However, some families will experience difficulties from time to time. Early help means taking action to support a child, young person or their family early in the life of a problem and as soon as it emerges. It can be required at any stage in a child's life from pre-birth through to adulthood and applies to any problem or need that the family cannot deal with or meet on their own. Recent influential studies and reports<sup>3</sup> show that providing early and effective support to families can prevent complex problems emerging and enable children and adults to reach their full potential.

### Key messages include:

- Families benefit more from preventative rather than reactive services. This approach adds value and is cost effective for all concerned.
- Current austere times with financial constraints and welfare changes make it even more important that we use our resources effectively to improve life chances for those children who are at the most disadvantage.
- High performing early help services are joined up and coordinated at both strategic and operational levels.
- Robust effective early help services prevent needs escalating.
- Services provided during pregnancy and when children are young (under 5) have greater impact on outcomes. Early childhood is one of the most critical phases of human development. It begins before birth, when a baby's body and brain are being formed, continues through early infancy when key relationships are established and developmental milestones reached and includes the preschool years and the transition into school. Children learn to move, communicate and interact with the world and develop a sense of personal and cultural identity. Early childhood offers the greatest opportunities for positive human development but is also the period when children are most at risk. Negative influences or Adverse Child Experiences (ACEs) on a child's development during early childhood can be irreversible without effective support and interventions.
- More recent research indicates that in the teenage years, young people have an increased level of plasticity in the brain which may make young people more susceptible to risk taking and potentially negative influences. Having effective evidence based early help services in place which establish healthy patterns of behaviour, provides an opportunity to reverse the impact of previous negative experiences, even if experienced in their early years by redefining neural pathways<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Early Intervention: the next steps and Early Intervention: Smart Investment, Massive Savings (Graham Allen MP (2011), Foundation Years: Independent Review on Poverty (Frank Field MP Dec 2010, Munro Review of Child Protection, Final Report (Professor Eileen Munro, 2011), The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning (Dame Clare Tickell, 2010), Fair Society, Healthy Lives (Sir Michael Marmot, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> The Adolescent Brain: A window of opportunity. A Compendium. <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/933-the-adolescent-brain-a-second-window-of-opportunity-a-compendium.html>





We know from what children and their families tell us that it can be daunting asking for help and they would like to be supported by the first person they approach, this is often someone already known to them. It is therefore important to make every contact count.

**This Delivery Plan describes who can benefit from early help, how it is accessed and who delivers it. It enables families, communities and all professionals to:**

- Respond quickly and effectively to the need for early help
- Intervene and provide support to stop an issue escalating
- Ensure there is consensual and partnership approach to working with all children and their families

**Our locality model of working with partners across the early help network encourages us to:**

- Work better together in an open, honest, partnership based way with the child and family
- Identify strengths and areas of expertise within the network so that practical and achievable solutions can be found to address needs of the child and family
- Provide the right information and advice to enable children and their families to make positive changes themselves with support tailored to their need
- Help children and their families build protective factors and family resilience to prevent situations recurring.

## 3. OUR VISION

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All children and young people in Croydon will be safe, healthy and happy and will aspire to be the best they can be. The future is theirs.

In Croydon, we believe that every child should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. We believe that children should grow and achieve within their own families when it is in their best interest and it is safe for them to do so. By working together, we will develop flexible services which are responsive to children and families' needs.

### **Croydon is establishing a vision for the future that will provide for:**

- A system wide approach, with joint pooled resources and pathways operating across organisational boundaries
- An outcome focussed approach delivering long term sustainable solutions for individuals and families to secure resilience and independence
- A shift from acute provision to an increase in prevention and early help activity
- Evidence based services that are built around customer need
- Locality based delivery where appropriate

Early help is everyone's responsibility; we want children, families, communities, including faith group and agencies to work together so that families are assisted to help themselves and are supported as soon as a need arises, thereby improving the wellbeing and life chances for Croydon's children and young people.

### **We will as partners together:**

- Understand those children and their families where children may be at risk of not reaching their full potential and share concerns
- Build a relationship with the child and family as early as possible, and work with them to create a family environment that provides children with the best life chances and prevent problems from arising or escalating
- Reduce the number of children and their families requiring support from specialist services

This Delivery Plan has been developed by and is jointly owned with our partners. Over the last 12 months we've been establishing a strong network of internal and external early help providers who are working jointly in the localities to provide preventative services. The voluntary, community and faith sector, schools, education welfare officers, health services, domestic abuse specialists, adult mental health specialists, parenting leads, housing, gateway and welfare services, Single Point of Contact (SPOC), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Tier 2, Youth Offending, Youth Engagement services and many more are delivering a range of early help interventions in their own right alongside the council's Family Solutions Service, which delivers targeted and intensive early help to children and families experiencing multiple problems.

Our delivery model is shaped around three early help localities, in the north, central and south of the borough, which provide a locality base for a range of practitioners supporting close collaboration and alignment of services. Our intensive early help Family Solutions Service, youth engagement teams, community connect service, food stops and other interventions jointly contribute to the early help offer in the locality. We recognise that our early years' providers such as children's centres, which are delivering excellent preventative interventions, need to be part of the locality and we are taking steps to make this happen. By making this change the Best Start aspect of the service (0-5 services) will be an integral part of the locality based early help model.



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The role of the early help localities is to enable different services and agencies to work collectively to address local need and to provide a coordinated, collaborative and local response to children and families across Croydon. Professionals across the locality areas will be effectively identifying children and their families with problems, working out with the child and family what help is needed and bringing together and aligning different services to support the child and their family in a coordinated way, without the need for families being repeatedly assessed and needing to keep “telling their stories”. We are currently refurbishing a number of our locality buildings to make them fit for partnership working.

Over the last 12 months, the localities have begun to develop a partnership identity. Practitioners, collectively across all partner agencies, have regular meetings, including the Locality Panel, as well as locality network events. This collaborative approach to delivering early help, offers opportunities to share good practice, develop understanding and shape the future of the early help offer to support families across the locality. It is anticipated that the locality networks will help facilitate collaboration and integration across universal and targeted services including schools, GPs, and other health services, police, voluntary, faith and community sector agencies and a wide range of Council services such as children centres, youth services, housing and community support services and children social care.

This model is ever evolving, as is the nature of early help, and is expected to change to reflect emerging needs over time.



## 4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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Problems may emerge at any point through childhood and adolescence. Early help is provided to prevent or reduce the need for statutory or specialist interventions, wherever possible and safe to do so. Early help seeks to meet the need, resolve the problem and prevent it becoming entrenched.

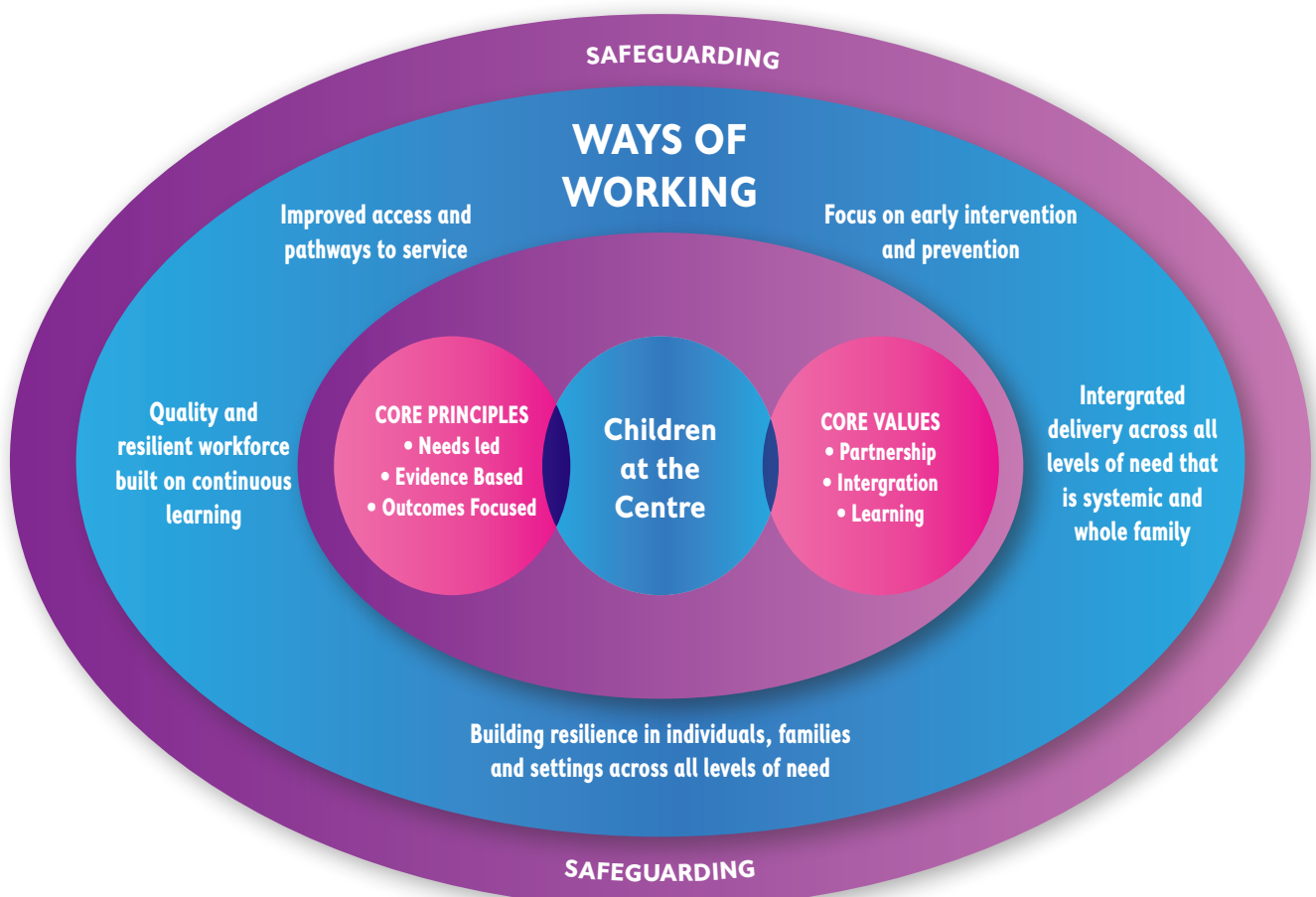
Within this context our early help approach is based on a set of shared principles:

- **Early help is everyone's responsibility.** All children and young people should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Parents have the primary responsibility to meet the needs of their children and ensure the wellbeing and prosperity of their family. We recognise that parenting can be challenging and asking for help should be seen as a sign of responsibility rather than a parenting 'failure'. It is essential that when support is required, we all act to provide the right help, at the right time, in the right way to improve children's life chances and build resilience.
- **Wherever possible all children and families' needs will be met by universal services.** Universal services working with children and adults have a role to ensure children and their families are achieving positive outcomes, to be aware of potential difficulties and act early to prevent needs escalating. Universal services must remain involved even if a child is receiving additional, intensive or specialist support to ensure there is a joined up, whole system response to meeting needs.
- **Listen to children and families and treat them as partners.** In most cases it should be the decision of the parents when to ask for help or advice, although there are occasions when practitioners may need to engage parents actively and with their consent help them to prevent problems becoming more serious. All services must keep the child at the centre of the solution, encourage families to harness their own resourcefulness and build supportive community networks, thereby enabling families to develop resilience.
- **Our priority and focus is always the child – understanding their needs and ensuring their welfare.** All services for children and families will safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people. Skilled practitioners will work in an open, honest and transparent way with families and with each other, with the confidence to intervene and challenge when appropriate. We will ensure that children and their families are not subject of repeated assessments.
- **Reducing inequalities.** We will work with our children and families to reduce inequalities. Some sections of society have poorer outcomes than others. We know that nearly half of all children are falling short of developmental and educational milestones set by the Department for education, with more children from deprived backgrounds performing the worst<sup>5</sup>. We know that good child development is hugely important in a range of ways, not just in the early years but throughout life, in terms of improving people's chances of maximising skills, getting good jobs and securing the income to live a healthy life. We recognise that a number of our families experience high levels of need, they may be impacted by poverty, poor housing which in turn can affect educational and health outcomes. As a network, we aim to help children and families help themselves (appendix 3) by addressing these issues in a timely way.
- **All services that work with children and adults must work together to deliver early help.** All services will work together with children and families to promote family strengths, build resilience, independence and support the transition from childhood to adulthood. This includes effective information sharing and joint working between professionals in children and adult services in order to reduce the impact that adults problems have on children's experiences and enable the opportunities greater integration can bring to the whole family.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/sep/23/half-children-reception-unready-school>

- **Early help resources deployed through three localities** based on an understanding of the needs of children, young people and their families. There are three early help localities in Croydon, one in the north, one in the centre and one in the south of the borough. For us, these localities are about the coming together of partners/ providers and embedding a shared approach to working with families and children. The approach is primarily aimed at early intervention work but will also connect with social care. Services for children and families will be commissioned and delivered through a joined up, integrated locality model to ensure we can best understand the needs of children and their families within their communities and maximise our multi-agency resources using evidence based approaches, learning from feedback and the voice of the child and family, with robust performance management in effect to deliver positive sustainable impact and best value.
- **Ensure clear pathways to support.** We want all families to have easy access to support when needed. Pathways will be clear and we will set out what support is available and make it easy for families to contact services themselves. We will deliver timely, high quality, effective, joined up support across the age range.
- **A shared operating framework** that starts with a universal assessment of need completed by health, education or voluntary sector services working with the family within a whole family approach. We will utilise the team around the family, team around the school and the lead professional model. This is not a new concept and is central to the guidance provided in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2013 and 2018).
- **The Local Authority's Early Help team** has been branded the Family Solutions Service to indicate that it is an all age service and, while part of the Croydon Partnership Early Help network, offers a distinctive service by focusing on families with more complex needs. The Family Solutions Service provides intensive casework and all referrals go through Croydon's Single Point of Contact (SPOC).
- **An Early Help Steering group** is well embedded and consists of senior representatives from all local partners both statutory and private and voluntary. This group has been charged with overseeing the development strategy and the delivery plan. We are now considering expanding the remit of the group to include a wider locality focus which will keep a close eye on practice, performance and service delivery within the wider Croydon Partnership Early Help Network.



# 5. WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

- As a network of early help providers, we have developed a shared understanding and vision of how early help is delivered in Croydon
  - We have created three early help localities in north, central and south of the borough where we are putting in place the right interventions and actively working with families at an intensive level alongside statutory and voluntary sectors
  - We have introduced social work expertise in our early help localities to support practitioners manage more complex families
  - Partnership working is strong and is being developed further as the early help localities are adapted to co-locate partners
  - We have increased the range of commissioned services catering for the full age range (0-18)
  - We are reducing the layers of bureaucracy with the early help network of partners and are seek consent once, so families do not have to keep repeating their stories
  - We have introduced a partnership Locality Panel which seeks to provide a framework for partnership based discussions in relation to children, young people and families referred for a targeted and intensive early help service
  - We have created one Child and Family Wellbeing Assessment for families which is shared and available for use across the early help network
  - We have streamlined our referral forms into the SPOC. We have introduced a single multi-agency referral form (MARF) for early help, parenting, Children's Social Care (CSC) and, in the near future, for emotional wellbeing and mental health support
  - We are delivering high quality and evidence based interventions. In February 2019 Ofsted recognised, that while the early help service was still in its infancy and underutilised, children who were in receipt of early help were being well supported<sup>6</sup>
  - The Partnership Early Help Steering Group has agreed clear pathways to support access to early help and ensure children, families and practitioners have clear information on how to access early help and will continue to do so
- **We have strengthened our support to universal settings by providing access to:**
    - List of partnership services on our Council website
    - Parenting Programmes Services (requested through a MARF)
    - Youth Engagement Universal Community Offer
    - Access to our Best Start 0-5 provision
    - Croydon Local Intelligence Programme (CLIP)
    - Parent Infant Partnership (PIP) services
    - Consultations & support from SPOC practitioners
    - Access & Support from our locality Early Help teams with the ability to use the locality bases for partnership working
    - Universal programmes delivered across the borough by the Youth Engagement Team and in partnership with our Voluntary Community Sector providers. Early Help has joined forces this year with Crystal Palace Foundation, Choose your Future, Cut it Out and the BME forum in naming a few, to engage with some of our most hard to reach young people around important matters, such as; careers and employment, emotional mental health, knife crime, obesity and health matters
    - Team Around the School programme
  - As an organisation we have a clear vision and our direction of travel is set out in Appendix 1. We expect children and families in Croydon to receive an outstanding service from our early help and children social care practitioners. We have revisited and strengthened our practice framework to help us achieve this aim, see Appendix 2. We have been sharing our practice framework with agencies and partners so they too understand our vision and share our approach. As we become a more mature early help organisation we would like practitioners within partner agencies to receive trauma informed and systemic training. In Croydon Council, all practitioners working within early help and children's social care will receive systemic training in the next few years.

<sup>6</sup> February 2019 Ofsted Monitoring Visit letter: <https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50062794>





## 6. OUR PRIORITIES

Croydon is establishing a locality model focussing on prevention and early help. Over recent years Croydon has reviewed and adapted its early help and prevention approach but the impact has not been as far reaching as anticipated and has not reduced the demand on statutory and specialist services. Croydon is committed to delivering an effective all age Partnership Early Help Offer, ensuring consistent application of ‘thresholds’ across the continuum of need and a more effective whole family, systemic locality based partnership approach to Early Help.

Our early help priorities in the first two years are to support the reduction in demand and impact on statutory services and prevent escalation to statutory and specialist services and to enable step down from statutory and specialist services to early help. Together we will focus on working with families where the following predominant issues are present:

- Domestic Abuse
- Parental mental ill health
- Parental substance misuse
- Violence in the community affecting children and young people
- Child neglect and abuse
- Housing and welfare supports for families
- Social isolation
- FGM practice
- Early Years (Children’s Centres and Parent Infant support for new families)
- Children at risk of exclusion from school or excluded from school
- Emotional and mental health issues with children and young people

In 2018 we asked parents what they wanted from early help services:

“HAVING SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP ME AND MY FAMILY ACCESS OTHER SERVICES”  
CROYDON PARENT

‘I WANT MY CHILD TO BE ABLE TO GET HELP WHEN HE NEEDS IT WITHOUT US HAVING TO KEEP PROVING OURSELVES TO NEW PEOPLE – THERE ARE TOO MANY HOOPS TO JUMP THROUGH – IT IS CONFUSING’  
PARENT OF A CHILD ON AN EHC PLAN

“HELP WHEN I’M STRUGGLING WITH MY MENTAL HEALTH AND A WAY TO GET ME BACK ON TRACK”  
YOUNG SINGLE MOTHER

As a partnership we are committed to working with our families to make them more resilient. This will be achieved by partners working together to respond to a whole system redesign of support to children, young people and their families across the continuum of need, from pre-birth through to 18 years, using a consistent evidenced based approach to effectively build family and community resilience in Croydon. This approach will shift the balance of service delivery towards earlier help and prevention, therefore improving outcomes and life chances for children and families, reducing demand on high cost statutory services and maximising the effective use of all available partnership resources. Appendix 3 sets out our approach to enabling families become resilient, in other words, how we will help families help themselves.





# 7. OUR EARLY HELP APPROACH

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Put simply, we believe that Early Help is all about identifying needs within families early and providing the co-ordinated support before problems become complex.

Over the last 12 months we have been developing an early help network which is based on collaborative working across the partnership. Our aspiration is to reduce duplication, maximise partner resources in our early help locality areas and work in an integrated way. The framework for working in this way is evolving but will be based on a shared operating approach that will be taken forward by:

- A Partnership Early Help Steering group;
- The Local Authority's Early Help team, i.e. the Family Solutions Service; and
- Partners in the three localities

## Thresholds of need

We want to make clear that the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership threshold guidance<sup>7</sup> (which is based on the Pan London threshold document) is our guide for supporting practitioners determine what level or tier of support a family/child might need. The continuum of need diagram on page 17 has been amended to remove any confusion about where the provision of early help sits.

An effective understanding and application of these levels will ensure children and their families receive help early in the life of the problem. Practitioners should take an open and honest approach to supporting children and families. Professionals should always seek a parent's consent to share information to enable them to access the right support, unless to do so a child would be at risk of significant harm.

- **Pan London level /tier 1, (Universal) - Most children and families will never come into contact with statutory or specialist services.** The basic needs of all children can usually be met by their family, community and faith networks and universal services such as maternity services, health visitors, school nurses, GP practices, health care, early years, school and education settings, housing and youth services. Universal services are provided as a right to all children including our most vulnerable children and those with additional, intensive or specialist needs. These services are also well placed to recognise and respond when extra support may be necessary so that support is addressing family vulnerabilities early. This may be because of the child's changing developmental, health and wellbeing needs or because of parental or family circumstances.
- **Pan London level/tier 2, (Targeted) - Children with additional needs.** Some children and young people are likely to need extra help to be healthy, safe and achieve their full potential due to their own needs or their family circumstance (Pan London level 2a). These children's needs are best supported by those who already work with them, such as health professionals, children centres, school settings, organising additional support with local partners as needed. These services are also well placed to recognise and respond when extra support may be necessary so that support is addressing children and their family vulnerabilities early.

For some children, young people and families with intensive needs a joined up, co-ordinated multi-disciplinary approach providing an intensive or package of support may be required (Pan London level 2b). These concerns can be managed without the need for statutory social work intervention or other specialist interventions and are usually best led by a professional already known to the family. The lead professional will engage the family and other professionals to co-ordinate support through one outcome based plan. Where the support needed is more than a lead professional can organise effectively or where support at an earlier level has not achieved the desired outcomes and concern for the child remains, referral to the Council's locality based Early Help Family Solutions Service can be made through the Council's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) so the service can work with the child and family in a more intensive way.

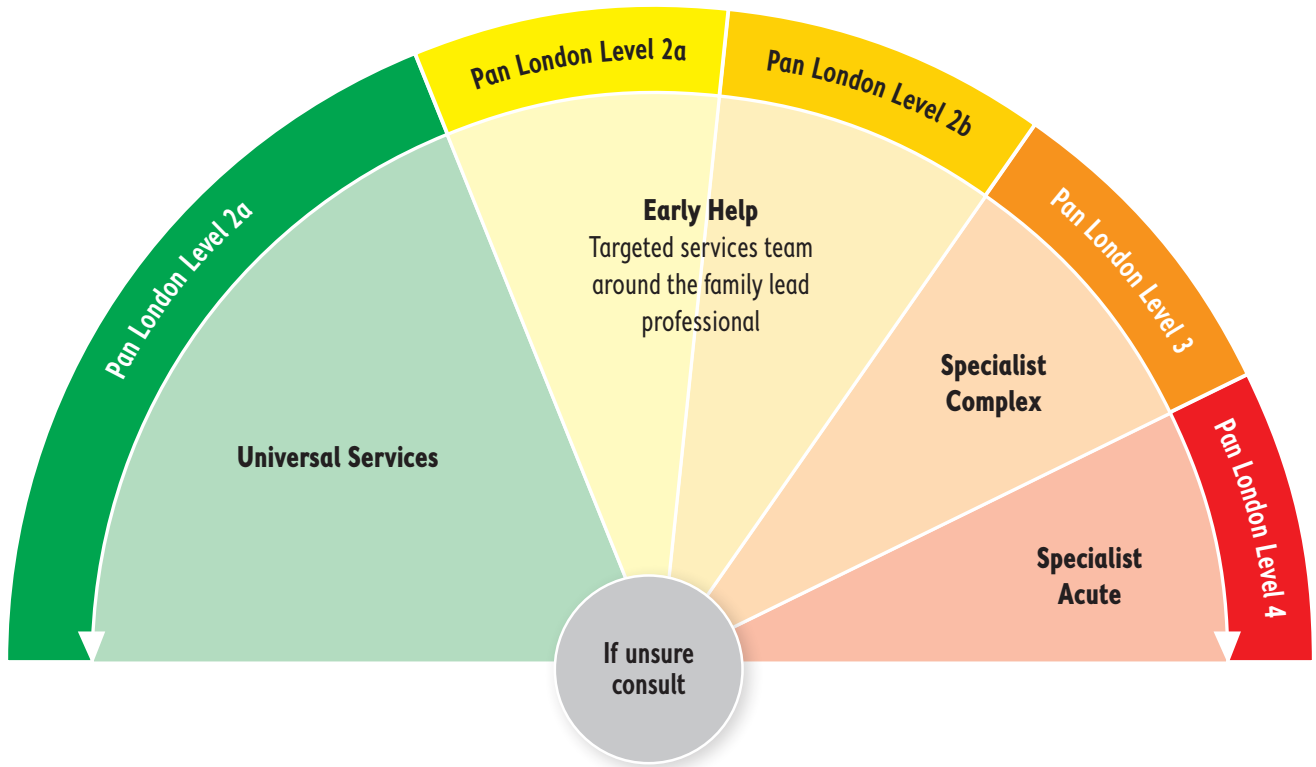
- **Pan London level/tier 3, (Specialist Complex)** - Children with complex multiple needs who need statutory and specialist service, a referral to children's social care is required.
- **Pan London level/tier 4, (Specialist Acute)** - For some children and young people their needs are so significant that immediate statutory social work or highly specialist intervention is required to keep them safe, protect them from harm or serious risk to their health or welfare. These needs may emerge after a series of, or even despite targeted early help interventions, or be sudden and/or so serious as to require an immediate request for services. There will be concern that the child is likely to, or is suffering significant harm or developmental delay.

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<sup>7</sup> CSCP Threshold guidance: <http://croydonlcsb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/CSCB-Thresholds-Guidance-.pdf>



# Continuum of Need



All partners working with children, young people and their families will offer support as soon as we are aware of any additional needs. We will always seek to work together to provide support to children, young people and their families at the lowest level possible in accordance with their needs.



## 8. MAKING A DIFFERENCE

### PARTNERSHIP EARLY HELP OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

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We are developing a Partnership Early Help Outcomes Framework with performance indicators to measure outcomes for children, young people and their families, to enable us to measure the effectiveness and impact of the Partnership Early Help Network Delivery Plan. It is anticipated that our Partnership Early Help Outcomes Framework will evolve over time as we implement our delivery plan.

This framework will enable us to be confident of the effectiveness of our delivery plan. We will be able to assess how we are improving life chances for children and their families by preventing issues becoming problems by providing the 'right help at the right time' thus reducing the levels of need for children and their families in specialist and statutory services.

Regular reporting on performance to strategic boards such as the Children and Families Partnership Board, the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP), the Children's Improvement Board and within partner governing body groups will occur to monitor progress and impact of our Delivery Plan.



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**The Partnership Early Help Outcomes Framework will include measuring the impact that the Partnership Early Help Network Delivery Plan has on the following:**

***A good childhood, for the best start in life – parents have the confidence to raise their children to have a good childhood and reach their potential***

- Early help reduces the need for statutory and specialist interventions
- Fewer children and young people are victims of crime including sexual exploitation
- Fewer young people are involved in crime and anti-social behaviour including gangs
- More children's parents/carers are in employment, education and employment
- Fewer families experience homelessness or living in unsuitable accommodation
- Fewer children and young people are subject to neglect or abuse
- Fewer children are affected by parental domestic abuse, mental ill health or substance misuse

***A great education to give the best chance in life – all children are eager to learn and confident in achieving their potential***

- More children attend early years provision
- More children are 'school ready' and achieve a good level of development at the end of the foundation stage
- More vulnerable children achieve good levels at each key stage
- More children have regular attendance at school
- Fewer children are at risk of exclusion or excluded from school
- More vulnerable children are engaged in education, training and employment

***The Best Health outcomes – all children achieve good health***

- More babies and children survive infancy
- More babies are breastfed
- Fewer young people conceive or become parents
- More children and young people maintain a healthy weight
- More children and young people are fully immunised
- More children, young people and adults in their family sustain good emotional health and well being
- Fewer young people and adults in their family misuse substances
- More young people have good sexual health

***Measuring the effectiveness of early help system – early help is an effective and proactive system in Croydon***

- The Partnership Early Help Network Delivery Plan is universally and consistently implemented across Croydon
- Partnership working is at the centre of all opportunities to support children and their families
- More evidence based and effective systemic practice interventions are used to effect sustainable change
- The workforce is skilled, competent and have taken up workforce development opportunities ensuring continuous learning

The data to measure the progress towards the above aspirations are readily available with our data sets and partnership data sets.

## 9. EARLY HELP DELIVERY MODEL UPDATED PRIORITIES FOR 2019-2021

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The Early Intervention Foundation in March 2014 developed an Early Intervention Maturity Matrix<sup>8</sup>. A mature level of early intervention is defined as **“all children and their families from groups that are a priority in a local area can access the support they need, when they need it. Outcomes for children, particularly those in ‘target groups’ who might otherwise not have done so well, are excellent and continuing to get better”**. (Early Intervention Foundations Maturity Matrix).

To ensure we have a mature early help system we need to transform the way professionals work with each other and with families. There is a strong commitment by partners to transform and develop the right culture, systems and behaviours needed to have a mature early help system in place in Croydon. We will, through the most appropriate governance arrangements, continue to evaluate the impact of the Partnership Early Help Network Delivery Plan to ensure we are making a difference and are developing a mature early help system.

In consultation with partners, an annual assessment is carried out of the level of maturity of service transformation regarding early help using the Early Intervention Foundation Maturity Matrix. The process considers six transformation strands and using local evidence, assesses the level of maturity across a four point scale: early; developing; maturing; mature. A mature service is one where all relevant services work in a consistent way with families who have multiple problems, taking an integrated ‘whole family’ approach co-ordinated by the most appropriate lead practitioner. Shared assessment models and family plans would be used across agencies with common thresholds and outcomes. The result of this co-ordinated, shared model is expected to have a positive effect on the demand placed on costly reactive services which need to intervene after earlier opportunities had been missed or only partially effective.

One of the aims of the Early Help Network Delivery Plan is to facilitate the journey of the early help network towards an increasingly ‘mature’ service offer. We will be undertaking an assessment of our maturity level on an annual basis. Our position at the end of 2018 firmly placed us in the early maturity stages, we are however confident that our next assessment, to be undertaken in early 2020, will reflect the progress made over the last 12 months.

### **The priorities for development during 2019-2021 are:**

#### **1. Establish effective leadership, partnership working and governance**

There are many positive examples of multi-agency working across Croydon to deliver good outcomes for children and their families and we will continue to expand on this to focus on developing more effective streamlined and joined processes. Delivery and accountability for this Partnership Early Help Network Delivery Plan and the Partnership Early Help Outcomes Framework currently sits with the Croydon Partnership Early Help Steering group which reports to the Children and Families Partnership Board. Reporting arrangements for early help are currently under review. The Croydon Partnership Early Help Steering group is currently responsible for:

- Each partner agency’s response to implementation of this delivery plan
- Developing an effective outcome based performance management and quality assurance framework to measure impact

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<sup>8</sup> Early Intervention Foundation Maturity Matrix



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## **2. Establish easy to use early help online information and advice**

- In order to help children and their families and practitioners across the partnership to understand the wide range of information and services available, we will build a digital platform on the Council's website as a central portal to bring information together. We have developed a list of services within Croydon that offer information, advice and guidance to the public on a range of family issues, including support from partner agencies. Other online websites, advice centres, telephone helplines or supports and services not linked will be connected to this platform in due course and for the ease of families and practitioners.

## **3. Develop a suite of tools for early help practitioners to use – ensuring a whole family strength based consistent approach to working with children and families**

- The Partnership Early Help Steering group has developed an early help Child and Family Wellbeing Assessment and Outcome Based Plan which have replaced all other assessments and plans for early help. They align to the practice approach adopted within Croydon which assists children, families and practitioners across all agencies by having a common approach to practice.
- To accompany the assessment and outcome based plan the Partnership Early Help Steering group will continue to develop a suite of early help tools, where necessary, to assist practitioners to understand the child and family journey, consistently monitor and review children's progress, evaluate the impact of support and interventions offered to improve outcomes and how to measure a family's engagement and their satisfaction level.

## **4. Develop effective and timely processes for sharing information between agencies**

To enable early help to be more effective and ensuring the right help, at the right time, we will work with partners to remove barriers to effective working and ensure that families don't need to have a series of assessments or repeatedly 'tell their stories' before receiving the support they need

- Ensure we have in place clear information sharing arrangements
- Ensure we are making the best use of IT systems and portals across agencies and departments.

## **5. Refresh structures and pathways that support the access to early help locality working**

The Croydon Partnership Early Help approach was refreshed in December 2018, specifically

- The Council's directly delivered early help service (the Family Solutions Service) was realigned at this time to create a locality based, systemic, family key worker (casework) service to work with children and families requiring intensive support. The Council is also continuing to develop the supports and interventions that can work alongside families and professionals such as parenting programmes, Gateway and Welfare services, targeted support for young people, substance misuse and mental health support, open to both statutory and early help services.
- Partnership early help localities are continuing to develop greater integration and alignment with communities and partner agencies, exploring co-location and/or coordination of processes with early years provisions, health visitors, schools, children and adult substance misuse services and emotional and mental health services
- We will work with commissioners and providers to ensure that the early help supports and interventions required in each locality and across the borough are developed in accordance with need and ensuring impact.

# 9. EARLY HELP DELIVERY MODEL

## UPDATED PRIORITIES FOR 2019-2021

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### 6. Develop a skilled and competent workforce across the partnership (systemic practice)

Delivery of early help requires effective working between professionals and between services including an understanding of each other's role, responsibility, organisational culture and values. The Partnership Early Help Steering Group will work closely with the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) to develop a programme of multi-agency learning and development to strengthen and enhance the Partnership Early Help Offer, to build on the delivery of evidence based practice. This includes:

- Awareness raising to ensure that the 'thresholds relating to risk across the continuum of need' are clearly understood and communicated between professionals so that families can move between early help and specialist statutory services at the right time and when required
- Information sharing and conversations between professionals to identify families who would benefit from early help
- Implementing whole family approaches whilst keeping the child at the centre and undertaking strength based assessments of families, including effective engagement and conversations with children and their families
- Holding and managing risk
- Working with difficult to engage families
- Embedding evidence based approaches and interventions across the partnership – including sharing good practice and developing online resources for practitioners

### 7. Develop a joint commissioning framework for early help

- Develop an approach that will encourage the development of services within our universal and early help offer across the partnership; through service redesign, reshaping specifications and identifying opportunities to recommission differently on a shared basis, or decommission/not recommission services that are not delivering to our identified needs. Ensuring a clear rationale for what services are required and how they should be delivered. A mixed economy model and trusted partners approach will be explored.
- Commissioning principles will ensure provisions are evidence based, outcome focussed and supported by robust data and analysis; focus on the needs of children and families; focus on prevention and early help; provide best value, sustainability and affordability for the future; collaborative with partners; commission across the life course of children and young people and offer opportunities for learning and innovation
- Enabling, through established governance mechanisms, pooled resources to develop a broader joint commissioning framework across partner agencies to direct the commissioning intentions for early help whole family approaches and maximise best value.
- Develop an intelligence led approach to commissioning that draws together key public funding streams to develop a broader joint commissioning framework across partner agencies to direct the commissioning intentions for prevention and early help
- Ensure all stakeholders, including children and families, have a voice at every stage of the commissioning cycle and provide feedback to measure and review impact and enable redesigned services that better meet the needs of our children and families





# APPENDIX 1

## Our destination 2019-2021

Where we are going...



How we will get there...



What this means ...

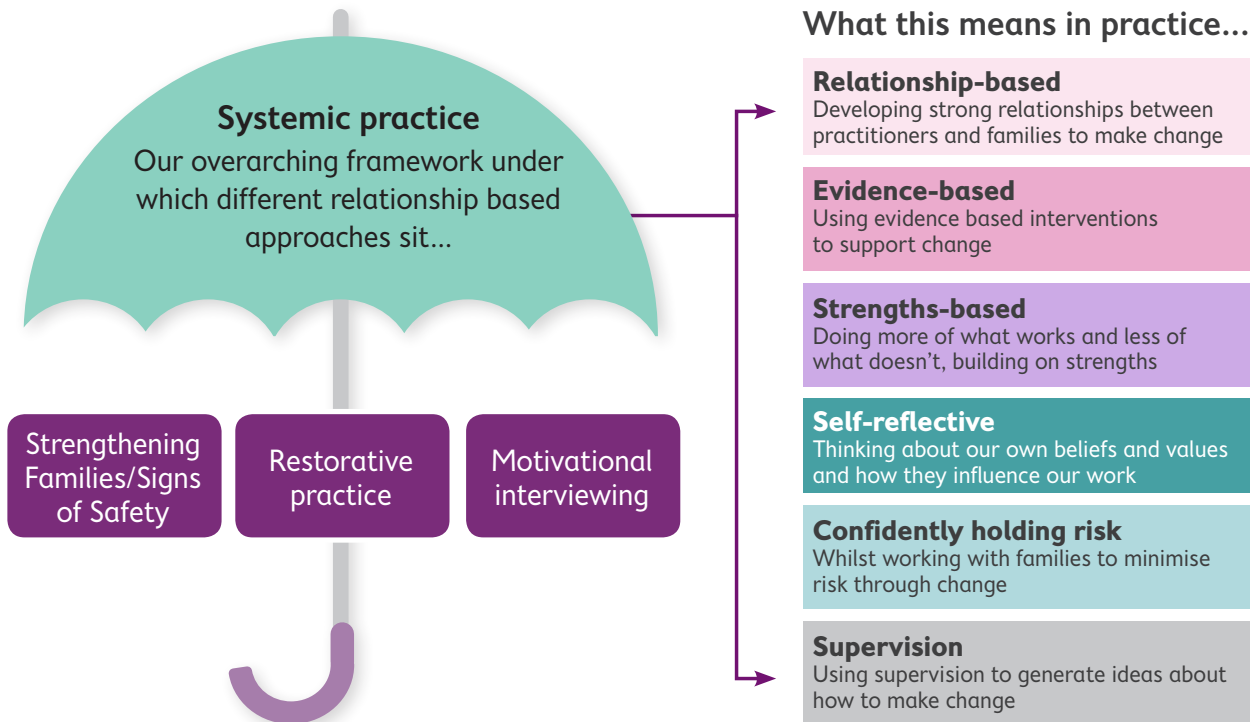
RELATIONSHIP BASED WORK	EARLY INTERVENTION, PREVENTION AND INCLUSION	LOCALITY WORKING	SKILLED & STABLE WORKFORCE
<p>We will build and sustain relationships of trust to build on successes and make change together with;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one another (colleagues)</li> <li>children, young people, families and carers</li> <li>Schools and colleges</li> <li>partners (health, police, voluntary and cultural sectors)</li> <li>local communities</li> </ul>	<p>We will invest in prevention; working with schools and communities to identify needs and deliver services as early as possible, to meet needs at the right time, in the right place and in the right way. We will promote educational inclusion and focus on preparing children for transitions and independence.</p>	<p>We will bring our services closer to the communities they serve through changing where and how we work. We will use local knowledge and intelligence (e.g. data and feedback) to ensure communities can access the services they need from us and partners, closer to home.</p>	<p>We will invest in permanent recruitment and retention to reduce workloads and enable more consistent relationships with children, families, schools and partners. We will build and develop multi-skilled teams and future leaders through a strong L&amp;D offer and 'high support, high challenge' culture</p>



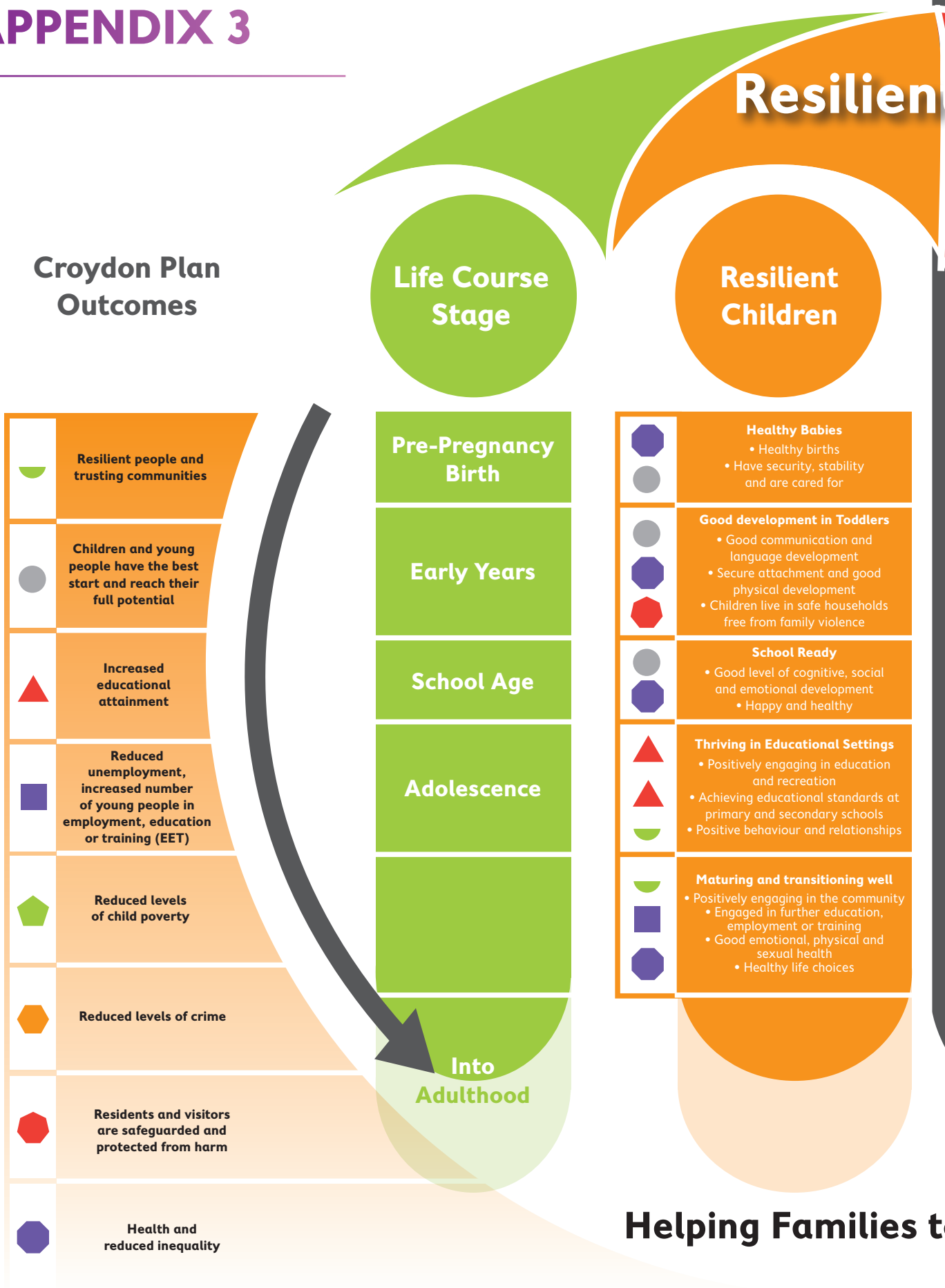
# APPENDIX 2



## Our practice framework



# APPENDIX 3



## Croydon Plan Outcomes

	Resilient people and trusting communities
	Children and young people have the best start and reach their full potential
	Increased educational attainment
	Reduced unemployment, increased number of young people in employment, education or training (EET)
	Reduced levels of child poverty
	Reduced levels of crime
	Residents and visitors are safeguarded and protected from harm
	Health and reduced inequality

## Life Course Stage

Pre-Pregnancy Birth
Early Years
School Age
Adolescence
Into Adulthood

## Resilient Children

### Resilient Children

	<b>Healthy Babies</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy births</li> <li>• Have security, stability and are cared for</li> </ul>
	<b>Good development in Toddlers</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good communication and language development</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure attachment and good physical development</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children live in safe households free from family violence</li> </ul>
	<b>School Ready</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good level of cognitive, social and emotional development</li> <li>• Happy and healthy</li> </ul>
	<b>Thriving in Educational Settings</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positively engaging in education and recreation</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving educational standards at primary and secondary schools</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive behaviour and relationships</li> </ul>
	<b>Maturing and transitioning well</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positively engaging in the community</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged in further education, employment or training</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good emotional, physical and sexual health</li> <li>• Healthy life choices</li> </ul>

Helping Families to

# Resilient Families

## Resilient Parents

### Preparing for Parenthood

- Good maternal physical and emotional health
- Reduced unwanted pregnancy
- Stable home environment
- Engaged with pregnancy related services



### Positive Parenting

- Physical and emotional health of parents and family
- Families overcome addiction and substance misuse
- Positive home learning environment
- Responsiveness, attunement, developing boundaries



### Supporting children into and in education

- Stable family life
- Parents engaged in education, employment, training
- Parents engaging with schools and their children's education
- Supporting young people's health



### Supporting children to make positive choices into adulthood

- Positive parenting in adolescence
- Supporting young people's transition into adulthood

## Resilient Communities

- Children are safe and feel safe in their community



- Reduced poverty in the community
- Families are living in suitable housing



- Families access high quality and affordable childcare



- Families have positive networks of informed support
- Families have a sense of belonging and feel respected



- Families access a broad range of employment opportunities



- Families participate in play, physical activity and wider community engagement



## Reducing reliance on high cost services

Preventable hospital use and/or specialist services

Reduced use of out of borough provision

Fewer school exclusions

Reduced offending

Reduced use of statutory Social Care services – numbers of Children In Need, Child Protection and Looked After Children

Increased number of EETs

Increased Parental Employment

# to Help Themselves

# Croydon Partnership Early Help Network Delivery Plan

2019 – 2021

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