

A Fair Chance in Life for All

Islington Children and Families Strategy 2011-2015

Children and Families
PARTNERSHIP

Building better futures with children, families and communities

In partnership with



ISLINGTON

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Islington Children and Families Partnership
Hosted by Islington Council Children's Services

Strategy and Commissioning
(Children's Partnership, Planning and Projects)
222 Upper Street, 2nd Floor, Laycock Wing
London N1 1XR

Websites:
<http://public.icp.islington.gov.uk>
www.islington.gov.uk/childrenandfamiliespartnership
Phone: 020 7527 3080

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About the Children and Families Board

Poverty and social exclusion can pass from generation to generation. All children and their parents need support at some points in life; some need more support because of the challenges they face. A small number need more intensive support to help them get back on track – they tend to face key areas of disadvantages, sometimes several at once.

In particular, children from families with multiple problems can experience poor outcomes, into adulthood, which continues the cycle of disadvantage. As identified by the Islington Fairness Commission, if we are to improve the quality of life in Islington, it will require the participation of everyone.

For the Children and Families Partnership and its board, improving the life chances of all our young people and tackling child poverty drive what we do – in particular for those where the challenges are greatest.

The Children and Families Board: who we are and what we do

We are founded on two key ideas. First, no one organisation or individual can meet all the needs of a child or young person, so local partners need to work together with families to improve their quality of life; and second, it takes a community to raise happy, healthy and successful children.

Partners across the community come together in our partnership for the benefit of children, their families and the wider community by:

- using all of the services, workforce, finances and capital (resources) available to children, young people and parents so we can improve their lives in the best way possible
- enabling services and organisations to get support from other professionals to tackle the barriers children and families face and better meet their needs.

With the changing role of public services, our role in improving children's lives is as a:

Champion: for children and families, addressing inequality, promoting fairness and ensuring all children and young people have the best possible life experiences and outcomes

Catalyst: bringing stakeholders together through shared vision and building effective partnerships to best meet need

Commissioner: making best use of resources available through joint planning and commissioning ensuring cost-effective delivery either in-house or through external providers.

The Children and Families Strategy

The Children and Families Strategy sets out the long-term vision of what Islington should look like for children and families, enabling services and organisations to shape what they will do to assist with this. It supports the increasing need to bring everyone together under common goals at a time when commissioning and service provision will be the responsibility of partners such as schools, GPs, the private sector and individuals themselves even more.

This is our five-year approach to support how we work together in Islington so that we:

- 1.** know our destination – the quality of life we want for Islington children, young people and families (fulfilling our role as 'place-shapers')
- 2.** know the journey to get to our destination – bringing together partners and the community to contribute and assist with a fairer Islington for children and families
- 3.** know how close we are from our destination – monitoring whether children and families have a better quality of life in Islington.

In this document, we have set out the long-term outcomes for what Islington will, as an area, be like in 2020 for children and families. The current financial climate makes it more difficult to provide all the services we would like for children and families. However, despite this, as a community we must keep our eyes on the prize: better outcomes.

Following the vision, our overall principles for how the Children and Families Board works together are outlined. Finally, we set out our priority themes. These are the areas that we feel that we can add most value to the vision in the medium-term, by working together rather than as individual bodies.

Our vision for children, young people and families in Islington

We want Islington to be the best place for children and young people to grow up. By 2020, we want an Islington where:

- children and their families live in a thriving and supportive community
- children are healthy and thriving
- young people have positive aspirations, achieve their full potential and are valued
- families are coping well and not disadvantaged by poverty
- children and their families live in a safe home and community.

Our principles for how Islington's Children and Families Board works

The principles that underpin our vision are:

1. Reducing inequalities

We believe that making Islington fairer involves:

- addressing child poverty
- narrowing the gap in outcomes between groups in Islington and between Islington and those nationally
- ensuring that the principles of fairness and social justice guide our priorities and actions.

2. Quality of universal services

We believe that:

- a continued focus on the quality of services available to and used by the general public – like GPs, schools, Sure Start children's centres, employment services – will support Islington's children and parents outcomes to be as good as, or better than, national performance.

3. Early intervention and prevention

We believe that:

- identifying and preventing problems as early as possible must be the core business of services such as housing and schools, instead of reacting to problems when they happen
- investing to meet the needs of children and their families earlier is cost-effective
- when necessary, the involvement of services aimed at children and families who need additional support or have specific or complex needs will be sharp and focused activity.

4. Think family

We believe that:

- addressing the needs of the whole family must be integrated into action and thinking by services available to and used by the general public
- stable, caring families are the right place for children and young people to grow up.

5. Safeguarding children

We believe that safeguarding and protecting Islington's children involves:

- acting on the Islington Safeguarding Children Board's assessments of the effectiveness of safeguarding in Islington
- ensuring safe services and support for children and young people most at risk.

6. Participation works

We believe that:

- children and families having a say in the services they use, the support they need and decisions that affect them is one of the first thoughts rather than an afterthought
- children and families must be empowered to shape their own futures.

7. Integrated working

We believe that to succeed:

- we must all work together, share ideas, resources and solutions, and use the tools that support us to work together, so children and families have good value services.

Achieving our vision: our four partnership priority themes

To support us to achieve our vision, we have the following objectives that we will tackle by working together, along with what this covers so anyone in the community and public, voluntary and private sectors can help improve the lives of children and their families.

Priority 1: Improving outcomes by 19 through outstanding health services, schools and children's centres.

This covers supporting children, young people and families to achieve positive outcomes through:

- a healthy start in life and good early child development
- healthy lifestyles as children and young people grow up
- improved access to health care provided close to home in community settings where possible
- good emotional and mental health
- children and young people in schools achieving above the national level at the key learning stages
- outcomes gap narrowed between children who are looked after, leave care and disabled children, and their peers
- achievement and planned progression when young people leave school
- no barriers to learning
- skills to prepare for adulthood
- tackling overcrowding and homelessness to support stable family life.

Priority 2: Ensuring play, youth and leisure opportunities for children and young people.

This covers:

- working with partners to ensure positive opportunities in our housing estates
- building social and emotional skills to enable young people, particularly disabled children and looked after children, to respond to risks and challenges they may face and support them as they become adults
- maintaining access for young people to have positive things to do and leisure opportunities
- promoting ways for young people and adults to get on, support one another and shape what happens in Islington.

Priority 3: Transforming early intervention and prevention support for vulnerable children and families.

This covers:

- encouraging supportive family relationships
- supporting stable families where parents are able to meet their children's needs
- getting parents and carers ready for work and into work
- building the ability of families to deal with the effects of low income, overcrowding, housing problems and other challenges faced throughout childhood and adolescence.

Priority 4: Ensuring children are safe at home, school and in the community.

This covers:

- promoting parents and families getting involved in community life
- supporting good parenting to care for children's needs
- ensuring a safe and secure environment at home, school and in the community
- ensuring effective support for children and young people most at risk of harm or neglect.

On the following pages, for each priority, we have identified how these will contribute to challenging child poverty locally and what we will/can do to make things happen in our three roles as a champion for children and families, as a catalyst and as a commissioner.

Please note that the latest time period from which data and statistics is sourced for this strategy is September 2010.

Priority 1: Improving outcomes by 19 through outstanding health services, schools and children's centres

What this means: the quality of life outcomes

- Healthy and thriving children.
- Valued, positive and achieving young people.
- All children have the best start in life and succeed in education.
- Men, women and children are healthy and well.

Addressing child poverty: Poverty in childhood does not translate into poor experiences and outcomes.

Why is this important?

- Outcomes for children in their early years are lower than those for children nationally.
- The proportion of young children in Reception who are not at a healthy weight has increased. For both children in Year 6 and in Reception, this is higher than the national averages.
- More five-year-olds in Islington have dental decay than in London and England – just under half of all five-year-olds in the borough.
- It was estimated that just under 3,200 children and young people aged five to 17 would be expected to have a mental health disorder – approximately 36% more than the national average.
- Although young people's educational outcomes are improving, they are below national levels and absence from school is still a concern.
- Both the rate for young people becoming pregnant and alcohol-related admissions to hospital are above national averages.
- The qualification levels of 19-year-olds are slowly improving but these are still significantly below the London and national average as is the level of young people in Islington who are in education, employment or training.

What will it take to do better through working together?

As a champion for children and families, we will:

- narrow the gap between the quality of life for disadvantaged children, such as those looked after by the council, care leavers and disabled children, and the rest of the children's population
- set aspirational outcomes for groups of children who are at risk of not reaching their full potential
- hold schools and Sure Start children's centres to account through challenge and, where appropriate, supporting them so that they get better.

As a catalyst, we will:

- set up the 'Islington Reads' initiative to improve children's reading skills
- assist schools, health services and Sure Start children's centres to work together and with other groups to meet education, health and child development objectives
- bring the world of work and learning together as a strong partnership between local employers, training, employment and education services, to enable young people to be ready for work
- make the use of tools for working together around the needs of children and families, such as single assessments/common assessment framework, a standard and consistent way of working across services.

As a commissioner, we will:

- tackle overcrowding and homelessness to provide stability for family life
- support services to be judged as good or outstanding
- proactively develop joint commissioning with the Clinical Commissioning Group¹ and relationships with community health and NHS North Central London² to address children and young people's health and wellbeing.

¹ **Clinical Commissioning Group:** The local group of GPs and other healthcare staff who will be responsible for commissioning health services for the local population. This is part of changes set out in the Government's White Paper – Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS

² **NHS North Central London Cluster (NCL)** works across Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington to support the commissioning of health services as the new NHS system develops.

Priority 2: Ensuring play, youth and leisure opportunities for children and young people

What this means: the quality of life outcomes

- Healthy and thriving children.
- Valued, positive and achieving young people.
- All children have the best start in life and succeed in education.
- Men, women and children are healthy and well.

Addressing child poverty: Poverty in childhood does not translate into poor experiences and outcomes. Child's environment builds resilience and supports them to thrive.

Why is this important?

- Research has proven that play, youth and leisure opportunities have a good effect on children and young people's learning, social and emotional development. Gaining confidence, building self-esteem and developing important social skills are part of preparing for adult life. Access to positive activities can help develop and foster all of these skills.
- With the second smallest amount of green space per head in London, a child in Islington has half the amount of space to play in than other children.
- Potential increases in the general population places pressure on available space in Islington for play, youth and leisure opportunities for children, young people and families.
- Play, youth and leisure opportunities at home are limited by lack of space. One in three children living in overcrowded housing will access play provision indicating a need for space to play and be active outside the home. Children may not be allowed outside to play without adult supervision because of concerns for safety.
- Children from low-income families access play services more than other children.

What will it take to do better through working together?

As a champion for children and families, we will:

- focus on exciting and safe places to go where children and young people from all backgrounds and circumstances can get involved in play, leisure and positive activities
- promote affordable leisure opportunities including subsidised swimming and free programmes for young people under 18
- promote the child's right to play and short breaks for disabled children
- improve the leisure facilities available in parks and improve community access to school sports facilities so that wider access for families is achieved
- provide a comprehensive school/after school sports programme
- provide youth engagement programmes across ten estates during holiday programmes.

As a catalyst, we will:

- work with partners to ensure positive opportunities on our housing estates
- engage a range of stakeholders to develop a future model for play and youth provision that secure services for children and young people who need additional help and support or who cannot afford to buy the services they feel would meet their needs
- stimulate opportunities for young people to drive and develop the youth provision they want, including involvement in decisions about service commissioning.

As a commissioner, we will:

- develop a mixed approach to leisure opportunities and facilities in the borough for families and children
- develop a sustainable model and core offer of youth, leisure and play opportunities that makes best use of resources and assets available in the area and the contribution of groups across the community and outside the local authority
- promote access to high-quality positive activities for young people from vulnerable groups such as disabled children and children looked after by the council.

Priority 3: Transforming early intervention and prevention support for vulnerable children and families

What this means: the quality of life outcomes

- Families are coping well and not disadvantaged by poverty.
- Children and families live in a thriving and supportive community.
- Children and adults are free from poverty.

Addressing child poverty: More families are in work that pays. Poverty in childhood does not translate into poor experiences and outcomes. Child's environment builds resilience and supports them to thrive.

Why is this important?

- Islington's rate of child poverty is the second highest nationally with a high proportion living in social housing. Getting parents and carers into work is the best route out of poverty.
- Families facing many disadvantages (such as low income, poor health, poor housing) are at greater risk of poor outcomes such as worklessness, school exclusion, anti-social behaviour and offending, with a later cost to society and a continuing cycle of disadvantage.
- Islington's outcomes are significantly worse than national levels across the whole of the life-cycle for:
 - life expectancy
 - children achieving a good level of development at birth
 - young people not in education, employment or training
 - families being paid means-tested benefits.
- Services dealing independently with a family experiencing multiple problems is a poor use of resources.
- There are higher rates of children in the care of the council. The rate of children subject to a child protection plan has decreased since 2009.

What will it take to do better through working together?

As a champion for children and families, we will:

- understand our families by working with users, families and communities to develop solutions that cut across services to the causes of problems and develop services that are shown to work better
- implement solutions around vulnerable children such those with additional needs or children with long-term health conditions so that problems don't arise in the first place (prevention) or problems are nipped in the bud (early intervention)
- coordinate integrated support for families of disabled children.

As a catalyst, we will:

- ensure that services for families from conception to a child's first birthday are effective and integrated (first 21 months initiative)
- stimulate all services that families and children come into contact with to **'think family'** from the point of first interaction with a family or child
- share innovation, data and expertise between adult-based and children-based support services
- develop the 'Childcare Coalition' to increase the amount of affordable childcare available in the borough, especially during school holidays.

As a commissioner, we will:

- enable parents to get pre-employment advice and support through a range of community settings; **design** personalised services offering advice on employment together with other relevant services; locate Jobcentre Plus staff with community based services; and **share** targets to improve the rate of parents in work
- pool resources to offer **early non-stigmatising, open-access, practical support to all families and based in the heart of the community, but targeting the families experiencing many disadvantages or persistent difficulties** – this will enable parents to function without the need for continual support, strengthen their ability to address challenges and greater independence
- develop an **integrated specialist service** so that we can support more of the most troubled children and families where there are young people with very complex difficulties, who otherwise may continue to offend or need to be taken into care
- reduce duplication and costs to achieve long-term savings to society and public services.

Priority 4: Ensuring children are safe at home, school and in the community

What this means: the quality of life outcomes

- Children and families live in a safe home and community.
- People of all ages and backgrounds are safe, feel safe and respect each other.

Addressing child poverty: Child's environment builds resilience and supports them to thrive.

Why is this important?

- Although Islington has greater numbers of crimes than the police force average, the crime rate has been declining. There has been a gradual rise in the rate of young victims of crime. Since 2009/10, there has been a reduction in serious youth violence. The rate of young people from Islington who receive their first reprimand, warning or conviction has fallen. However, it is still higher than the national average. Islington has gone from having the second highest rate of admissions to hospital caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children among similar boroughs in 2007 to the third in 2009.
- The rate of children with child protection plans has decreased. There has been an overall decrease of children looked after by the council since 2004. However, the number of looked-after children is still relatively high compared to other London boroughs. Domestic violence is a consistent characteristic in families with children with child protection plans, followed by mental health and substance misuse.
- Although relatively low, children who need to be looked after by the council that experience three or more placement moves during the year has slightly increased. A high proportion of children were placed with an adoptive family. Finding permanent adoptive homes for sibling groups and children with special needs is also challenging.

What will it take to do better through working together?

As a champion for children and families, we will:

- ensure that all children looked after by the council have the lives we want for our own children
- support children to overcome difficult and harmful childhood experiences
- build resilience in parents to help them care for their children safely
- ensure children and young people who are vulnerable because of their disability, ethnicity or sexuality have their needs understood and responded to
- find permanent families for children who cannot live at home.

As a catalyst, we will:

- identify and address gaps in services that impact upon safeguarding children and young people
- drive the 'think family' approach between those working on domestic violence, substance misuse and mental health issues
- get involved at the right time to identify children who are at risk of offending or getting involved in serious youth violence and gangs
- support children and families to bring about change where they are experiencing violence or anti-social behaviour in the home, at school or in the community
- promote innovative ways of working with national government and partners such as the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub³ and the Family Drugs and Alcohol Court⁴
- ensure we act on the recommendations from the 2011 national review of the child protection system.

As a commissioner, we will:

- create a commissioning process to make sure we use our resources more efficiently and shape services through greater involvement from those that use our services
- safely reduce the number of children looked after by the council and increase the number of local foster carers
- establish an evidence-base for issues such as opportunities to reduce anticipated costs (cost avoidance) and join in on research to drive excellent ways for professionals to do their job and work together.

³ Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub: A 'one-front door' approach by co-locating safeguarding agencies to join up information and support vulnerable people.

⁴ Family Drugs and Alcohol Court: The UK's first drug and alcohol court developed by Camden, Islington and Westminster Councils to support families affected by substance misuse so that children can remain or return home

The Children and Families Strategy priorities and how other strategies link in

This strategy is part of a matrix of plans which sets the context to support and deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.

	SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM PRIORITIES			
	Children and Families Strategy 2011-15			
	Priority 1: Improving outcomes by 19 through outstanding health services, schools and children's centres	Priority 2: Ensuring play, youth and leisure opportunities for children and young people	Priority 3: Transforming early intervention and prevention support for vulnerable children and families	Priority 4: Ensuring children are safe at home, school and in the community
Islington Council Corporate Plan 2011-15 sets out what the council intends to do to improve life in Islington.	Best start in life for all children Healthy, active and independent lives	Best start in life for all children	Best start in life for all children Decent, suitable and affordable homes Cycle of poverty broken	Lower crime and anti-social behaviour Best start in life for all children
Islington Health Commissioning Strategy Plan 2009-14 sets out what the Clinical Commissioning Group intend to focus on to help Islington people be healthier and live longer, live independently and participate in society.	Goal 1: Improve the health of local people, especially targeting those with the worst health outcomes Goal 4: Improve and expand services delivered closer to home and commission acute and specialist hospitals to provide only those services that they do best	Goal 1: Improve the health of local people, especially targeting those with the worst health outcomes	Goal 1: Improve the health of local people, especially targeting those with the worst health outcomes Goal 3: Ensure people and services work together to design and deliver the best care pathways that are safe and clinically effective	Goal 3: Ensure people and services work together to design and deliver the best care pathways that are safe and clinically effective

SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM PRIORITIES				
Children and Families Strategy 2011-15				
	Priority 1: Improving outcomes by 19 through outstanding health services, schools and children's centres	Priority 2: Ensuring play, youth and leisure opportunities for children and young people	Priority 3: Transforming early intervention and prevention support for vulnerable children and families	Priority 4: Ensuring children are safe at home, school and in the community
<p>Islington Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2011-12 sets out what groups in Islington will work together on to keep children and young people safe from harm and neglect.</p>	<p>Core business Teenage parents Domestic violence Young people at risk</p>	<p>Core business Teenage parents Transition to adulthood Domestic violence Young people at risk</p>	<p>Core business Teenage parents Domestic violence</p>	<p>Core business Teenage parents Transition to adulthood Domestic violence Young people at risk</p>
<p>Islington's Core Strategy sets out what can be built in Islington, providing housing and employment spaces, response to climate change, and providing facilities for the community.</p>	<p>Promoting neighbourhoods that support a sense of wellbeing Maintaining the growth in employment by ensuring a broad range of opportunities exist for all types and sizes of businesses across all parts of Islington</p>	<p>Promoting neighbourhoods that support a sense of wellbeing Ensuring new development and the spaces around it provide a high quality environment that is accessible Delivering high quality, multi-functional green infrastructure alongside development throughout the borough</p>	<p>Tackling worklessness through training and employment initiatives Securing a supply of housing which encourages mixed communities Meeting and seeking to exceed the minimum regional targets for housing supply</p>	

Children and Families Board membership list

	Member name, position and organisation/network
Lead Member for Children's Services	Clr Richard Watts , Executive Member for Children and Young People, Islington Council
Corporate Director of Children's Services	Eleanor Schooling , Corporate Director of Children's Services, Islington Council
Health	Dr Katie Coleman , Children's Lead for the Islington Clinical Commissioning Consortium Phil Orwin , NHS North Central London Cluster, Borough Director for Islington (Interim)
Police – Borough Commander	Mike Wise , Borough Commander, Islington Police
Probation – Assistant Chief Officer	Adam Kerr , Assistant Chief Officer, London Probation
Maintained schools including special schools, Academies and Short Stay Schools / Pupil Referral Units	Jo Dibb , Head teacher, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Paul Formosa , School Governor (Alex Barros–Curtis – Alternate School Governor rep) Vacancy – Head teacher
Further Education	Keren Abse , Head of City and Islington Sixth Form College, City and Islington College
Jobcentre Plus	Sukhpal Grewal , Partnership Manager, Central London District, Jobcentre Plus
Community and Voluntary Sector	Denise Ward , Chair of the Islington Children and Young People's Community and Voluntary Sector Forum Anita Grant , Islington Play Association
Housing and Adults Services – Corporate Director of Housing and Adults Social Services	Sean McLaughlin , Corporate Director of Housing and Adult Social Services, Islington Council
Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board	Janet Mokades , Chair of the Islington Safeguarding Children Board
Community Health Provider – Whittington Community Health	Maggie Buckell , Service Director for Children's Community Health Services, Whittington Community Health
Child Poverty Strategy and Community Development – Director of Strategy and Partnerships	Louise Round , Corporate Director of Corporate Resources, Islington Council
Sure Start Children's Centres – Advisory Boards representative	Feride Baycan , IMECE Turkish Speaking Women's Group, Chair of Barnsbury Advisory Board