

# London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Early Years Education Strategy 2015 to 2018

Striving for Excellence – Sustaining Early Years Providers and Local Authority Partnerships



## Overarching objectives

- A place in a good or outstanding early years setting (school, preschool, day nursery or childminder) for every child
- Exceeding national standards and then London standards for achievement at the end of Foundation Stage



## 1. Foreword

In November 2014 Barking and Dagenham schools and the Council agreed their Education Strategy for 2014-2017. The two overarching objectives for education were then and still are for all our children and young people to have a place in a good or outstanding school or early years setting and for them to have the best possible life opportunities so that by the time they leave school they exceed national and then London averages as the benchmark. This early years education strategy has been designed to support and complement the overarching aims of the education strategy. It recognises the crucial role that this first phase of education plays in ensuring good and better outcomes for all children.

Fundamental to the achievements to date is the strong partnership between, schools, children's centres and early years providers and the Council. The Council has been at the forefront of children's centre development and has some of the best and most effective centres in the country. These children's centres have gained national recognition, not least for the contribution they have made to improving outcomes for children at the end of Foundation Stage.

Children's centres, schools and early years settings have played a crucial role in supporting families to understand the importance of the home learning environment to support their child's learning. Early intervention workers have been trained specifically to provide parents and carers support in language and communication development in the early years.

Early years settings and provider led partnerships with the Early Years Service are essential to ensuring a continued focus on improving provision and outcomes for the youngest children. The Early Years Service will continue to develop strong partnerships between settings, children's centres and providers so that expertise can be shared, leadership embedded and professional development for all practitioners supported.



The four principles guiding this new strategy are:

- a further raising of the expected standards and shared ambition for all the children who live here;
- a commitment to all early years settings and providers and a collective responsibility for all of the children in Barking and Dagenham;
- developing provision and sustaining and evaluating the partnership between early years settings/providers and the Council which has been a critical factor in the improved outcomes for children and young people;
- ensuring the pre-conditions for learning are in place through effective support for parents, early help and inclusive practices.

This Early Years Strategy links with and complements the Education Strategy and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Strategy. These documents are guided by the Council's Education Policy which reflects the Council's vision and priorities. The context of unprecedented increase in the school population is set out in the strategy for ensuring sufficient school/early years places reviewed and approved by Cabinet twice per year. Mobility across the school population and within early years is high. For example, in 2012, 384 disadvantaged 2 year olds were supported into accessing 15 hours of early education. This cohort of children was tracked to the end of the reception year. Only 300 remained in Barking and Dagenham schools. This represents a mobility level of nearly 25%.

Despite these levels of mobility, in 2015 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results were significant in that for the first time the borough was above the national average for headline performance for five year olds. This allows us to further raise the bar with the London average as our next milestone. This is in the context of the biggest population increase in the country with many of our families experiencing significant hardship.

Barking and Dagenham Council has a longstanding and steadfast commitment to early years. We know from the evidence that it is high quality provision and the people who work in the sector that make a big difference to young children's outcomes. Recognising that much has been achieved, some big challenges remain. Specifically the take up of early education places by 3 and 4 year olds remains significantly below national and London averages and the proportion of children exceeding the expected level of development at age 5 is not high enough.

It is well documented that, children who have access to high quality early years provision are more likely to achieve better than those children who have had no or poor quality early years experiences. These early years experiences are particularly important for developing early communication and language skills. This is why our focus on improving the quality of early years provision, the strong links with children's centres and improving the skills of the practitioners working in the sector is essential. Promoting and supporting high aspiration and ambition for our youngest children runs as a thread through the Council's vision and priorities which were renewed in July 2014. This new strategy reaffirms the Council's commitment to our youngest children, underlines its commitment to work in partnership with all early years' settings, schools, children's centres and providers in the borough and sets out the challenge for the coming three years.

**Councillor Evelyn Carpenter**  
**Cabinet Member for Education and Schools**



## Our Vision



The Council's vision and three priorities directly inform the Early Years Strategy.

**One borough; one community;  
London's growth opportunity**

## 2. Improvement priorities for 2015 to 2018

### i. Encouraging civic pride

Narrow the gap in attainment and realise high aspirations for every child

### ii. Enabling social responsibility

Ensure children and young people are well-educated and realise their potential

### iii. Growing the borough

Develop a local, skilled workforce and improve employment opportunities.

Our two overarching objectives for early years education:

- A place in a good or outstanding early years setting for every child
- Exceeding national standards and then London standards

### Nine priority areas for improvement:

To achieve these we must:

1. Work to improve standards in early reading, writing and mathematics by age 5;
2. Create sufficient high quality early education places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds;
3. Ensure the delivery of 30 hours of early education for eligible children
4. Improve the % of children taking up their early years education free entitlement to at least London levels of 96%;
5. Ensure that all settings (schools, day nurseries, pre schools and childminders) achieve a minimum of 'good' Ofsted outcome for overall effectiveness;
6. Ensure the early years workforce is fully trained in meeting the learning and development needs of the youngest children;
7. Ensure the Portage and Inclusion Services respond effectively and promptly to the rising demand of children with complex additional needs;
8. Continue to work creatively and flexibly to ensure that all young children with additional needs are identified early and appropriate interventions put in place;
9. Ensure the sustainability and viability of Private, Voluntary and Independent nurseries, pre schools and childminders through business management support.

This is achieved by:

- Strong and effective support for leaders in all early years settings;
- Appropriate challenge monitoring and targeted interventions by the Council's Early Years team;
- The training and development of qualified, reflective and skilled practitioners;
- Developing inclusive learning environments which allow young children, regardless of need, to play and learn with purpose and enthusiasm;
- Careful assessment and tracking of children's progress as a basis for high quality teaching in the early years;
- Strong partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals to ensure the best possible start for every child.







### 3. Key actions for early years' settings and the local authority for 2015 to 2018

Section 2 sets out areas where outcomes for young children need to improve. In order for this to happen, aspects of leadership and the quality of teaching and provision need to be strengthened where they are not yet good or outstanding.

The Council continues to support and deliver the statutory functions contained within the Childcare Act 2006 specifically :

- securing sufficient childcare for working families
- securing sufficient early education places for 2,3 and 4 year olds and managing the roll out of 30 hours of early education for eligible children
- providing information, advice and assistance to parents on the provision of childcare, early education and other services for children aged 0-5
- providing information, advice, training and support to childcare providers.

Key features of the context for improvement are set out below:

3.1 Early years non maintained settings are inspected generally on the same cycle as schools, although this cycle can be far more frequent if complaints are made to Ofsted by parents or the local authority. Since September 2014 early years provision within a maintained school has received a separate judgement for the overall effectiveness of the early years foundation stage.

In September 2015 the proportion of:

- EYFS provision in schools judged good or better (since September 2014) 87% (no national benchmark currently)
- Childminders judged good or better 80% (national 82% London 79%)
- Childcare on non domestic premises (children centre nurseries, pre schools and day nurseries) 80% (national 86% London 83%)
- All provision (excluding schools) 78% (national 82% London 79%)

Performance on this measure continues to improve steadily (September 2015), but remains below national and London averages for good or better settings. It is also below our commitment for all children to have a place in a good or outstanding early years setting.

3.2 The population of Barking and Dagenham continues to grow at probably the fastest rate in the country – twice the rate of London and four times national (2012 data). There are more babies per person in Barking and Dagenham than in any other local authority in Britain, with over a thousand more children entering reception than left to go to secondary school.

Approximately 1600 early education places in schools and Private, Voluntary and Independent early years settings were created between September 2007 and July 2015. There remains an acute shortage of places for disadvantaged 2 year olds. The Council had a target of providing 2055 free early education places for 2 year olds by September 2014. The Council has one of the best track records in London for the delivery and take up of places for 2 year olds. The provision of 30 hours of early education for children of working parents from 2017 will create additional pressure in an already stretched sector.



Alongside this rapid growth is a change in population which has become more mobile and far more diverse in origin. Many schools and settings have become adept at managing high levels of mobility and supporting children arriving from different countries throughout the year. What has not changed is the economic position - with the eighth highest level of child poverty nationally. In this context it is an achievement that performance for children on free school meals is amongst the strongest in the country.

3.3 The impact of the increasing demand on the Portage Service (200% increase in case load since 2010) and the substantial rise in the number of young children diagnosed with Speech and Language Delays and Disorders, coupled with the steep rise in numbers of children with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Condition has put immense pressure on all early years providers and settings. Schools and settings have responded very positively to these pressures by working closely with our SEN Advisory Teachers and the Portage Service to adapt provision so they are more able to meet the needs of children many with complex and enduring conditions.

3.4 Individual providers and schools are responsible for the quality of their own provision. The Early Years Service is responsible for overseeing quality in Private, Voluntary and Independent early years settings and for supporting improvement in all aspects of the settings' work. There is a particular responsibility to ensure that the public funded provision for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds is of the highest quality. This important relationship underpins our strategy and is linked to the legal duty placed upon Local Authorities to secure sufficient and accessible high quality childcare places as directed in the Childcare Act (2006).

Leadership and management of early years provision within schools and children's centre nurseries is becoming stronger and more focussed on improvement. However some settings have weaker management and this impacts on progress and outcomes for children.

Staff turnover in both sectors is high and schools and providers report difficulties in attracting high quality experienced practitioners.

The Council and early years settings in partnership are working collectively to secure and develop cultural, creative, and sporting and health opportunities for our children. Children and settings have been participating in initiatives around music, drama, art and fitness and health.

Key actions for early years settings and the local authority are set out below against our two overarching objectives. The actions address the eight priority areas for improvement, within our context of rapid growth, demographic, change, ambition and aspiration for all our young children. An interim review of progress is scheduled for Spring 2017.





## 1. A place in a good or outstanding early years setting for every child

### Priority actions:

1. Ensure there are sufficient, sustainable high quality early education places for eligible 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds in a range of settings to meet parental needs and expectations.
2. Ensure that all early years settings are judged at least good for their overall effectiveness by Ofsted focussing particularly on improving leadership and management where this is not yet good.
3. Improve the proportion of early years settings that are outstanding. (April 2015 8% in Barking and Dagenham against a national of 12% and London of 10%. The first milestone is to reach London and then national levels.
4. Continue to commission and deliver high quality training to meet the needs of all early years practitioners particularly with a focus on Literacy and mathematics.
5. Ensure parents have access to clear and impartial advice through the Family Information Service.





## 2. Exceeding national standards and then London standards

Priority actions:

1. Ensure that results at the end of Foundation stage are at least at national levels and in line with London standards.
2. Implement and manage the Early Years Pupil Premium to maximise its impact on young children's development.
3. Support the introduction of the forthcoming Reception Baseline assessment to get an accurate reflection of attainment on entry to reception.
4. Ensure that children with additional and complex needs are identified supported within their local setting as far as possible.
5. Ensure the Portage and Inclusion Services respond effectively and appropriately to children with complex needs and their families.





## 4. Ten key facts about early years in the borough

1. Barking and Dagenham is home to 61,000 children and young people of whom 22,000, 33% are under 5 years of age.
2. The borough is experiencing one of the fastest rising birth rates in the country. In September 2013, one thousand more children entered Reception than left Year 6 to go to secondary school. Our projected forecasts are that the combined primary and secondary populations (Year R to Year 11) will grow by around 10,000 over the coming years to 2017/18.
3. 45% of all reception aged children in Barking and Dagenham do not hold English as a first language. The average for England is 18%.
4. Approximately one in three children (34%) in Barking and Dagenham is born into poverty, higher than the national average of one in five.
5. There are 13 children's centre nurseries, 27 day nurseries, 23 pre-schools, 142 child minders, and 39 schools offering the early years foundation stage. There are 8 children's centre and nurseries co-located with schools sharing some facilities.
6. 90% of 3 and 4 year olds attend an early years setting. This is significantly lower than both national and London levels of take up.
7. In 2014 Barking and Dagenham was ranked 70 out of 152 local authorities for attainment at age 5, with 60% of children achieving a good level of development. However, the proportion of children exceeding expected levels is below national.
8. In 2014 53% of children in reception class eligible for free school meals achieved a good level of development at the end of Foundation Stage compared to 45% nationally.
9. 55% of White British children achieved a good level of development at the end of Foundation Stage compared to 62% nationally.
10. As of September 2015, Barking and Dagenham has a delivery target of up to 2,055 places for disadvantaged 2 year olds.



## Appendix 1 - Accredited Register of Excellent Practice

Name of setting/provider	Area of excellence	Evidence
<b>Schools</b>		
St. Teresa's Catholic School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement</li> <li>• Quality of rich provision which support learning and development</li> <li>• Enabling environment</li> <li>• Involvement and participation in LA initiative, i.e. Active Start Dance programme</li> </ul>	Outstanding Ofsted Inspection report
Thames View Infant School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement and progress in early years</li> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Behaviour and Safety</li> <li>• Leadership and Management</li> </ul>	Outstanding Inspection report
Furze Infant School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Provision</li> </ul>	Consistently high % of children achieving Good Level of Development
Godwin Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching of early phonics</li> </ul>	Observations of sessions Hosted visits for other schools
Beam Primary School Marsh Green Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching of early reading</li> </ul>	High EYFSP scores in reading
Five Elms Primary School St Margaret's Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for the application of writing</li> </ul>	High EYFSP scores in writing
Ripple Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching and learning environments and impact on children's progress</li> </ul>	Independent observations and reviews
Valence Primary School Richard Alibon Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching of mathematics</li> </ul>	High EYFSP scores in mathematics
Dorothy Barley Infants School James Cambell Primary School Grafton Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor learning environment</li> </ul>	Observations, Ofsted report and impact on children's learning
Roding Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent participation in tackling obesity</li> </ul>	Active Start Dance Programme

# Appendix 1

Name of setting/provider	Area of excellence	Evidence
<b>Inclusion and SEN support in early years</b>		
John Perry Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing training and modelling in the EYFS for children with complex social and communication needs</li> </ul>	Inclusion Advisor Judgements
Rush Green Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly TA workshops</li> <li>Ongoing training and modelling in the EYFS for children with complex social and communication needs.</li> </ul>	Inclusion Advisor Judgements
Valence Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEN including training for support staff and provision for children with complex needs</li> <li>Working with other schools staff exchange project</li> </ul>	Inclusion Advisor visits and sharing practice to other settings
<b>Pre schools</b>		
Alamiyah Pre-school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning Environment</li> <li>Inclusion</li> <li>Children's progress</li> </ul>	Outstanding Ofsted report Early years observations
Buttercups Pre-school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's well-being</li> <li>Inclusion</li> <li>Partnership with parents</li> </ul>	Ofsted report Early years observations
Becontree CC Pre-school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Session pre-school with strong parent partnership</li> <li>Inclusion</li> </ul>	Ofsted report Early years observations
St Chad's Pre School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion</li> <li>Parent partnership</li> <li>Learning Environment</li> <li>Leadership and Management</li> </ul>	Outstanding Ofsted report Early years observations



Name of setting/provider	Area of excellence	Evidence
<b>Children's Centre Nurseries</b>		
Abbey Children's Centre Nursery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership and management</li> <li>• Learning Environment</li> <li>• Inclusion</li> </ul>	Ofsted report Early years observations Host setting
Chestnut Nursery @ Gascoigne Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of teaching</li> <li>• Learning Environment</li> </ul>	Ofsted report Early years observations Host setting
Chestnut Nursery @ Sue Bramley Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of teaching</li> <li>• Learning Environment</li> <li>• Inclusion</li> <li>• Parent partnership</li> </ul>	Ofsted report Early years observations Host setting
London Early Years Foundation Ford Road Children's Centre Nursery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion</li> <li>• Outdoor provision</li> <li>• Teaching and Learning</li> </ul>	Ofsted report Early years observations Host setting
London Early Years Foundation Furze Children's Centre Nursery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent partnership</li> <li>• Learning Environment</li> <li>• Outcomes for children</li> <li>• Provision for babies</li> </ul>	Ofsted report Early years observations Host setting
Playaway @ Becontree Children's Centre Nursery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning environment</li> <li>• Outcomes for children</li> <li>• Inclusion</li> </ul>	Ofsted report Early Years observations Host setting
<b>Day Nurseries</b>		
Barney Bears Barking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Partnership</li> <li>• Leadership and Management</li> <li>• Inclusion</li> </ul>	Ofsted report EYAT observations
<b>Childminders</b>		
10 outstanding childminders For further information contact the Family Information Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Partnership</li> <li>• Provision and support of children with SEND</li> <li>• Enabling Environment</li> <li>• Outdoor Provision</li> <li>• Children's Wellbeing</li> <li>• Inclusion</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> </ul>	Outstanding Inspection reports
4 good and outstanding childminders involved in the making of LBBB promotional Video Available on the Family Information website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor provision</li> <li>• Wellbeing and Safety</li> <li>• Professionalism</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Quality interaction</li> </ul>	Participation in LBBB promotional DVD

## Appendix 2 - Early Years led partnerships and collaborations

<b>Commissioned partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London Early Years Foundation</li> <li>• Chestnut Nursery Schools</li> <li>• Playaway Nurseries</li> <li>• Harmony House</li> <li>• Pre-School Learning Alliance</li> <li>• Sycamore Trust</li> <li>• Carers of Barking and Dagenham</li> </ul>
<b>Non commissioned partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Park Rangers</li> <li>• Portage and Inclusion</li> <li>• Health Visitors</li> <li>• Speech &amp; Language Therapy</li> </ul>
<b>Sharing good practice forums</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heads of Early Years meeting (Pan London)</li> <li>• Daycare managers forum</li> <li>• Pre-school managers forum</li> <li>• Out of school alliance</li> <li>• Regional Quality Improvement Network</li> <li>• Development workers forum (cross borough)</li> <li>• Cross Borough EYFSP moderation</li> <li>• Foundation Stage Coordinators</li> </ul>
<b>Private Voluntary and Independent Childcare Providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day nurseries</li> <li>• Pre-schools</li> <li>• Out of school clubs</li> <li>• Childminders</li> </ul>
<b>Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant schools</li> <li>• Primary schools</li> </ul>
<b>Training Providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HSHTC-First Aid and Food Hygiene</li> <li>• iFast-Fire Safety</li> <li>• Donna Brown-Safeguarding</li> <li>• SMART Training-NVQ qualifications</li> <li>• PACEY (childminders)</li> </ul>
<b>Children's Centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abbey</li> <li>• Becontree</li> <li>• Eastbury</li> <li>• Gascoigne</li> <li>• Leys</li> <li>• Marks Gate</li> <li>• Sue Bramley</li> <li>• William Bellamy</li> </ul>



## Appendix 3 - Collaborative Projects within Early Years

### Early Years Music-Sound Connections

- Furze Children's Centre Nursery
- Marks Gate Children's Centre Nursery
- Abbey Children's Centre Nursery
- Eastbury Children's Centre Nursery
- Leys Children's Centre Nursery
- Ford Road Children's Centre Nursery
- Henry Green Primary-nursery and reception

### Active Start Dance Programme

- Godwin Primary
- Grafton Primary
- John Perry Primary
- Monteagle Primary
- Parsloes Primary
- Richard Alibon Primary
- Roding Primary
- St. Teresa's Catholic School
- William Bellamy Primary

### Boys Writing Project (schools only)

- Beam Primary
- Godwin Primary
- Leys Primary
- Richard Alibon Primary
- Roding Primary
- Rush Green Primary
- Southwood Primary

### Cultural Passport Initiative (PVI settings only)

- Abelle Pre School
- Abbey Pre School
- Beacon Pre School
- Becontree Pre School
- Cornerstone Pre School
- Cheeky Cherubs Pre School
- Quality Kids Pre School
- St Chad's Pre School
- St Mark's Pre School
- Tenacious Pre School
- Sydney Russell Pre School
- Greatfields Day Nursery
- The Glory Day Nursery
- Westbury Day Nursery

### Sharing Inclusive Practice

- Trinity
- Valence NARP
- St Peter's ARP

### Supporting SEND Transition

- Working with all Early Years Settings and the Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA) to identify children who require a supportive transition into school nursery or reception.
- Identifying children in early years setting, with the most complex needs and supporting settings to request EHC assessment.
- Working with school admission to identify schools that are due to admit a high percentage of children with complex needs.

### Joint working with Speech and Language Therapy

- Valence Primary School
- Village Infants School
- Marks Gate Primary School
- Five Elms Primary School
- John Perry Primary School

### Training to support children with complex social and communication needs

- Training for all early years settings and parents provided jointly by Speech and Language Therapy, Portage and Advisory Teachers

### Future Collaborations

- Links with Health Visiting Teams to pilot joint integrated 2 year old review at Marks Gate Children's Centre Day Nursery and Health Centre and Sue Bramley Children's Centre Day Nursery and Health Centre
- Termly support group for Teaching Assistants working with children who have complex social and communication needs – led jointly with Speech and Language Therapy
- 2015-16, 60 hours of outreach time from Lead Professional for speech and language at Valence School to support EYFS in schools
- 2015-16, training sessions for school staff on teaching numeracy to children with complex social and communication needs in Reception. Supported by St Peter's ARP and Trinity.
- New SEND training modules in line with the SEND code of practice 2014 and reflecting the LBBB Education Health and Care pathway.

## Appendix 4 - Sufficiency Strategy September 2015. To be reviewed and refreshed in September 2017.

### Introduction

The Childcare Sufficiency Strategy builds on the council's vision:

### One borough; one community; London's Growth Opportunity

It also forms part of the local authority's pledge to eradicate child poverty by providing good quality childcare that supports parents to take up or stay in employment or training. Accessing good quality childcare also supports children's cognitive and social development and can help raise their attainment and aspirations.

### Aims

To provide childcare that is sufficient in terms of quality, accessibility, inclusivity, flexibility, sustainability and affordability to meet the needs of parents in the local authority area.

### National context

The Childcare Act 2006 outlines the legal responsibility of local authorities to firstly assess and secondly secure sufficient childcare within their local area and be the strategic leader in facilitating the childcare market.

The act particularly focuses on facilitating good quality, sufficient, sustainable, accessible and flexible childcare that is responsive to parental needs. This is to be achieved in partnership with the Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector.

A short sufficiency assessment must be presented annually to members. This assessment enables local authorities to fulfil their duty under section 6 of the Childcare Act – to secure sufficient childcare.

The assessment has been published and will underpin local authority planning as outlined below.

### Purpose of childcare sufficiency assessment

The aim of the assessment is to identify gaps in the childcare market and plan how to address these. Needs of working parents have been considered and so will the need for free early education places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

Sufficiency is defined as meeting the needs of local parents who require childcare in order to enable them to take up or remain in work or undertake training or education that will lead to work. There is a particular emphasis on providing sufficient childcare for tax credits claimants and families with children with additional needs.

The Childcare Act 2006 stipulates that local authorities are not expected to deliver childcare, but need to act as a market facilitator in providing support across childcare sectors to achieve sufficiency.

### Affordability

The average prices for childcare in Barking and Dagenham are within the Government's guidelines for affordable childcare. However, day nursery fees are now closer to some inner London averages. Many Barking and Dagenham families earn below national income levels and should therefore qualify for support through the tax credit system. The take up of the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit in Barking and Dagenham is above the England average and has increased year on year for the last 3 years. Although the prices of some types of childcare in Barking and Dagenham are lower than those recorded for outer London, parents are still referring to cost as a main barrier to accessing formal childcare. Prices for holiday provision for school aged children are higher in Barking and Dagenham than outer London averages.

We will:

1. Further promote the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit in partnership with key partners and childcare providers.
2. Ensure the delivery of the free entitlement of 15 hours early education for all 3 and 4 year olds whose parents require it.
3. Work towards the implementation of 30 hours of free early education for eligible 3 and 4 year olds by September 2017.
4. Continue to mainstream the 2 year old offer by September 2015 in line with government legislation. From 2012 onwards we have been increasing capacity within providers to meet the increased expectation of the 2 year old offer. Currently we offer 1500 places to disadvantaged 2 year olds. This will increase steadily through out 2015-2016 to meet our expected target of 2055 places.

### **Suitability/accessibility/inclusion**

Childcare services for children under 5 were assessed to be accessible to children with additional needs. However, the level of accessibility in out of school provision in the borough was lower and more parents of children with additional needs felt that staff and premises were not suitable for their children or were unable to cater for the particular needs of their children.

We will:

1. Continue to support specialist childminders to cater for children with additional needs.
2. Continue to run a resource library to support out of school settings in providing an inclusive environment.
3. Provide training, mentoring and inclusion support for out of school childcare providers.
4. Commission the Pre School Learning Alliance to provide an Inclusion Adviser to support out of school clubs to ensure the inclusion of children with additional and complex needs.
5. Provide limited funding for out of school clubs to buy in additional staffing if deemed necessary to support children with additional and complex needs.

### **Time and flexibility**

Childcare provision for children under 5 is typically open from 7.30am or 8am to 6pm or 6.30 pm Monday to Friday. In many childcare settings, times are flexible and no major need for further flexibility or different times of operation for this age group has been expressed.

Childcare provision for children aged 5-14 (18 with additional needs) is usually open between 3pm and 6pm or 6.30pm. During holidays this provision is available between 8am and 6pm or 6.30pm. When consulting children in this age range on the times that they attend out of school care, it was evident that they were satisfied with the time spent in out of school care. Some children even stated that they wanted to spend more time at their out of school provision than they do currently.

A small percentage of parents stated that they would like to use childcare before 8am and after 6pm, but the majority of surveyed parents are either using or wanting to use childcare between 8am and 6pm.

We will:

1. Continue to raise the profile of childminding to meet needs of parents wanting to use childcare during unsocial hours such as evenings and weekends.

### **Age range**

It is evident that there are low levels of childcare for all age groups compared to outer London figures. However, there are some vacancies in provision across the borough. There is an acute shortage of places for funded 2 year olds.

Day nurseries continue to be more flexible with their offer of the free entitlement. Currently we can meet the demand for 3 and 4 year old places within school nurseries and non maintained settings. However, with the increased need for places to meet the 2 year old offer and the increase to 30 hours for eligible 3 and 4 year olds pressure could be placed on the availability of places. Currently 2 year old places are not offered in schools so all demand for this age group has to be met from the non maintained sector.

We will:

1. Support settings to be more flexible to encourage development of free early education places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.
2. Support development of new childcare places for funded 2 year olds.
3. Support schools to commence delivery of places for 2 year olds.
4. Prepare for 30 hours of early education for 3 and 4 year olds.

### **Type**

When asking parents about the type of childcare they would like to use, pre-school provision was the most popular option with home based childcare (child-minders) being the least popular option.

Generally, the availability of pre-school provision is low, which means that the need for this type of provision may not be met.

We will:

1. Work with potential providers to encourage development of pre-school places.
2. Raise profile of childminding by publicising good news stories and promote the council's childminding film.



## Appendix 4

### Location and place creation

All wards have childcare in the form of group care and/or childcare provided by childminders. Provision is available for 0-14s in every ward in the borough. However, a number of wards have gaps in provision for funded 2 year olds. These include Heath, Abbey and Gascoigne.

We will:

1. Support development of new childcare places for funded 2 year olds in the wards of need.
2. Open new provision at Arden House in Longbridge ward (opened Septemebr 2014).
3. Open new provision at Halbutt Street in Heath ward (opened September).
4. Open new provision at the old Markyate Library in Markkyate ward (opened June 2015).
5. Work with schools with vacancies in nursery classes to admit 2 year olds.

### Level of provision

Levels of childcare provision are in line with outer London average across the borough. However, there is still spare capacity of childcare across most age ranges. The recession has increased our vacancy rates. All types of providers report their vacancy rates to us quarterly. The last recorded quarter (July 2015 to September 2015) showed very high vacancy rates with childminders, out of school clubs and holiday provision. There were much lower vacancy rates in pre schools and day nurseries. However this quarter is traditionally when we see the lowest vacancy rates.

We will:

1. Support development of early education places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds across all localities.

### Sustainability

With lower than outer London average prices, childcare providers in Barking and Dagenham have a lower turnover than providers in other outer London areas. The majority of childcare providers mentioned that the levels of fees they charge do allow them to be sustainable. Factors that affect sustainability mentioned were high running costs such as premises costs, utility costs and high staff costs. Some providers feel they cannot charge higher fees for fear of losing business. However, some day nurseries charge £225 per week and still maintain low vacancy rates. These nurseries tend to be in the children's centres and provide extremely high standards of early education and care. Many parents continue to put quality first above cost.

We will:

1. Maintain a sufficiency and sustainability officer to work with childcare providers to ensure low reliance on council funding.
2. Ensure that all childcare provisions work to a SMART business plan which is submitted to the local authority.
3. Further develop business training and support for childcare providers including childminders.
4. Work closely with potential providers to ensure they have done adequate market research and understand the costs of opening a childcare provision.

### **Quality**

Ofsted inspection grades show significant improvement in the percentage of settings rated good or above by Ofsted. As of September 2015 80% of group provision is rated good or above and 80% of childminders good or above. Outstanding and good inspection results are lower in some provider types in Barking and Dagenham than the national averages. This is an area for improvement.

When looking for childcare, parents/carers sited quality as the most important factor when choosing childcare. Poor quality was also one of the main reasons stated by parents when saying that their childcare needs were not being met.

We will:

1. Undertake continuous monitoring of quality via Ofsted inspection ratings ensuring that all settings in the borough are of good quality.
2. Work towards ensuring that ultimately all settings are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.
3. Provide continuous delivery of common core training to raise quality standards.
4. Deliver regular in house training on the Early Years Foundation Stage.
5. Develop a training programme to promote quality in out of school provision.
6. Continue to raise the qualification level of the childcare workforce and develop pathways into childcare.
7. Provide curriculum support for settings and accredited childminders by advisory teachers.

### **Awareness**

Lack of awareness of childcare services is reducing. We have worked more closely with health services, children's centres and children's social care to ensure those agencies are promoting the free entitlement in particular to the families they come into contact with. The Family Information Service (FIS) continues to broker childcare support, supporting parents with information about childcare costs, types of provision and what to look for when they visit providers to choose childcare.

We will:

1. Continue to refine and enhance brokerage service provided by the Family Information Service.
2. Continue to develop and implement the family services directory making sure it links to other areas of the website.
3. Refine and improve the website. Statistics show us that increasing numbers of parents looking for childcare use the website. We will ensure that the Family Information Service presence on the new borough website is of high quality.



## London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Early Years Education Strategy **2014 to 2017**

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