

Harrow's Early Years Strategy 2016-2019

1. Introduction

Harrow's aspirations are that all children experience the best education possible so that outcomes are improved and gaps in achievement are closed in order that children are better prepared for school. The foundation for this is established in the early years of a child's life and the Early Years Strategy 2016-19 sets out how this will be achieved with early year's providers across Harrow.

The Early Years Strategy is based on funding streams that enable the Council to provide additional capacity and resources over the next two years. One of the key challenges is to ensure that improvements are sustained beyond this time. The Strategy will be reviewed annually. This strategy has been produced in consultation with Harrow's key partners, including Private, Voluntary and Independent settings, childminders and schools.

2. Context

National Context

Local Authorities are required to secure sufficient childcare for working parents, and those seeking work; this has increased the focus on funded places for two years olds and the planned increase in hours for funded places for 3 and 4 year olds from September 2017. In addition, the recent introduction of the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) has imposed further responsibilities on the Local Authority:

- in developing new systems to check eligibility
- to track their access to and take-up of provision
- to establish clear base lines for 2, 3 and 4 year olds
- to monitor the progress of children in receipt of the Pupil Premium.

Other key responsibilities are to provide information, advice and assistance to parents as well as information, advice and training to childcare providers.

Local authorities are also required to report annually to Members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and to make this report available to parents.

Recent evidence indicates that Harrow is not yet meeting Department for Education targets for 2 year old childcare provision. Early Years PVI providers have received minimal support and training over the past 2-3 years. Evidence also suggests that communication with parents is key to ensuring that children are given the best provision to meet their needs [Childcare information for parents February 2015 report by Suzanne Hall, Ipsos MORI, DfE].

Vulnerable children

As provision for 2 year olds is extended, this has implications for the Local Authority as well as Early Years settings. For instance, take up by Children Looked After and Children in Need was 64% and, as these are our most vulnerable children, the Local Authority needs to ensure all who are eligible are able to access their entitlement. As such, the proposals set out in this paper will strengthen the Local Authority's capacity to more effectively target these groups of children.

The EYPP aim is to close the achievement gap between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers by providing additional funding to early years providers in order to raise the quality of their provision.

Research

Extensive research evidence demonstrates that children who have good quality pre-school experiences, often attain enhanced longer-term developmental benefits. Across England, 85% of early years registered providers are good or outstanding and in 2014 60% of children reached a good level of development by the end of reception. In Harrow, most 3 and 4 year olds are taking up early education entitlements in such settings, where approximately 17 in every 20 childcare providers in Harrow have Ofsted ratings of 'Good' or 'Outstanding', in line with all England averages.

As the research evidence suggests, the longer the time period that children attend good quality early years establishments, the longer lasting and beneficial are the intellectual outcomes later on in the educational cycle, in addition to improved levels of independence, concentration and sociability. Furthermore, it is well-established that children make better all-round progress in settings where staff have higher levels of education. In Harrow, we have a total of 56 settings run by managers with degree level and EYPS qualifications, which constitute increased levels of opportunity for potential good outcomes for children, with three childminders possessing similar degree qualifications.

Moreover, it is disadvantaged children, in particular, who benefit the most, as by making funded early years places available to them, gaps in educational attainment levels can be reduced. Disadvantaged children benefit in particular, especially where they attend centres that cater for a mixture of children from different social backgrounds. The study of Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education showed that it can make the difference between achieving the nationally expected level or falling behind by the end of Key Stage 1. In 2015 national government figures show that there are 3.7 million children living in poverty, which is more than one in four. Most children living in poverty have at least one parent who is working and as the research shows, being poor at an early age is linked to poor behavioural, learning and health outcomes by age 5.

Local Context: Harrow's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

The priority to better target this group of children has been highlighted in the recent Harrow Childcare Sufficiency Assessment [CSA] which reports that the most disadvantaged in the borough are more likely not to attend early years provision, due to the high rates of childcare costs. Ultimately, the consequence of such circumstances demonstrates widening gaps of achievement, as unlike their peers who come from homes where income is in excess of £40,000 per annum and who's educational attainment at GCSE and A level would be expected to be at a national levels, those disadvantaged children not entering into early years education are falling further behind.

Statistics in England demonstrate that at the age of 5 there is a large gap in school readiness between the most advantaged and the poorest children. In 2007 the gap was around 20%, which had not closed by 2015. Between the age of 5 and the age of 7 there has been a narrowing of the gap. This is despite the fact that 40% of two year olds in England are eligible for a funded place based mainly on family income but only 9% of two year olds in schools are on a funded place.

The Harrow CSA report notes that where children attend centres that cater for a mixture of children from different social backgrounds and cultures, then the benefits are even more substantial for socialisation and preparedness for learning. As Harrow has an ethnically diverse population, ranked 4th amongst local authorities in England for the proportion of the population who are not white-British (69.1%), according to the 2011 Census, the majority of

our settings demonstrate a vast ethnic diversity, where the Black and Minority Ethnic [BME] population in Harrow continues to grow, as is evidenced in the 2014 Schools census, where 88% of pupils were from BME groups.

The most recent data available also shows an increase in the numbers of White European Other groups- for example the numbers increased from 9,600 [4.6%] in June 2001 to 18,300 [8%] in June 2009, an increase higher than both London and nationally [ONS Resident Population Estimates]. Birth estimates show that the number of Polish residents in Harrow has increased from 2,000 in 2010 to 7,000 in 2014. The number of Romanian residents increased from 4,000 to 10,000 in 2014.

Special educational needs and disability

Pre-school can also be an effective intervention for the reduction of special educational needs, as early intervention measures can support children's greater ability to access the learning and therefore aid their development. However, the current CSA report shows that 4.4% of children aged 2 years who are eligible for the 15 hour funded entitlement have a statement of educational need at January 2015, which is substantially higher than the England average of 2.6% and inner London average of 3.4%. Whereas, 7% of 3 year olds in Harrow have SEN statements and 6.1% of 3-4 year olds have SEN statements, as of January 2015. These statistics, which relate only to those children already assessed, and not those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), indicate a definite need for well equipped childcare settings and staff to meet the needs of the increasing amount of children with additional needs and disabilities. This presents a further challenge to the borough, as the CSA report states, "Most early year's settings report they need help to improve their ability to meet the needs of these children", which places an identified need for training to support settings and the children concerned. The Early Years Strategy has a strong interface with Harrow's Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy. The SEND Strategy identifies the need for high quality provision and outcomes based on a continuity of provision for all children, but especially vulnerable children including disabled children and those with special educational needs [SEND].

Two, Three and Four year old take up and minority ethnic communities.

Harrow's take-up for the entitlement to 2 year old early years learning was recently 52%, around the London average of 51% but below the national average of 63%, and above our statistical neighbours. However, the recent rapid population growth in already acknowledged areas of deprivation and historic low take-up, have resulted in the borough again falling below national averages.

In addition, the recent CSA has confirmed that take-up of funded places in Harrow for some minority ethnic groups (including; Indian; Asian; Any Other Black; Mixed White; as well as White British) is particularly low. The report identifies that "a key consideration for any childcare planners in encouraging take-up rates to increase would involve provision that is sensitive to religious, cultural and language needs, particularly for new communities such as from Somalia, who have very low take-up of childcare rates." In addition, the report highlighted that there are now four areas that have low take-up rates, compared to the historically known areas and these include; Wealdstone and Marlborough in the central planning area, Roxbourne in the South West planning area and Harrow Weald in the North West Planning Area.

In England, more than half of three and four year-old children taking up funded early education are in Nursery and Reception classes in schools, although in Harrow this percentage is a lot higher, with almost two thirds of 3 year olds accessing 15 hours funded places, with a quarter of 3 year olds accessing extended hours in addition to the 15 hours. Whereas, there are 100% of children aged 4 years accessing 15 hours funding as well as paying for additional hours. However, Ofsted has pointed out that fewer than 5,000 schools

take two year olds, but in those that do, a disproportionate number are from economically advantaged families.

The strategy therefore aims to promote an integrated approach to improving outcomes with schools and PVIs / child minders working collaboratively to prepare children for school. A priority is to improve transition arrangements.

Health

From autumn 2015, Health and Education professionals are required to complete an Integrated Review. Health professionals have adopted the ASQ-3 for all two year olds. Various systems have been adopted across the country to ensure Health and Education work together to provide parents with data on children's developmental progress at age two. This information is integral to the data collected on children which shows their developmental progress over time and is enabling early intervention systems to support children in need, aiming at improving long-term outcomes. This is being enhanced by the introduction of baseline assessments for children in reception from September 2016. Furthermore, as of September 2015, a mandatory check by health visitors for every one year old was introduced.

Harrow Council is also committed to making a significant improvement to the health and well-being of the people in Harrow, and promoting health and well-being in the early years is reflected in the Health and Well-being Strategy, 'Start Well'. There are key outcomes to reduce poor health outcomes for children and prevent health problems in adulthood. This is an Ofsted requirement for Health and well-being. Harrow Early Years will be introducing the Healthy Early Years programme which will be a vehicle to embed good practice in promoting healthy outcomes for children.

This early education strategy is also linked to a commitment to tackling poverty and inequality, as well as other disadvantages, and is set within Harrow Council's Ambition 2020 (Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow). Each of the three goals are embodied in the strategy- to build a better Harrow, to be more business-like and business friendly, and to protect the most vulnerable and support families. The early years team embraces the new Harrow values to 'be courageous', 'to do it together', and 'to make it happen'.

Links with other Harrow strategies

As the population in Harrow continues to grow, this strategy where appropriate will link with the school expansion programme which has been able to secure additional nursery provision. Funding has been invested in the private, voluntary and independent sector infrastructure since 2012 to increase capacity and is set to continue through to 2018.

This strategy links in to other aspects of Harrow's work including the special educational needs and disability strategy. It supports the need for high quality provision and outcomes based on a continuity of provision for all children, but especially vulnerable children including SEND, looked after children, and those funded through the early years pupil premium.

2. Priorities for an overall EYFS strategy

Considerable work has been done to identify the needs and priorities for Early Years in the light of the local context and the changing landscape of Early Years nationally. Following extensive discussion and debate within the Early Years Strategy Group, the following have been identified as the strategic priorities for early years:

Priority One:

Improve the quality of Early Years provision and outcomes across the Maintained and the PVI sector so that all settings achieve Good and above



Objectives

- Improve leadership of PVI settings to secure both capacity and quality of provision for two year olds (as well as 3 and 4 year olds).
- Provide support and challenge to settings through evaluation, feedback and targets.
- Develop sector led capacity and skills to model and share best practice.
- Provide targeted support to those settings who are at risk of being judged to be below Good by Ofsted.
- Review and audit of settings against the Early Years single inspection framework on request, in accordance with the local authority's statutory duty.
- Create self-sustainable networks of PVI settings.
- Improve transition into and out of PVI settings.

Priority Two:

Increase capacity within the PVI and maintained sectors in respect of eligible two year old places and in respect of the likely increase from 15 hours free nursery education to 30 hours of free nursery education for three and four year olds (predicted start in 2017).

Objectives

- Create additional capacity within the PVI settings, in particular, those areas identified in the CSA report March 2016.
- Targeted support for existing PVI settings with potential to expand.
- Identification and targeted work with potential new providers, particularly in those areas identified in the CSA report March 2016.
- Liaison with Corporate Estates to identify premises.
- Create a sustainable marketing strategy.
- Targeted outreach work in localities and specific ethnic minority communities and individual families – working in partnership to support hard to reach communities, with newly identified 'parent champion' volunteers and the local Community Leaders, in addition to Children's Centres.
- Carry out regular comprehensive childcare sufficiency assessments in line with requirements of local authorities.

Priority Three:

Improve the quality use of assessment and data across the Early Years sector.

Objectives

- Establish appropriate and sustainable systems for monitoring and tracking two year old progress (which can also be utilised for three and four year olds).
- Design and implement sustainable systems for monitoring and tracking pupil baseline and progress data.
- Train and support settings in the use of tracking systems, via the Kent Tracker system identified as meeting this need.
- Plan for the costs for the development of the new system.

Priority Four:

Meet more effectively the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged children within the Early Years sector (health needs, SEND, CLA, Pupil Premium).

Objectives

- Secure sufficient capacity within the PVI's to provide high quality support for two, three and four year olds with SEND.
- Develop skills and expertise of staff within the PVI's to plan for and ensure appropriate targeted support for any disadvantaged children.

Priority Five:

Support the development of quality and capacity of childminders providing for two to five year olds

Objectives

- Provide access to training and support on the EYFS to childminders.
- Facilitate quality networks (including childminder agencies) for childminders which are self-sustaining in the longer term.

Priority Five:

Adopt an Early Years team approach.

Objectives

- Ensure that all those contributing to the overall Early Years strategy are clear about their roles and accountabilities and deliver these effectively.
- Provide strong leadership to the team through sharing key data and information with the team and providing clear direction for individuals and the team as a whole.

3 Implementation : Key actions and the Early Years action plan

The Early Years Strategy action plan sets out the key priorities, key performance indicators with timescales and success criteria. A copy is provided at Annexe A.

An Early Years strategic group has been established to lead the Early Years Strategy. It is lead by a Senior School Improvement Adviser for Early Years, with three early year's advisers and an Education Psychologist.

An Early Years operational group has been established consisting of a wide range of Harrow Council staff and contracted early years consultants. There are also PVI representatives on the group, staff from Children's Centres, from Public Health and from specialist services. This group ensures that all operational matters in respect of Early Years inform the work of the strategic group and any concerns and issues are quickly resolved. The operational group is chaired by a Senior School Improvement Adviser/Early Years lead officer.

Regular Early Years Forums have been taking place with the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI's) sector providers. Additional events have been scheduled to meet high levels of demand. The leadership being provided by the Local Authority has been welcomed.

The work of the Families Information Service (FIS) is integral to the overall strategy and provision for Early Years. The leadership and line management of FIS is within the Early Years Team.

4. Next steps

- 5.1 Draw together a more detailed Early Years action plan so that early years outcomes across all settings is at least Good and there is sufficient capacity within Harrow to provide early education for all eligible children.
- 5.2 Provide effective leadership of the LA's Early Years strategy and provision to meet the requirements of any external scrutiny (e.g. DFE, STA, Ofsted).
- 5.3 Begin analysing the information provided in the childcare sufficiency assessment to inform future strategies and plan to meet the identified increasing childcare demands and the rise in the number of children with SEND, and continue to maintain and update CSA data.
- 5.4 Develop roles and responsibilities in relation to the newly created posts for a two year period ensuring that line management is clearly within the Early Years services.
- 5.5 Provide clear overview of direction of travel and challenges to elected members through regular reporting.

Brian Netto – Senior School Improvement Adviser (Early Years Lead Officer) - March 2016

Early Years Action Plan and KPIs –2016-19 [first year of plan] Annexe A

Cabinet 24 May 2016 Appendix B

Workstream	Lead Officer	Reporting to	Frequency of reporting	Key Performance Indicators	Progress
Develop and adopt an Early Years strategy to identify the strategic direction for the sector	Brian Netto	Nasim Butt	Monthly steering group meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy is signed off by Corporate Management team and action plan in place, agreed and progress reviewed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Autumn term 2015- the strategy and action plan has been shared with PVIs and schools
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new team members have clear roles and responsibilities and deliver these effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new members completed 6 week induction
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership provided through effective sharing of information and professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Half termly strategic and termly operational meetings in place; termly cpd with HSIP in place
Improve quality and provision in PVIs and childminders a) Create additional capacity within the PVI settings, in particular the areas identified in the 2016 CSA [Wealdstone, Marlborough,	Joan Ugwu [FIS] Business support officer	Brian Netto	Once per term FIS team with Business, marketing and communications officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in 2 year old disadvantaged take up [% each term tbc] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase from June 2015 [48%] to most current December 2015 [67%]
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a full childcare sufficiency assessment[CSA] by February 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft CSA completed on time
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target demand and supply in areas of need in Harrow, with a particular focus on disadvantaged groups, including those from minority ethnic communities identified in the CSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awaiting publication of CSA

Workstream	Lead Officer	Reporting to	Frequency of reporting	Key Performance Indicators	Progress
Roxbourne and Harrow Weald]					
Improve quality and provision in PVI's and childminders: b) Improve Leadership of PVI settings to secure both capacity and quality of provision for 2 year olds. c) Support and challenge to settings through evaluation, feedback and targets	Early Years advisers and practitioners	Brian Netto	Termly review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PVI Ofsted outcomes [85%] at least around national average for good or better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autumn term 2015 dip in overall effectiveness [15 settings judged to require improvement= 82% good or better
	Business support officer			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PVIs judged RI/inadequate improve to good within 6 months of report being published 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 settings [3%] judged inadequate
	Public health officers and health visitors [Andrea Lagos, Suzette Muhammed]			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 year old check in place in all settings/ Child minders during 2015-16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with Public Health and NHS in place
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved school readiness, and improved progress across EY leading to GLD which is above the national average [end of 2015-16] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rising trends over last 3 years
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School readiness is improved as measured by Reception baseline assessments, so that progress is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not yet comparable during pilot phase- September 2016 reception baseline to be used as measure of progress
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harrow meets DfE targets for 3 and 4 year olds especially those funded through the pupil premium [2015-16] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awaiting new DfE targets
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for increase to 30 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning meeting for

Workstream	Lead Officer	Reporting to	Frequency of reporting	Key Performance Indicators	Progress
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hours free childcare for eligible 3 and 4 year olds from September 2017 Support childminders through networking [including childminder agency] and cpd to ensure sustainability beyond 2017 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> capital bid set for April 2016 with schools and PVI's to plan expansion Childminder and PVI termly forums and cpd in place; initial discussions on childminder agency set for April 2016
Develop sector lead capacity and skills to model and share best practice	EY advisers Archana Dattani	Brian Netto	Termly review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff in PVI's are better qualified to sustain best practice – accreditation via Stanmore College is 100% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress, completed by end of academic year 2015-16
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By September 2016 the majority of PVI's sign the partnership agreement which commits them to an annual subscription 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Termly PVI Forums successful, well attended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial forums [x 3] well supported [50 attended the first, 100+ attended the next 2]
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual PVI conference successful, well attended [September 2016] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over subscribed [110 attended]
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Termly EY operational meeting effectively implements the EY strategy via the action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of the EY strategy and action plan in place
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> integrated approach to EY involves school and PVI's [joint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress, joint training with Stag Lane Infants as

Workstream	Lead Officer	Reporting to	Frequency of reporting	Key Performance Indicators	Progress
				training during 2015-16]	knowledge centre
Establish appropriate and sustainable systems for monitoring and tracking 2 year old progress. (which can be utilised for 3 and 4 year olds)	EY Data Officer Gayatri Athalye EY advisers	Brian Netto	Termly review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harrow explores and sources suitable tracking system. Agree with providers to adopt a data tracking system with settings that lack systematic assessment [2015-16] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress, Kent LA system being adopted by some settings with January 2016 training scheduled for over 50 settings
Secure sufficient capacity within the PVI to provide high quality support for 2 year olds with SEND and other vulnerable groups [CLA, EYPP etc]	EY SENDco-Denise Deighton EY Educational Psychologist	Brian Netto	Termly review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased capacity and support for vulnerable children reduces the proportion of DSEN in early years [from September 2016] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linked to the SEND-early years strategy
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEND/EY strategy identifies potential providers in target areas in Harrow [Kenmore area tbc]- from September 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awaiting CSA
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals for SEND provision across Early years settings is agreed by Corporate Management team and shared with school Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans in progress, due for launch in September 2016
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital and revenue funding is sourced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No details yet from government for 2016-17 financial year
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infant/nursery schools report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No details yet

Workstream	Lead Officer	Reporting to	Frequency of reporting	Key Performance Indicators	Progress
				clearer understanding of child's needs at point of entry	
Develop skills and expertise of staff within the PVI to plan for and ensure appropriate support	EY advisers	Brian Netto	Termly through the SEND strategy monitoring group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programme in place, is well attended and supports improvements in 2,3 and 4 year old provision [2015-16] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring/summer 2016 programme in place
	EY practitioners			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outreach support offer is in place that complements the knowledge centres and EYFS CDP programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School DSEN support mirrored in early years SENCo forum, surgeries and training
	EY SENDco - Denise Deighton				
	EP				