

Public Document Pack

MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	Wednesday 19 October 2022
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall
PUBLIC WEB LINK:	https://barnsley.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcasts

AGENDA

1. Declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests
2. Leader - Call-in of Cabinet decisions

Minutes

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 October 2022 (Cab.19.10.2022/3)
(Pages 3 - 4)

Items for Noting

4. Decisions of Cabinet Spokespersons (Cab.19.10.2022/4)

Petitions

5. Petitions received under Standing Order 44 (Cab.19.10.2022/5)

Items for Decision/Recommendation to Council

Children's Spokesperson

6. Children and Young People's Early Help Strategy (2022-27) (Cab.19.10.2022/6)
(Pages 5 - 42)
7. Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the Multi-agency response to the identification of initial need and risk among vulnerable children: Draft Written Statement of Action (Cab.19.10.2022/7) (Pages 43 - 58)

Core Services Spokesperson

8. Barnsley Council Annual Customer Complaints and Compliments Report - April 2021 to March 2022 (Cab.19.10.2022/8) (Pages 59 - 102)
9. Household Support Grant - October 2022 to March 2023 (Cab.19.10.2022/9)
(Pages 103 - 114)

Regeneration and Culture Spokesperson

10. Affordable Warmth Charter (Cab.19.10.2022/10) (Pages 115 - 126)
11. Exclusion of Public and Press
It is likely that the public and press will be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the items so marked because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the specific paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the

Local Government Act 1972 as amended, subject to the public interest test.

Regeneration and Culture Spokesperson

12. Barnsley Property Investment Fund 3 - Scheme Approval (Cab.19.10.2022/12)
(Pages 127 - 136)

Reason restricted:

Paragraph (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

13. Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund - Wave 2.1 Proposal (Cab.19.10.2022/13)
(Pages 137 - 142)

Reason restricted:

Paragraph (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

To: Chair and Members of Cabinet:-

Councillors Houghton CBE (Chair), T. Cave, Frost, Gardiner, Higginbottom, Howard, Lamb, Makinson and Platts

Cabinet Support Members:

Councillors Cain, Cherryholme, Eastwood, Franklin, Newing, Osborne and Risebury

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chair of Audit Committee

Sarah Norman, Chief Executive

Carly Speechley, Executive Director Children's Services

Wendy Lowder, Executive Director Place Health and Adult Social Care for Barnsley

Shokat Lal, Executive Director Core Services

Matt O'Neill, Executive Director Growth and Sustainability

Julia Burrows, Executive Director Public Health and Communities

Neil Copley, Service Director Financial Services (Section 151 Officer)

Sukdave Ghuman, Service Director Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Michael Potter, Service Director Business Improvement, HR and Communications

Katie Rogers, Head of Communications and Marketing

Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officer

Jason Field, Head of Legal Services (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Corporate Communications and Marketing

Please contact Sukdave Ghuman by email governance@barnsley.gov.uk

Tuesday 11 October 2022



MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	Wednesday 5 October 2022
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present Councillors Houghton CBE (Chair), T. Cave, Frost, Gardiner, Higginbottom, Makinson and Platts

Members in Attendance: Councillors Cain, Cherryholme, Franklin and Osborne

91. Declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests.

92. Leader - Call-in of Cabinet decisions

The Leader reported that no decisions from the previous meeting held on 21 September 2022 had been called in.

93. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 September 2022 (Cab.5.10.2022/3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2022 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

94. Decisions of Cabinet Spokespersons (Cab.5.10.2022/4)

The Record of Decisions taken by Cabinet Spokespersons under delegated powers during the week ending 16 September 2022 was noted.

95. Petitions received under Standing Order 44 (Cab.5.10.2022/5)

It was reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 44.

96. Station Road and Woolley Colliery Road, Darton, Barnsley: Introduction of prohibition of motor vehicles and prohibition of waiting at any time (Cab.5.10.2022/6)

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

1. Overrules the objections received for the reasons set out in the report, and ensures objectors are informed accordingly; and
2. Authorises the Head of Highways and Engineering and the Executive Director, Core Services and Solicitor to the Council to make and implement the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) as originally published.

97. Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items, because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as described by the specific paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, as follows:-

<u>Item Number</u>	<u>Type of Information Likely to be Disclosed</u>
8	Paragraph 3
10	Paragraph 3

98. Re-Commissioning of the Adult Community Support and Enablement Services (ACSES) Framework (Cab.5.10.2022/8)

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

1. Approves plans to re-commission the Adult Community Support and Enablement Services (ACSES) Framework following consideration of the financial implications highlighted in section 3.1 of the report;
2. Approves the direct award of existing care packages to the incumbent providers if their tender is successful; therefore, these packages are not subject to competition. As advised by Legal Services, this is achievable based on the Council's obligations under the Care Act to promote wellbeing when carrying out any care or support functions in respect of a person;
3. Notes the complexities of the original TUPE transfer and associated on-costs, the options and risks considered in section 2.6 of the report; and
4. Approves option 2 to continue to pay an enhanced rate associated with services outsourced to the independent sector based on the vulnerability in the care market, including the financial pressures on this sector and risks associated with capacity and demand.

99. Barnsley's Health and Care Plan and Disposal of Council Asset (Cab.5.10.2022/10)

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

1. Authorises the acceptance of the surrender of the existing lease of the named asset;
2. Authorises the freehold sale of the asset as laid out in the report; and
3. Authorises the Council to take a lease back of space required for other service delivery as mapped out in the report.

.....
Chair

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

TITLE: Children and Young People's Early Help Strategy (2022-2027)

REPORT TO:	CABINET
Date of Meeting	19 October 2022
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Children's Services
Key Decision	Yes
Public or Private	Public

Purpose of report

To gain approval to launch the newly developed Early Help Strategy in relation to Children, Young People and Families. This strategy replaces the children's element of the expired All Age Early Help Strategy. A separate Early Help Strategy for Adults has been developed in relation to adult early help services

Council Plan priority

Healthy Barnsley & Learning Barnsley priorities are supported by this strategy, and this is outlined within the body of the strategy document

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 1. Note the contents of the Children & Young People's Early Help Strategy**
- 2. Endorse the strategy and its publication via the Council Website**
- 3. Support governance arrangements for the delivery of the strategy through community based Early Help Delivery groups within localities.**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Children and Young People's Early Help Strategy 2022–2027 for Barnsley sets out the long-term vision and priorities where we, our partners and communities will continue to work together to deliver the best outcomes for all children and young people within the borough.
- 1.2 This strategy provides the foundations for Barnsley's future, supporting our recovery from COVID-19 and building our borough back better, fairer and more inclusive. Working towards Barnsley being the place of possibilities.
- 1.3 Our early help offer for Children, Young People and Families is critical in identifying emerging needs and bringing together multi-agency support to respond effectively and creatively during times of need, as was seen during the Covid19 pandemic and associated lockdown.
- 1.4 The learning from these experiences will help us to shape and influence our ongoing practice across the Children and Young People's Trust alongside key developments such as the implementation of Family Hubs, Best Start for Life, Reducing Parental Conflict, our Hidden Harm Strategy, the Healthy Child Programme, expansion of the Supporting Families programme and the independent review of Children's Social Care (undertaken by Josh MacAlister).
- 1.5 The strategy identifies three broad strategic priorities which are:
 - The right help, in the right place at the right time
 - A whole system approach to early help with strong partnership working and system leadership
 - Empowering local people and communities to build capacity and resilience, helping people and communities to do more for themselves
- 1.6 This strategy and approach will underpin Barnsley's commitment to making the town the 'Place of Possibilities' and its success is reliant on the effort and commitment of all partners, including our children and families.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 That cabinet accept and endorse the Early Help Strategy: Children & Young People

4. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

3.1 Financial and Risk

- 3.1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from consideration and endorsement of the attached Early Help Strategy for Children and Young People. The Strategy provides the overarching commitment to work across the children's system to support families at the earliest opportunity.

3.1.2 In terms of scope, it covers the range of activities / functions delivered through the Early Start & Family Centres (including Early Help Assessments) and Targeted Youth Support services in Children Services. The strategy is set against the backdrop of significant national policy drivers and proposed investments in relation to Family Hubs and the Start for Life Programme, expansion of the Supported Families programme and recommendations detailed in the Josh MacAlister's Independent Review of Children Social Care report.

3.2 Legal

There are no legal implications

3.3 Equality

Full Equality Impact Assessment completed

3.4 Sustainability

There are no implications for sustainability in the Borough emerging through consideration of the draft Strategy

3.5 Employee

No Implications for employees

3.6 Communications

Communication team has been consulted and is supporting promotion through existing campaigns

4. CONSULTATION

Consultation has taken place as follows:

- multi agency partners identified their key priorities and challenges within a joint TEG/Barnsley Safeguarding partnership workshop in Autumn 2021
- Consultation with members of the Barnsley Youth Forum, Care4Us Council and SEND Youth Forum which is detailed within the body of the strategy
- Consultation was also undertaken with parents/carers through Family centre groups
- The draft strategy was then circulated and opportunities extended to partner agencies across the children and adults early help system to provide feedback and comments

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Not applicable

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Strategy has been developed to replace the Borough's previous All Age Early Help Strategy. It is important that there is a strategy in place which pulls together key work priorities and provides a common understanding of the collective response to early identification and intervention across the early help system to drive developments forward positively. This will then support the development of a multi-agency delivery plan which will allow oversight of progress against implementation of the strategic priorities across the children's partnership.

7. GLOSSARY

TEG: Barnsley Children and Young People's Trust Executive Group (TEG)

SEND: Children and young people with special educational needs including a disability or SEND

8. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Early Help Strategy: Children & Young People

Appendix 2: Equality impact assessment

Appendix 3: Terms of Reference of the Borough Community Early Help Delivery Group

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email governance@barnsley.gov.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made

10. REPORT SIGN OFF

Financial consultation & sign off	Senior Financial Services officer consulted and date Joshua Amahwe (07/09/22)
Legal consultation & sign off	Legal Services officer consulted and date Jason Field 02/09/22

Report Author: Claire Gilmore

Post: Head of Early Start Prevention and Sufficiency

Children and Young People's Early Help Strategy 2022 - 2027



Barnsley – the place
of possibilities.



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Introduction

The Children and Young People’s Early Help Strategy 2022–2027 for Barnsley sets out the long-term vision and priorities where we, our partners and communities will continue to work together to deliver the best outcomes for all children and young people within the borough. This strategy provides the foundations for Barnsley’s future, supporting our recovery from COVID-19 and building our borough back better, fairer, and more inclusive. Working towards Barnsley being the place of possibilities.

Resources are reducing, and demand for services is increasing. It is therefore important that, as we work through our journey to recover from the current pandemic, we work together and pool our resources to make sure people in our communities get the right support, at the right time, in the right place as early as possible.

Early Help is our approach to providing support to children, young people and their families as soon as problems start to emerge or when it’s likely there’ll be problems in the future.

The Children and Young People’s Early Help Strategy will bring together a range of public, private, voluntary, community and social enterprise partners to maximise capacity and build resilience. It will promote collective ownership and accountability for the delivery of our vision, priorities and outcomes. The strategy sets out our strategic priorities and approach to make sure Early Help is understood, accessible and firmly embedded within working practices.

Barnsley’s Early Help approach focuses on reframing the relationship with our communities, developing resilience and empowering children, young people and families ensuring that our work is led by their voice. This approach is crucial in improving outcomes for children and young people and their families as well as managing demand and cost pressures.

Our Early Help offer is critical in identifying emerging needs and bringing together multi-agency support to respond effectively and creatively during times of need, as was seen during the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdown. The learning from these experiences will help us to shape and influence our ongoing practice across the partnership alongside key developments such as the implementation of Family Hubs, Best Start for Life, Reducing Parental Conflict, our Hidden Harm Strategy, the Healthy Child Programme, expansion of the Supporting Families programme and the independent review of Children’s Social Care (undertaken by Josh MacAlister).

This strategy and approach will underpin Barnsley’s commitment to making the town the place of possibilities, and its success is reliant on the effort and commitment of all partners, including our children and families. We look forward to working with you to make sure that children and families in Barnsley receive the help they need as soon as they need it and guarantee that everyone can reach their full potential.



Carly Speechley,
Executive Director for Children’s Services



Cllr Trevor Cave,
Cabinet Spokesperson for Children’s Services

2022-27 Strategy evolution

Our previous strategy (All Age Early Help Strategy) helped us to identify the things we could do to best improve outcomes for the community of Barnsley. The strategy supported us to ensure that Early Help is everyone's responsibility, ensuring that there was no 'wrong door' addressing root cause and building resilience within in our communities.

During the pandemic we have seen an increase in the demand and pressure on children's services within both Early Help and statutory children's services. Our strategy for the next five years builds on the outcomes achieved through our previous strategy and the strong foundations laid, taking into account the context shaped by the pandemic and national strategy which raises still further our ambitions for children and young people.

The Early Help Strategy: Children and Young People outlines the next phase in our delivery of Early Help and provides our high-level shared vision, outcomes, and priorities for Barnsley. It reflects the **Barnsley 2030 vision**: 'Barnsley – the place of possibilities', and its ambitions within the scope of providing Early Help and developing resilient communities.

Its success is bound by all communities and partners working in collaboration to make the borough the best place that it can be in respect of Early Help and prevention for children and young people.

Early Help is an approach that is about making sure that through early identification, we can provide the **right support in the right place at the right time**. It's about guaranteeing that children, young people, adults, families and communities are self-aware, able to identify when they need support and access appropriate services to meet their needs.

Central to our Early Help approach is the understanding that **Early Help is everyone's responsibility**. We all need to work together to support the early identification of people who would benefit from Early Help and participate in a coordinated early assessment of needs and development of a tailored support plan to help improve their outcomes. This is about adopting a **whole system approach with strong partnership working and system leadership** support as the key building blocks, which includes awareness raising with others who may come into contact with adults or children through their job roles, who may not see their role as operating within the early help system.

Early Help is about giving people the help they need as early as possible and supporting children, young people and their families to do more for themselves. Help may be required at any point in someone's life and can involve interventions early on in life and early in the development of a problem. This is about **empowering local people and communities to build capacity and resilience** to do more for themselves.



This strategy delivers against the Barnsley 2030 plan ambitions with a specific focus on delivering against 'Healthy', 'Learning' and 'Growing' themes:

- Everyone is able to enjoy a life in good physical and mental health
- Fewer people live in poverty, and everyone has the resources they need to look after themselves and their families
- People can access the right support, at the right time and place and are able to tackle problems early
- Our diverse communities are welcoming, supportive and resilient
- Children and young people aim high and achieve their full potential with improved educational achievement and attainment
- Everyone has the opportunity to create wider social connections and enjoy cultural experiences
- Lifelong learning is promoted and encouraged, with an increase in opportunities that will enable people to get into, progress at and stay in work
- Everyone fulfils their learning potential, with more people completing higher-level skills studies than ever before
- Residents, businesses and organisations are more confident in accessing and using digital resources, benefitting all aspects of daily life

Themes	Healthy Barnsley	Learning Barnsley	Growing Barnsley	Sustainable Barnsley
Ambitions	<p>Everyone is able to enjoy a life in good physical and mental health.</p> <p>Fewer people live in poverty and everyone has the resources they need to look after themselves and their families.</p> <p>People can access the right support, at the right time and place and are able to tackle problems early.</p> <p>Our diverse communities are welcoming, supportive and resilient.</p>	<p>Children and young people aim high and achieve their full potential with improved educational achievement and attainment.</p> <p>Everyone has the opportunity to create wider social connections and enjoy cultural experiences.</p> <p>Lifelong learning is promoted and encouraged, with an increase in opportunities that will enable people get into, progress at and stay in work.</p> <p>Everyone fulfils their learning potential, with more people completing higher-level skills studies than ever before.</p>	<p>Local businesses are thriving through early-stage support and opportunities to grow.</p> <p>Barnsley is known as a great place to invest, where businesses and organisations provide diverse and secure employment opportunities, contributing to an economy that benefits everyone.</p> <p>People have a wider choice of quality, affordable and sustainable housing, to suit their needs and lifestyle.</p> <p>Residents, businesses and organisations are more confident in accessing and using digital resources, benefitting all aspects of daily life.</p>	<p>People live in sustainable communities with reduced carbon emissions and increased access to affordable and sustainable energy sources.</p> <p>People can get around in Barnsley easier than ever, with an increase in cycle routes and better connections across the borough.</p> <p>Barnsley has increased the amount of renewable energy that is generated within the borough.</p> <p>People are proud of and look after their local environment.</p>

Why do we need Early Help? The challenges in Barnsley and the context

Barnsley Council serves a population of 248,071¹ which, since the 2011 census, has grown by 6.9 per cent - broadly equal to the England average for population growth. The population is predicted to grow to over 257,000 by 2025, and then to 264,000 by 2030. There are currently 51,621 children and young people under the age of 18, which is approximately one-fifth (20.8 per cent) of the total population of the borough. Life expectancy is lower in the borough than the national average, with females on average living to 80.2 years compared to an 82.6 year England average, and males living to 76.3 years compared to an 78.7 year England average.

Population projections:

Age band	2015	2030	Per cent change
0-4 years	14,664	13,276	-9.5%
5-9 years	14,162	13,620	-3.8%
10-14 years	12,670	14,704	16.1%
15-19 years	13,584	15,122	11.3%
20-64 years	139,928	145,183	3.8%
65 years and over	44,847	60,471	34.8%
Total	239,855	262,376	9.4%

Deprivation continues to affect a significant number of families in Barnsley. The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranks Barnsley as the 38th most deprived local authority in England, out of 317. A significant proportion of children and young people (15.1 per cent) are growing up in households where no adults work, and 22.4 per cent of children and young people live in low-income households. Both statistics are higher than regional and national averages. There is a known correlation between rising levels of deprivation and the need for children's social care intervention. During the pandemic we have seen significant increases in demand for Early Help support, Children In Need and Child Protection.

Below are the rankings for Barnsley relative to the other 316 Local Authorities using the 'rank of average score' by domain (where 1 = most deprived, 317 = least deprived)

- 43rd – income deprivation
- 27th – employment deprivation
- 15th – education and skills training
- 22nd – health deprivation & disability
- 31st – crime

There has been a 5.1 per cent increase in the Child Poverty rate since 2014/15, to 33 per cent. This compares to a UK average of 31 per cent (+2 per cent increase). 24.5 per cent of children within Barnsley are living in low-income families, and as at March 2022, 28.2 per cent of children in Barnsley are eligible for free school meals.

The diversity of our population continues to change. In 2011, four in every 100 people were from a black and minority ethnic (BME) group, significantly lower than the regional and national demographic picture. The January 2021 School Census² shows that 9.8 per cent of primary school pupils and 8.8 per cent of secondary school pupils are from black and minority ethnic origins, the same percentage for primary schools in January 2020 but an increase for secondary schools which reported 8.5 per cent in 2020, remaining below the regional and national averages.

¹ Revised mid-year (2020) population estimates, released by ONS in June 2021.

² January 2020 School Census analysis not yet available at the time of writing, due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic.

In Barnsley, at the 2021/22 year-end outturn there were:

- **3,177** children with an Early Help support plan.
- **1,654** children with a Child in Need (CIN) episode
- **279** children with a child protection plan (CPP)
- **350** children in care (CIC)
- **89** care experienced young people
- **2,133** children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- **96 (4.5 per cent)** of children with an EHCP children are accessing support in Barnsley schools
- **10.9%** of school aged children are receiving SEND support without the need for an EHCP

What do we mean by Early Help for Children, Young People and Families?

Early Help is the term used in Barnsley to describe our approach on a whole range of individual social, health and educational issues when providing support to children, young people and their families as soon as problems emerge or re-emerge.

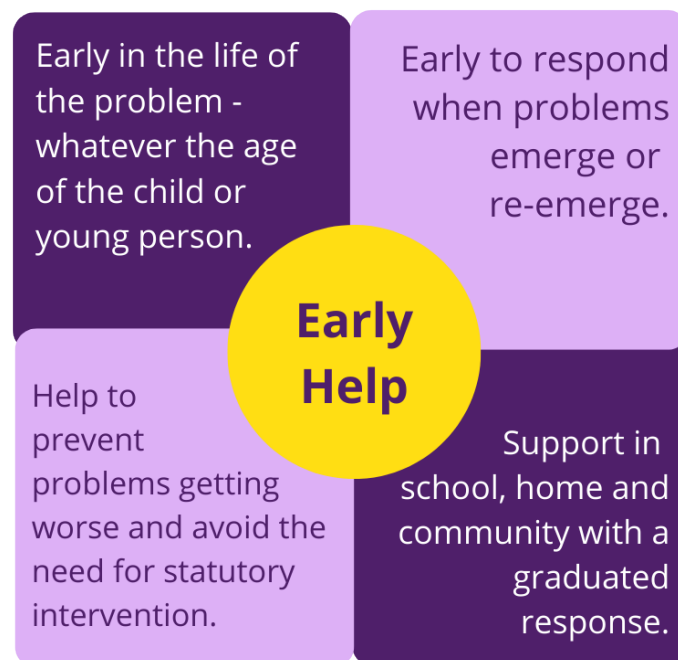
Early Help can be provided through a single agency or multi-agency responses appropriate to the needs of the child and family and the concern. However, where more than one agency or partner are identified as needing to work with the family, an Early Help Assessment should be undertaken to ensure that a single plan can be pulled together to ensure that everyone is clear on who is providing what support to the family.

Intervening as early as possible, regardless of the age of the child or young person, can positively improve their outcomes. Early Help is a collaborative approach which relies on local agencies working together effectively with families to identify who needs help and then to meet their varied needs.

Excellent work with families already takes place across Barnsley, day in and day out, by schools, health services, family centres and early years settings, services provided or commissioned through our voluntary and community sector, and a range of other agencies and services.

Our Early Help approach includes our commitment to shifting the balance of power so that our work is family led and not led by practitioners.

The Barnsley Early Help approach in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 also includes proactive and planned support for those children and young people stepping down from statutory social work interventions and specialist care or services.



The Barnsley Early Help approach

Barnsley's Early Help approach to providing support to potentially vulnerable children, young people, and their families as soon as problems start to emerge - a collaborative approach, not a provision.

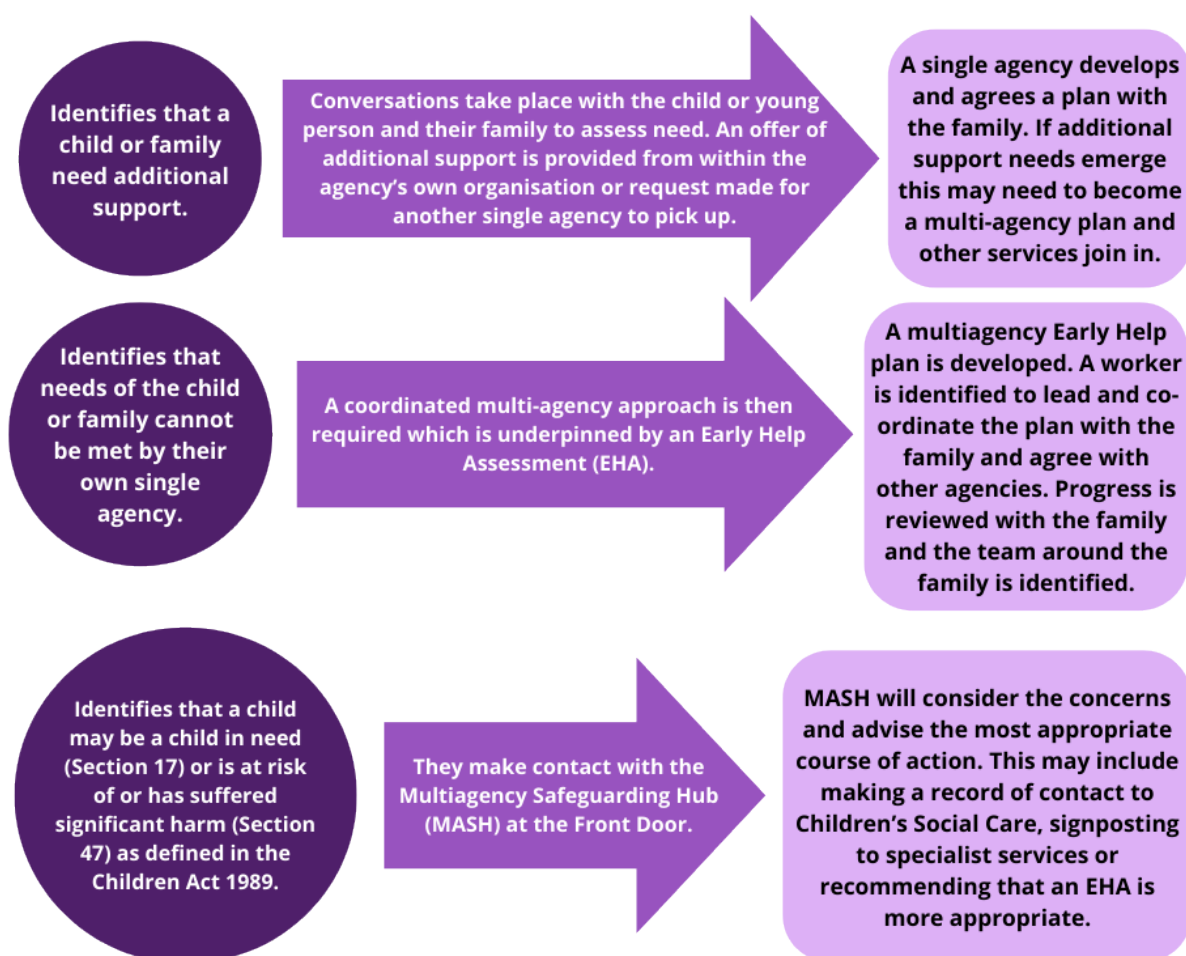
Right support, right place, right time

Our approach to Early Help is to focus on regular conversations with children, young people and families and people who can offer support and help, to jointly assess what help is required. Through regular meetings and collaborative conversations between the family and team around them, circumstances and progress can be reviewed and plans adjusted to meet changing needs. For children and young people to receive the right service at the right time, conversations need to be constructive and strengths based - going beyond a discussion about concerns, to form part of a meaningful assessment utilising the Early Help Assessment and where appropriate, a whole family plan developed to support the child, young people and their families. It is vital that children and families are at the centre of any assessment and plans and that their voice, wishes and feelings are heard and clearly present in any plans. This approach supports families to develop their resilience and achieve the best possible outcomes in the longer term through developing strategies for self-help.

How we put Early Help into practice

It is everybody's responsibility to identify and assess need, through having conversations with children young people and their families and planning with them to address these needs. Our Early Help approach is underpinned by the framework of **Assess, Plan, Do** and **Review**. The following shows how we work when addressing social care needs. A similar approach is used when meeting educational needs as part our of graduated response.

Early Help graduated approach – for anyone working with children, young people and families



Our commitment – ‘Early Help is everybody’s responsibility’

Barnsley benefits from successful, and longstanding multi-agency working across the diverse and rich partnership in the town. The Barnsley Trust Executive Group is committed to providing the support that children, young people and their families need, as soon as they need it, when and where they need it and by the people who are best placed to help. Early Help is a collaboration between Children’s and Young People’s trust partners and the wide range of organisations who work with children and families. Early Help services should be seen as a flexible continuum of support ranging from universal services through to statutory or specialist provision, all of which are focussed on improving the lives of children young people and families. Children, young people and their families may experience a range of different needs at different times and as such will move backwards and forwards through the continuum as needs are met.

The delivery of our Early Help strategy is based on a joint commitment to shared outcomes, which will evidence the impact we make for families by intervening early and providing the right support at the right time in the right place, enabling sustainable outcomes and building family resilience. We cannot achieve change without the full commitment of families and all agencies and organisations who are supporting them to make changes. Effective Early Help relies upon local organisations and agencies such as health professionals, police, fire and rescue, schools and colleges, childminders, nurseries, housing, social workers, and CAMHS working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from Early Help
- Undertake an assessment of the need for Early Help
- Provide targeted Early Help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child

Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. This may be as simple as asking if people have heard about Early Help when coming into contact with a member of the public, through to a full-scale assessment of need.

It is important that all practitioners, including those in wider council and partner services, delivering universal services and those providing services to adults with children, understand their role in identifying emerging problems, assessing need, and raising awareness and sharing information with other practitioners and families and children to support early identification and assessment in a multi-agency context.

A critical factor for successfully meeting needs is the commitment of individuals and families to make changes in their lives with our support.

Early Help provides support for those children, young people and families at risk of poor outcomes. All our work is child and family-centred, consent-based and focussed on working collaboratively with families to overcome the issues they face, build their resilience and leave them better able to manage future challenges. Families who may require Early Help are identified by a wide range of practitioners, in many different ways, for example:

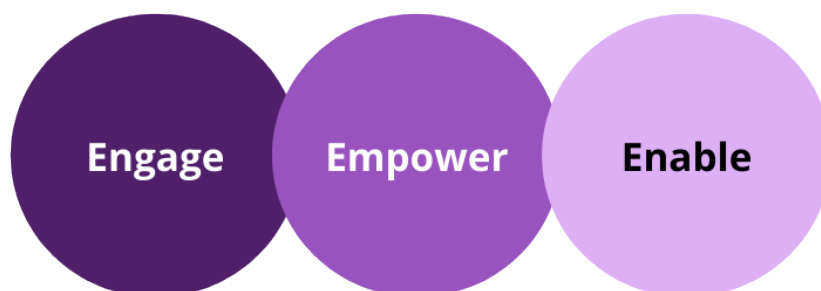
- A midwife identifies concerns about a lack of support for a teenager who is pregnant and is reporting that they are struggling with their emotional health and scared they won’t be able to cope with a baby
- A health visitor sees a family finding it difficult adapting to a new baby at home and has concerns about attachment between mum and baby
- A member of school staff observes that a child may have behavioural or emotional issues and is often at school early and is reluctant to go home
- A school meals assistant notices a child is always hungrier than their peers and always asks for more food
- An Education Welfare officer identifies a young person’s persistent absence from school, or has concerns about a family’s support needs where their child is electively home educated.
- A detached youth worker is worried that a young person may be putting themselves at greater risk of offending or entering the criminal justice system
- An employment adviser is concerned that a parent may be subject to a benefit sanction

- A housing officer notices a family struggling with debt and at risk of eviction
- A drug or alcohol worker feels that children in the family home may be vulnerable through the risk-taking behaviour of adults
- A social worker feels there is a need for additional support for a child even though there are no child protection concerns as part of a step-down plan
- A youth justice worker is concerned that a young person is at risk of sexual exploitation
- A General Practitioner recognises that a child is struggling to cope with his/her parent's separation
- A probation officer identifies that an individual, with children, may be having problems settling back into their family home following their release from custody
- A customer services call handler has a conversation with a member of the public who is struggling to manage their household budget
- A workman overhears a parent shouting at their child, and they are clearly struggling to cope with their child's behaviour

All agencies undertake early help as part of our 'day job' whether having an initial conversation (have you heard about), providing a single agency response, acting as a lead professional or participating in a multi-agency team around the family to undertake an Early Help Assessment; and working to provide help and support to those who need it in a way that makes sense for the whole family.

The three E's

Early Help is everyone's responsibility



Listening to and championing the voice of children and young people



Engage: Relationships are key to effective Early Help and the quality of relationships can significantly impact on the success of the work we do together. We are committed to developing positive and trusting relationships based on honest and open conversations built upon children, young people and families' strengths. Getting the right people involved is crucial and it is important that families feel supported in their journey.

Early Help is based upon consent and we will work with families empowering them to make informed choices to engage in Early Help. Families should be enabled and supported to access the right support, with the right people and at the right time around their needs or concerns, so that needs can be addressed as soon as possible avoiding the need for statutory interventions such as social care involvement further down the line.

Empower: Families are well placed to identify the things they are struggling with and should be at the centre of the assessment. We will listen to all voices within the family and build a plan with the child and family in the driving seat. Early Help is not about doing to or for our families it is about developing their confidence and skills so that they feel able to identify what they need and know how to ask for support or access it in the longer term. The plan should be led and owned by the family with the voice of the children and parents being heard, and shaping the response and action plan agreed. It's about others providing support to the family to make the changes they need to secure better outcomes, shifting the power base from workers to family and co-producing the action plan so that the actions are collectively owned in a family plan.

Enable: We will support families to come together to utilise their own resources and strengths to overcome challenges. This will mean that we expect families to take responsibility for actions on their plan alongside others who can support them. Once families are empowered to lead their own action plan and are involved in reflecting on progress made and barriers this will support them to be in a stronger position to identify when needs merge in future and to take appropriate action and seek support at the earliest opportunity if they need help. Families will become more resilient and more able to support their wider family friends and community in addressing their needs. Therefore, in the longer-term families will need to access Early Help services less as they will be able to identify when they need help and will be empowered and enabled to access support or self-help.

Levels of support

Early Help responses are tailored to individual circumstances and needs. Some families or individuals may feel able to access support and services on their own if they have access to the right information and signposting.

Others may need to help from one or more professionals where support is best coordinated through a multi-agency Early Help assessment and plan.

Some families with more complex needs may need assessment and risk support, which is coordinated through Social Care, with other professionals also offering support as part of an overarching plan.

Early Help will mainly aim to support those who are getting advice, or moving from getting more help or getting risk support.



What people say about Early Help

Children, young people and families told us about what Early Help should be:

"Support needs to be given earlier when it's needed which will help young people in crisis"

"Young people should be able to come face to face with the professionals and hold them to account"

"Young people don't know where to turn to, to access the early help or are too ashamed to access it because of the stigma associated with it"

"We need to make options available to young people better known so I know what choices I have"

"Easily accessible quick resources for families in time of need"

"More local community options to make it easier for everyone"

"There needs more positive support work in and around schools for young people"

"It should be easy to understand for families, not scary and it should be supportive"

"Support from someone approachable and understanding that can support both parents and children"

"It should be early....earlier intervention would have been beneficial"

"A lot of stuff is virtual at the minute which is rubbish for me, and I get that it has to be but that's not great for lots of young people"

The following link gives an example of how Early Help has supported a local family through a time of need: [Early Help case study video](#).

Children, young people and families told us that we will know we are getting Early Help right because:

People feel supported and there's less need for early help

Less need for early help services

Involving them and including them in the design and delivery of the service by putting them first is really important

Feedback from families...things get better....don't need support anymore

Some of it is measurable - referrals etc. but quantifying happiness is very hard

If there's good public awareness that it is there if its needed

Everyone's experiences and outcomes are going to be different

That support is given when it's needed without having to jump through lots of different evidence hoops, even when proof has been established

If the family gets on better

Will see results and progress

Positive outcomes

People need to know about what's on offer and where it is, when its open

Worker is helping me

When children start attending school

To help you access the services you need at the right time for the right support

Children, young people and families told us how they feel Early Help has or can impact positively on outcomes:

The right worker/team supports you through a downward dip

Finding the right support for me is what has helped me through difficult times, and I am very grateful for that.

Makes family life more pleasant and helps children develop more positively

Helps parents to have more confidence in their parenting abilities having a positive impact on children

Give both us and our children the tools to deal with the problems they are having

Get support needed to succeed at home and school, support their health and mental health as well as behaviour

Strategic Priorities

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) uses data and information from various sources and related plans and strategies. This information can be found through this link: [JSNA summary data](#). A combined understanding of this intelligence data has helped underpin our understanding of local needs and the setting of our priorities.

Our priorities have also been informed by several sources of information such as Community Early Help Delivery Groups and the Best Start for Life Partnership along with feedback from young people's groups and various case studies in respect of actions in place supporting children, young people and their families to become independent, resilient, and stronger in managing their health and well-being ensuring the best start for life.

Our strategic priorities are:



Strategic priority 1:

The right help, in the right place at the right time.

This means that:

- Children, young people and families in Barnsley will know what advice and support is available to them to help them respond to problems or needs arising due to their changing circumstances.
- Children, young people and families will know where and who to go to for support and what to expect.
- Children, young people and families will be able to deal with issues or problems before they become more severe or complicated. They will be helped to be independent and resilient enough to support themselves safely in the longer term.
- Families will be able to access the right services at the right time and have access to good quality information, evidence-based services and support.

Strategic priority 2:

A whole system approach to Early Help with strong partnership working and system leadership.

This means that:

- Early Help partners will work together to minimise duplication, share knowledge about services available, and make sure that people who need more help don't fall through gaps.
- There will be no wrong door for people who need to access advice and support.
- Intelligence and insight will be available to help services to effectively target and co-ordinate early intervention, inform service delivery, support demand management and monitor performance.
- The children and young people's workforce will be well equipped with the appropriate skills, resources, and confidence to deliver effective Early Help.
- Ensuring that children young people and families can access the right services at the right time without delay will be everyone's responsibility.
- Early Help will be embedded across all partners services and aligned with other key strategies including neglect, Child exploitation, and poverty.
- All partners will utilise the universal Early Help Assessment to gain a holistic understanding of need and will participate in undertaking Early Help Assessments including fulfilling the role of Lead Professional.
- All partners will provide oversight to their own agencies work within the Early Help System to identify and address any weakness in practice.

Strategic Priority 3:

Empowering local people and communities to build capacity and resilience, helping people and communities to do more for themselves.

This means that:

- Children, young people and families will feel supported and have the information they need and confidence to seek support services when needed.
- Children, young people and families will achieve better outcomes and will experience effective transitions across ages and stages and also between Children's and Adults services.
- Children, young people, and their families will be able to access the right services digitally at the right time.
- Children, young people and families will be heard, and their views and feedback will shape the intervention they receive and wider service delivery.

Making It happen

Implementation of the Children and Young People’s Early Help Strategy will be detailed in an Early Help Steering Group Delivery plan which will be continually refreshed during the life of this strategy (2022 -2027). This will be a dynamic plan which will be reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis to ensure that it is able to adapt to the pace of progress, as well as new developments, research and opportunities. This should be read alongside the Adults Early Help Adults Plan and associated action plan.

We have identified the following enablers as critical elements to our success in line with our priorities to achieve our strategic aims.



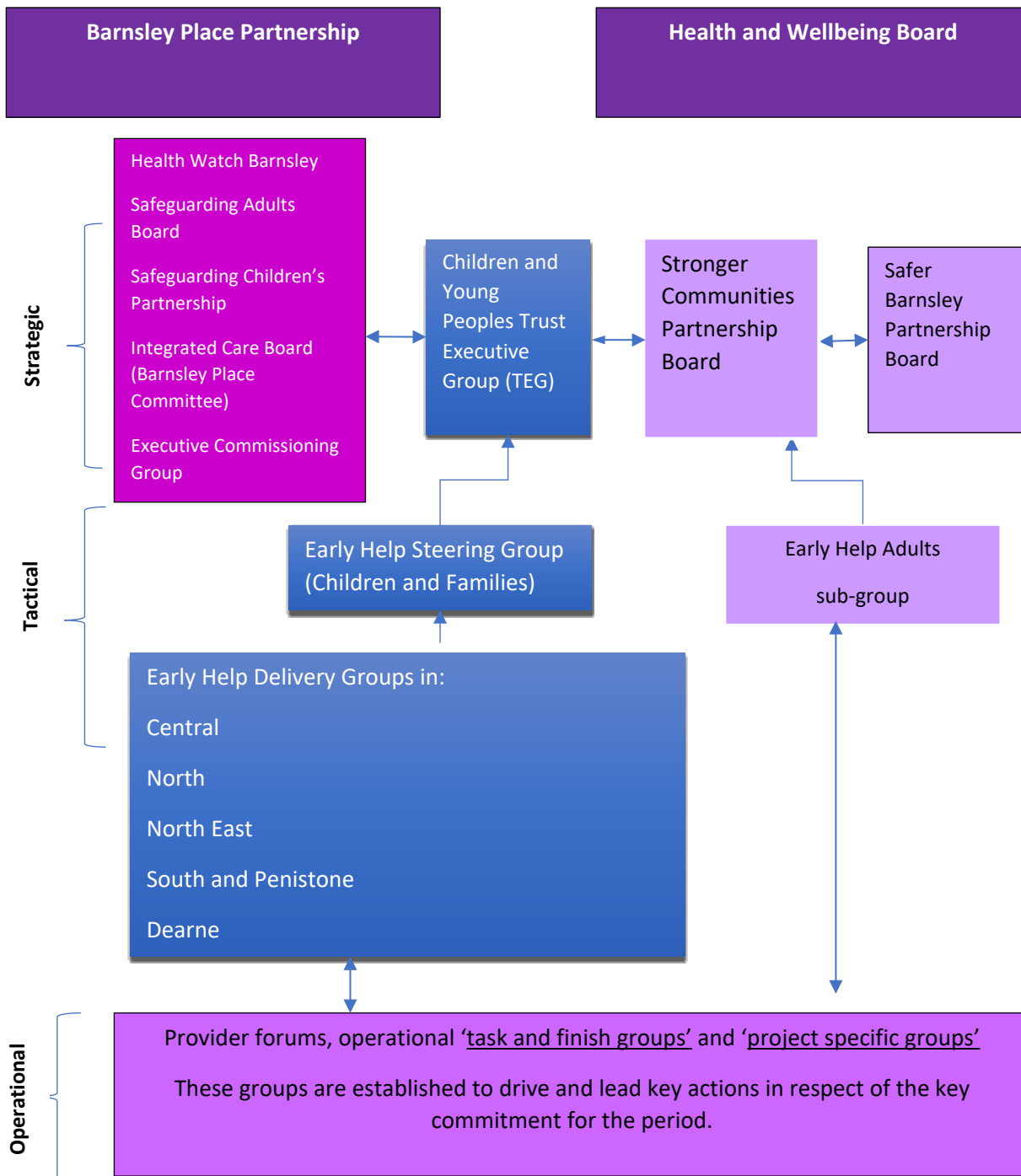
Governance

Our focus is on targeting our resources appropriately in accordance with identified needs, thereby helping us to achieve the best outcomes for and in partnership with local people and communities.

Early Help is a system wide approach.

Now more than ever there’s a need to pool our resources across sectors acknowledging that strong and resilient communities will form the solid foundations to the successful delivery of this strategy.

The Governance structure illustrates how partnership across the children sector will oversee delivery and maintain accountability.



Key indicators and performance

It is important that measures of success are established and agreed. The following outcome indicators will demonstrate the effectiveness of the strategy and its implementation:

1. Increase in the number of families supported through a multi-agency early help plan
2. Number of families making progress against the goals in their early help plan
3. Number of families who are satisfied with the support they receive
4. Number of families accessing targeted early help support
5. Reduction in the number of statutory social work assessments which result in closure
6. Reduction in the number of families subject to child in need plans
7. Reduction of contacts to the front door – meaning that families are supported by those who already know them
8. Number of parents and professionals trained in parent led parenting programmes
9. Number of multi-agency practitioners trained in understanding parental conflict
10. Number of multi-agency practitioners trained in Barnsley Early Help related courses
11. Number of multi-agency practitioners trained in use of the Graded Care Profile
12. Increase in the number of early help plans in place at the time of a request for an Education Health Care needs assessment
13. Reduction in the number of Education Health Care Plan needs assessment requests by parents

Contact us

Early Help for Children Young People and Families

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Equality Impact Assessment

Stage 1 Details of the proposal

Name of service Directorate	Education, Early Start and Prevention (Early Start Prevention & Sufficiency) Children's Services
Name of officer responsible for EIA Name of senior sponsor	Head of Early Start Prevention & Sufficiency
Description / purpose of proposal	Early Help Strategy: Children & Young people (2022-27)
Date EIA started	1.9.22
Assessment Review date	30.8.25

Stage 2 - About the proposal

What is being proposed?	The Borough's latest Early Help Strategy; Children & Young people has been developed for approval and adoption by Cabinet
Why is the proposal required?	This Strategy has been formulated to maintain the development of a coherent and inclusive children and young people's early help system which meets the needs of children young people and families, ensuring that help is provided at the right time in the right place by the right service to prevent needs escalating
What will this proposal mean for customers?	Please see above.

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Stage 3 - Preliminary screening process

Use the Preliminary screening questions to decide whether a full EIA is required

Yes - EIA required (go to next section)
 No – EIA not required (provide rationale below including name of E&I Officer consulted with)

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Stage 4 - Scoping exercise - What do we know?

Data: Generic demographics

What generic data do you know?

Underlying data used to ensure the system is working will include the number of early help assessments across the system and action plans being instigated, and successful outcomes met.

Data: Service data / feedback

What equalities knowledge do you already know about the service/location/policy/contract?

We know that there are currently approximately 3543 children who are subject to 1,566 Early help Assessments.

Data: Previous / similar EIA's

Has there already been an EIA on all or part of this before, or something related? If so, what were the main issues and actions it identified?

This is a new strategy which replaces the previous All Age Early Help Strategy, which would have had an EIA

Data: Formal consultation

What information has been gathered from formal consultation?

Consultation was undertaken through TEG and BSCP on key priorities and challenges for early help delivery. Consultation with children young people and parents has been undertaken via Family Centres and Youth Voice & Participation workers.

Stage 5 - Potential impact on different groups

Considering the evidence above, state the likely impact the proposal will have on people with different protected characteristics

(state if negative impact is substantial and highlight with **red text**)

Negative (and potentially positive) impacts identified will need to form part of your action plan.

Protected characteristic	Negative '-'	Positive '+'	No impact	Don't know	Details
Sex			none		None anticipated
Age			none		None anticipated
Disabled <i>Learning disability, Physical disability, Sensory Impairment, Deaf People ,invisible illness, Mental Health etc</i>			none		Early help is available up until the age of 25 years where a young person has SEND. This is a positive impact as statutory support interventions may cease at age 18.
Race			none		Targeted support and intervention will continue to be provided to children and young people in need of additional help
Religion & Belief			none		As above
Sexual orientation			none		As above
Gender Reassignment			none		As above
Marriage / civil partnership		N/A			
Pregnancy / maternity			none		Universal and Targeted support and intervention will continue to be provided to families who are pregnant or have a new baby

Other groups you may want to consider

	Negative	Positive	No impact	Don't know	Details
Ex services			none		Universal and Targeted support and intervention will be provided to children young people and families in need of

					additional help. Targeted support will continue to be offered as part of the Armed Forces Covenant
Lower socio-economic			none		Universal and Targeted support and intervention will continue to be provided to children and young people in need of additional help
Other ...					-

Stage 6 - BMBC Minimum access standards

If the proposal relates to the delivery of a new service, please refer to the Customer minimum access standards self-assessment (found at)
If not, move to Stage 7.

Please use the action plan to ensure that reasonable adjustments be taken to ensure the new service complies with the minimum access standards for disabled people.

Not yet live

The proposal will meet the minimum access standards.
 The proposal will not meet the minimum access standards. –provide rationale below.

Stage 7 – Action plan

To improve your knowledge about the equality impact . . .

Actions could include: community engagement with affected groups, analysis of performance data, service equality monitoring, stakeholder focus group etc.

Action we will take:	Lead Officer	Completion date
Continued engagement with all groups of young people and their families particularly the Youth Council, Care4Us Council and SEND Youth Forum, together with other specific initiatives including the annual <i>Make Your Mark Survey</i> and National ‘Takeover’ Challenge.	Head of Early Start Prevention & Sufficiency	September 2023
Continued engagement with community members, parents and carers through relevant parent groups, Parent Carer Alliance and Early Help Delivery Groups	Head of Early Start Prevention and Sufficiency	September 2023

To improve or mitigate the equality impact . . .

Actions could include: altering the policy to protect affected group, limiting scope of proposed change, reviewing actual impact in future, phasing-in changes over period of time, monitor service provider performance indicators, etc.

Action we will take:	Lead Officer	Completion date
Pulse surveys and further consultation	Head of Early Start Prevention and Sufficiency	September 2023
Identifying, disseminating and introducing best practice	Head of Early Start Prevention and Sufficiency	September 2023
To ensure all partners implement coherent and consistent approaches to early help	Head of Early Start Prevention and Sufficiency	September 2023

To meet the minimum access standards . . .(if relevant)

Actions could include: running focus group with disability forum, amend tender specification, amend business plan to request extra 'accessibility' funding, produce separate MAS action plan, etc.

Action we will take:	Completion date
Not yet live	

Stage 8 – Assessment findings

Please summarise how different protected groups are likely to be affected

Summary of equality impact	All children already benefit from access to universal early help services across the system. Children with specific needs are able to access targeted support based on a clear assessment against the continuum of needs/thresholds for intervention and appropriate early help or statutory support offered on a tailored basis
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Summary of next steps	The Strategy will continue our commitment to ensuring that children and young people are able to achieve their aspirations by providing help and
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support at the earliest opportunity, and supporting future resilience within families . For those individual or groups of children who require additional help, targeted intervention will enable them to achieve their potential and enhance their life chances

Signature (officer responsible for EIA) Date

C Gilmore

**** EIA now complete ****

Stage 9 – Assessment Review

(This is the post implementation review of the EIA based on date in Stage 1 if applicable)

What information did you obtain and what does that tell us about equality of outcomes for different groups?

Community Early Help Delivery Group

Primary purpose Community Early Help Delivery Group

Community Early Help Delivery Group are a key component of the government's commitment to:

- Give every child the best start in life
- Improve outcomes for all children, but particularly the most vulnerable members of the community
- Provide opportunities and support for parents
- Develop stronger and safer communities

Objectives of Community Early Help Delivery Group

The main aim of a Community Early Help Delivery Group is to work with Family Centre (Hub) staff and partners to advise and make recommendations about the development and running of the Family Centre (Hub) on the following areas:

- a) To maintain the focus of improving outcomes for all children and closing the gap between the most disadvantaged children and others
- b) To provide support and challenge to provider agencies working in the Family centre/hub
- c) To ensure that the local community and families are engaged in the planning, shaping, implementation and ongoing development of services and promote local decision making,
- d) To provide targeted support for issues identified in the Family centre/hub Self Evaluation, possibly through the creation of a task and finish subgroup,
- e) To promote equal opportunity and redress inequality by promoting access to Family centres (Hubs) for all members of society especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and their families,
- f) To promote awareness and engagement with Family Centre/hub services by all members of the local community and relevant partner agencies/organisations,
- g) To develop a communication plan to ensure information is shared appropriately and effectively with parents and stakeholders,
- h) To ensure there is consistent, accessible and up to date information, advice and guidance for parents,
- i) To facilitate and encourage integrated working with all relevant agencies/organisations, promoting understanding and ownership of a common vision, including services required by the local community beyond the Family centre/hub's offer,

- j) To feed into the annual review process and support with the implementation and review of an action plan,
- k) To facilitate and encourage the collaboration and/or integration of services to improve accessibility to families, particularly those in greatest need,
- l) To support Barnsley Council and key partners in securing and protecting provision for the satisfactory delivery of Family centre/hub services,
- m) To actively participate in Ofsted, CQC or other inspections or reviews if required, to ensure that the work of the Family Centre (Hub) is recognised and valued by the inspectors and that feedback is constructively processed and implemented,

Frequency of meetings

The frequency of meetings will be discussed and agreed locally. There should be a minimum of three meetings per calendar year which will be planned in advance.

Membership

Member's role	In what capacity The aim of all members is to feed in any agenda items and back to their group	Length of term
Board Administrator/ Clerk	Circulating the agenda and reports prior to the meeting Sending meeting invitations Minute taking of the meeting Capturing actions and items for escalation Circulation of minutes to the group	Permanent
Family Centre Manager	Family centre representative To maintain the focus on improving outcomes for all children and families in designated area. Give an overview of services being provided from the Family centre (Hub) Share relevant data, information Plan, shape, implement service delivery	Permanent
Family Support Manager	Family centre representative safeguarding Give an overview of key safeguarding themes, and challenges regarding family support that may link to specific geographical areas. Share relevant data & performance information to the group	Permanent
Councillor	Community leader representative	2-year term unless de-elected

Member's role	In what capacity The aim of all members is to feed in any agenda items and back to their group	Length of term
	To provide peer challenge and support for the family centre/hub and service delivery partners Share relevant data or information with the group from their ward area	
Councillor	Community leader representative To provide peer challenge and support for the family centre/hub and service delivery partners Share relevant data or information with the group from their ward area	2-year term unless de-elected
Councillor	Community leader representative (Dependent on size of locality) To provide peer challenge and support for the family centre/hub and service delivery partners Share relevant data or information with the group from their ward area	2-year term unless de-elected
Councillor	Community leader representative (Dependent on size of locality) To provide peer challenge and support for the family centre/hub and service delivery partners Share relevant data or information with the group from their ward area	2-year term unless de-elected
	Early Years representative To provide support and challenge. Share relevant data or information with the group from their service area.	2 years
	Primary School representative To provide support and challenge. Share relevant data or information with the group from their service area	2 years
	Secondary School representative To provide support and challenge. Share relevant data or information with the group from their service area	2 years
	Youth service representative To provide support and challenge. Share relevant data or information with the group from their service area	2 years
	Health representative To provide support and challenge.	2 years

Member's role	In what capacity The aim of all members is to feed in any agenda items and back to their group	Length of term
	Share relevant data or information with the group from their service area	
	Library representative To provide support and challenge. Share relevant data or information with the group from their service area	2 years
	Third sector representative To provide support and challenge. Share relevant data or information with the group from their service area	2 years
	Housing representative To provide support and challenge. Share relevant data or information with the group from their service area	2 years
	Job centre plus representative To provide support and challenge. Share relevant data or information with the group from their service area	2 years
	Local businesses representative To provide support and challenge. Share relevant data or information with the group from their service area	2 years
	Faith groups representative To provide support and challenge. Share relevant data or information with the group from their service area	2 years
	Local families' representative To provide support and challenge. Share relevant data or information with the group from their service area	2 years

Roles and Responsibilities of board members

Board members will

- Represent their organisation, service users or peer group, seeking input and feeding back as appropriate
- Work as part of a task and finish group as themes are identified
- Contribute to discussions at the meeting
- Read reports and documents that are circulated for discussion prior to meetings

Election of Chair

Wherever possible the chair should be a parent with a child who is currently 0-19 (25 with SEND). If a parent cannot fulfil this role a community member should be considered next, and should have children or grandchildren resident within the area or be actively engaged in the local community. Where this is not possible Local councillors may fulfil this role. The chair will hold the position for at least 12 months. The Chair must either reside within the geographical area covered by the EH Delivery group or be an elected representative for a ward within the designated area.

Role of Chair

The key role of the Chair is to ensure that Community Early Help Delivery Group meetings are run effectively, focusing on the key priorities and making the best use of time available and ensuring that all members have an equal opportunity to participate in discussion and decision-making. The Chair will be expected to have clear lines of communication with Family Centre Manager and Assistant manager and any partner agencies. The chair should therefore not be the Family Centre Manager or the Assistant Manager.

The Chair should:

- Meet with Family Centre Manager or Assistant Manager to plan the agenda in time for circulation prior to the meeting
- Ensure all members of the board can speak and be heard by all board members
- If the Chair is absent for any meeting, the Vice-Chair shall chair that meeting and shall be entitled to exercise the Chair's casting vote if required
- Ensure actions are captured and recorded on the minutes
- Check final minutes for accuracy before they are sent to the group

Reporting to:

Early Help Steering Group

Conflict resolution

Members must recognise that each person will bring different views and ideas and there is a need to allow space for creative thinking and discussion.

Disputes or differences in views are expected to arise between members and the board will collectively take all reasonable steps within their powers to resolve them. However, where a matter cannot be resolved at the Early Help Delivery group, the next step would be for it to be raised through the Early Help Steering Group in the first instance and then through the Local Authority, following appropriate policies and procedures and guidance.

Suggested agenda

Attendance/ apologies	
Minutes of the last meeting/ actions	
Family centre update including early help activity/performance	
Safeguarding	
Health and Safety	
Key priorities and delivery against agreed actions	
Business continuity	
Partner updates	
Guest speakers	
Matters for escalation to EH Steering group	

Current Elected Members by Ward and Early Help Delivery Group (July 2022)

<u>Early Help Delivery Group</u>	<u>Wards Covered</u>	<u>Current elected members</u>	<u>Membership required</u>
Central Early Help Delivery group Held at Kendray & Worsbrough Family Centre	Central Dodworth Kingstone Stairfoot Worsbrough	Cllr Martin Dyson Cllr Janine Moyes Cllr Summer Risebury Cllr Peter Fielding Cllr Will Fielding Cllr Chris Wray Cllr Kath Mitchell Cllr Pooja Ramchandani Cllr Kevin Williams Cllr Karen Dyson Cllr Andrew Gillis Cllr Ian Shirt Cllr Roy Bowser Cllr John Clarke JP Cllr Jake Lodge	3 x Community Leadership representatives
North East Early Help Delivery group Held at Grimethorpe Family Centre	Cudworth Monk Bretton North East Royston	Cllr Sir Stephen Houghton CBE CBE Cllr Joe Hayward Cllr Charlie Wraith MBE Cllr Victoria Felton Cllr Steve Green Cllr Ken Richardson MSc Cllr Anita Cherryholme Cllr Jeff Ennis OBE Cllr Ashley Peace Cllr Caroline Makinson Cllr Pauline McCarthy Cllr Dave Webster	3 x Community Leadership representatives

<u>Early Help Delivery Group</u>	<u>Wards Covered</u>	<u>Current elected members</u>	<u>Membership required</u>
<p>South & Penistone Early Help Delivery Group</p> <p>Held at Jump Family Centre</p>	<p>Darfield South Penistone East Penistone West Rockingham Wombwell</p>	<p>Cllr Pauline Markham Cllr Kevin Osborne Cllr Trevor Smith Cllr Robin Franklin Cllr Tim Shepherd Cllr Mick Stowe Cllr Robert Barnard Cllr Paul Hand-Davis Cllr John Wilson Cllr David Greenhough Cllr Hannah Kitching Cllr Mandy Lowe-Flello Cllr Chris Lamb Cllr Nicola Sumner Cllr David White Cllr Brenda Eastwood Cllr Robert Frost Cllr James Higginbottom</p>	<p>4 x Community Leadership representatives</p>
<p>North Early Help Delivery Group</p> <p>Held at Athersley Family Centre</p>	<p>Darton East Darton West Old Town St Helen's</p>	<p>Cllr Mat Crisp Cllr Dickie Denton Cllr Steve Hunt Cllr Alice Cave Cllr Trevor Cave Cllr Sharon Howard Cllr Phil Lofts Cllr Jo Newing Cllr Clive Pickering Cllr Dave Leech Cllr Jenny Platts Cllr Sarah Tattersall</p>	<p>3 x Community Leadership representatives</p>
<p>Dearne Early Help Delivery Group</p> <p>Held at Dearne Family Centre</p>	<p>Dearne North Dearne South</p>	<p>Cllr Sue Bellamy Cllr Wendy Cain Cllr Alan Gardiner Cllr Janine Bowler Cllr Dorothy Coates Cllr Neil Danforth</p>	<p>2 x Community Leadership representatives</p>

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BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

TITLE: JOINT TARGETED AREA INSPECTION OF THE MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF INITIAL NEED AND RISK AMONG VULNERABLE CHILDREN: DRAFT WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION

REPORT TO:	CABINET
Date of Meeting	19 OCTOBER 2022
Cabinet Member Portfolio	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
Key Decision	Yes
Public or Private	Public

Purpose of report

To seek Cabinet's approval for the submission of the Barnsley Local Safeguarding Children Partnership's (LSCP) draft Written Statement of Action in response to the findings of the recent Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

Council Plan priority

The JTAI and its outcomes primarily support the priority of a **Healthy Barnsley** within the Council Plan, by ensuring young people are effectively safeguarded from harm, together with the priority of a **Learning Barnsley** through enabling young people to thrive by having access to effective early help and support.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

Approves for submission to Ofsted, the draft Written Statement of Response to the recent findings of the JTAI concerning the multi-agency response to the identification of initial need and risk among vulnerable children, by the deadline of 25th October 2022.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 On 21st September, Cabinet considered the outcomes of the recent JTAI. The JTAI's headline findings were that:

“Most children in Barnsley receive the right support at the right time to identify risk and meet their needs across the ‘front door’ services. The recently formed Barnsley Local Safeguarding Children Partnership demonstrates ambition and commitment to improve outcomes for children and their families. However, it is too early to evidence consistent progress to improve services for all children”

1.2 Many aspects of provision were commended in the report, including the following:

- The commitment of local partners to working together to improve outcomes for children
- The quality of the multi-agency training offer to practitioners
- The quality of early help offered
- Tackling child protection concerns
- The quality of child and family assessments
- The multi-agency response to children missing from home
- The effectiveness of both single and multi-agency audits in building upon the quality of practice.

1.3 However, the following areas of provision were identified as in need of improvement

- The quality and consistency of all agencies' in gathering, recording and responding to the expressed wishes and feelings of children with whom they work.
- The quality of referrals to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), including the timeliness of those from general practitioners (GPs).
- The timeliness of the local authority sharing information with partner agencies, including the outcome of referrals and the minutes of child protection strategy meetings.
- The consistent application of thresholds for children stepping down to early help services.
- The provision of an appropriate adult when children are arrested by the police.

- The timeliness of the police response to all incidents when there is an identified risk to children.
 - The availability of and the quality of the Emergency Duty Team's (EDT) response to children and partner agencies.
- 1.4 As a result, the JTAI concluded that as the principal authority, Barnsley MBC, together with its local statutory partners in the Barnsley LSCP should compile a *Written Statement of Proposed Action* outlining how the local partners will appropriately own and respond to the findings in the JTAI's report via an improvement plan to be overseen by the Barnsley LSCP Board.
- 1.5 Whilst the outcomes highlighted in the joint inspectorates' letter, appended to the Cabinet report considered on 21st September, are not a judgement, such external assessments provide both validation on the quality of provision and where provision and practice can be continually improved to match our ambitions for all children and young people in the Borough.

2. PROPOSAL

2.1 Draft Written Statement of Proposed Action

- 2.2 The draft Written Statement is detailed in the Appendix to this report. This document includes a plan on the remedial action to be taken particularly in response to the areas identified as in need of improvement during the JTAI (*Please see Paragraph 1.3 of this report*)
- 2.3 Cabinet is requested to review the draft Statement, including the improvement plan with a view to its submission to Ofsted by the deadline of 25th October. Similarly, the draft Statement has been considered and endorsed by our local statutory partners. In this instance, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed to waive the Committee's right to 'Call-in' the draft Statement to enable the Authority to meet the deadline without prejudicing its right to consider the Written Statement, on a later date.
- 2.4 Following submission, Ofsted will consider the draft Statement on behalf of the joint inspectorates and once it is satisfied that the actions incorporated into the draft Statement are achievable, the improvements will begin as part of our ongoing commitment of closing any gaps in the quality of practice and provision and enhance our capacity to achieve our ambition for commissioning the highest quality range of services for children, young people and families in the Borough.
- 2.5 In terms of the overall inspection framework for children's services, the Statement will inform the lines of enquiry during any future joint or single agency activity by the inspectorates.
- ### **2.6 Risks**
- 2.7 Cabinet will note that the draft Statement contains an initial RAG rating of the six improvement priorities. Improvement Priority 5 concerns the steps to be

taken to ensure provision of an appropriate adult when young people are arrested by the police. Here, a review of provision has been instigated which will lead to recommendations concerning service specifications and subsequent commissioning and procurement. A Regionally procured contracted service is likely to emerge and in case any delays in the review, development of service specifications and commissioning emerge, such risks will be managed and mitigated in accordance with the Council's risk management policy and procedure.

- 2.8 The progress achieved concerning the improvement priorities, will be overseen by the Barnsley LSCP's Board, including the Independent Scrutineer who will act as a '*Critical and impartial friend*' within the process. Progress will, also, be reported each month to the Cabinet Spokesperson (Children's Services) and as part of quarterly corporate and children's social care performance reporting arrangements to Cabinet, Senior Management Team and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

3.1 Financial and Risk

- 3.2 The Service Director – Finance or his representative has been consulted as part of drafting this report. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report, however the implementation of the Written Statement of Action (WSA) could result in additional financial implications for Children Social Care and the Council as the lead partner in the multi-agency safeguarding arrangement. Any financial impact (e.g. workforce / staffing) would be assessed and considered alongside other service improvement priorities.

3.3 Legal

- 3.4 The JTAI letter did not expressly indicate any non-compliance with the Council's statutory responsibilities for meeting the needs of children in need of help or protection, together with children in need of care.

- 3.5 There are no legal implications other than those outlined in the report.

3.6 Equality

- 3.7 Similarly, there are no implications for promoting equality or eliminating unlawful discrimination emerging through the outcomes of the JTAI or the draft Written Statement.

3.8 Sustainability

- 3.9 There are no implications for sustainability in the Borough arising through this report.

3.10 Employee

- 3.11 The JTAI letter commends the quality of the overall multi-agency programme of training and development for professionals and practitioners. However, the JTAI did identify specific instances where the quality of practice was variable among the multi-agency partners. This will be addressed through the 'Written Statement of Proposed Action' and the multi-agency training programme

3.12 Communications

- 3.13 Following Cabinet's recent consideration of the outcomes of the JTAI there are no further communications implications emerging through today's report.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Barnsley Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, together with the Council's Senior Management Team have been consulted and have endorsed the draft Written Statement, following the recent JTAI.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The exclusive purpose of this report is to present the draft Written Statement of Action which has been formulated in response to the outcomes of the recent JTAI, to Cabinet for agreement and approval prior to the Written Statement's submission to Ofsted.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Our ambition is to ensure the commissioning and provision of an outstanding and seamless range of services for all children, young people and families in the Borough. As part of this, we are committed to seeking all forms of external assurance on the quality and consistency of services, including benchmarking them with similar services in the Region and nationally.
- 6.2 The outcomes of the JTAI and the subsequent draft Written Statement of Action will inform our ongoing commitment to further improve the range of provision as we prepare for our next full inspection of the Local Authority's Children's Services.

7. GLOSSARY

- 7.1 None, applicable.

8.0 LIST OF APPENDICES

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Multi-agency Response to the Initial Identification of Need and Risk in Barnsley: Draft Written Statement of Action

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email governance@barnsley.gov.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made

10. REPORT SIGN OFF

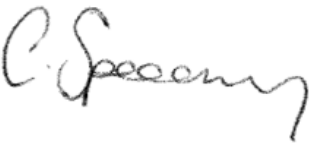
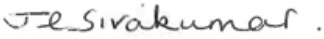

Financial consultation & sign off	Senior Financial Services officer consulted and date <i>Joshua Amahwe (14/09/2022)</i>
Legal consultation & sign off	Legal Services officer consulted and date <i>14/09/22 Jason Field</i>

Report Author: Sophie Wales

Designation: Service Director (Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding)

Multi-agency response to identification of initial need and risk in Barnsley

Local Area Written Statement of Action (WSA)

This written statement of action has been approved by the statutory partners and is led by Barnsley MBC, Barnsley Place Integrated Care Board and South Yorkshire Police:		
		
Carly Speechley Executive Director of Children's Services Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC)	Jayne Sivakumar Chief Nurse Barnsley Place Integrated Care Board	Simon Wanless Chief Superintendent District Commander South Yorkshire Police (SYP)

Introduction

The Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership has developed this joint action plan in response to the joint targeted area inspection of the multiagency response to the identification of initial need and risk, in May 2022.

The JTAI findings acknowledged the changes in Executive partners that had taken place in the months prior to the joint inspection. Change has continued with the arrival of the new Executive Director of Childrens Services in July and the departure of the Police Executive Partner. His successor joined the Partnership in early September. Whilst these recent changes have affected pace in terms of the restructuring of the Partnership we continue to move forward with commitment and ambition and have refreshed our structure to better deliver our priorities. The Independent Scrutineer has brought challenge and rigour to our safeguarding arrangements, drawing on external and internal reviews and inspections as well as audit and scrutiny that is part of the BSCP's quality assurance.

Partnership Governance

The Partnership structure has been reviewed to give clear lines of reporting for escalations and oversight. Work is carried out through priority workplans based in subgroups, which have representation from Police, Health, and Children Social Care, Early Help Education/SEND, Housing, Probation and South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue. The new Strategic MASH group is a monthly meeting to challenge and assure the work of the Operational MASH group for 'Front Door' services. Scrutiny and quality assurance is provided by the Assurance and Scrutiny (silver) Group which is a quarterly cycle. Oversight through exception reports and escalations will be provided by the Executive Group's scheduled monthly meetings.

All health providers/Trusts, South Yorkshire Police and Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council have established mechanisms for safeguarding governance and assurance for single agency plans.

The Local Safeguarding Children Partnership will bring joint accountability and challenge to this action plan through monthly Executive and Strategic MASH meetings to ensure timely delivery.

RAG Rating System

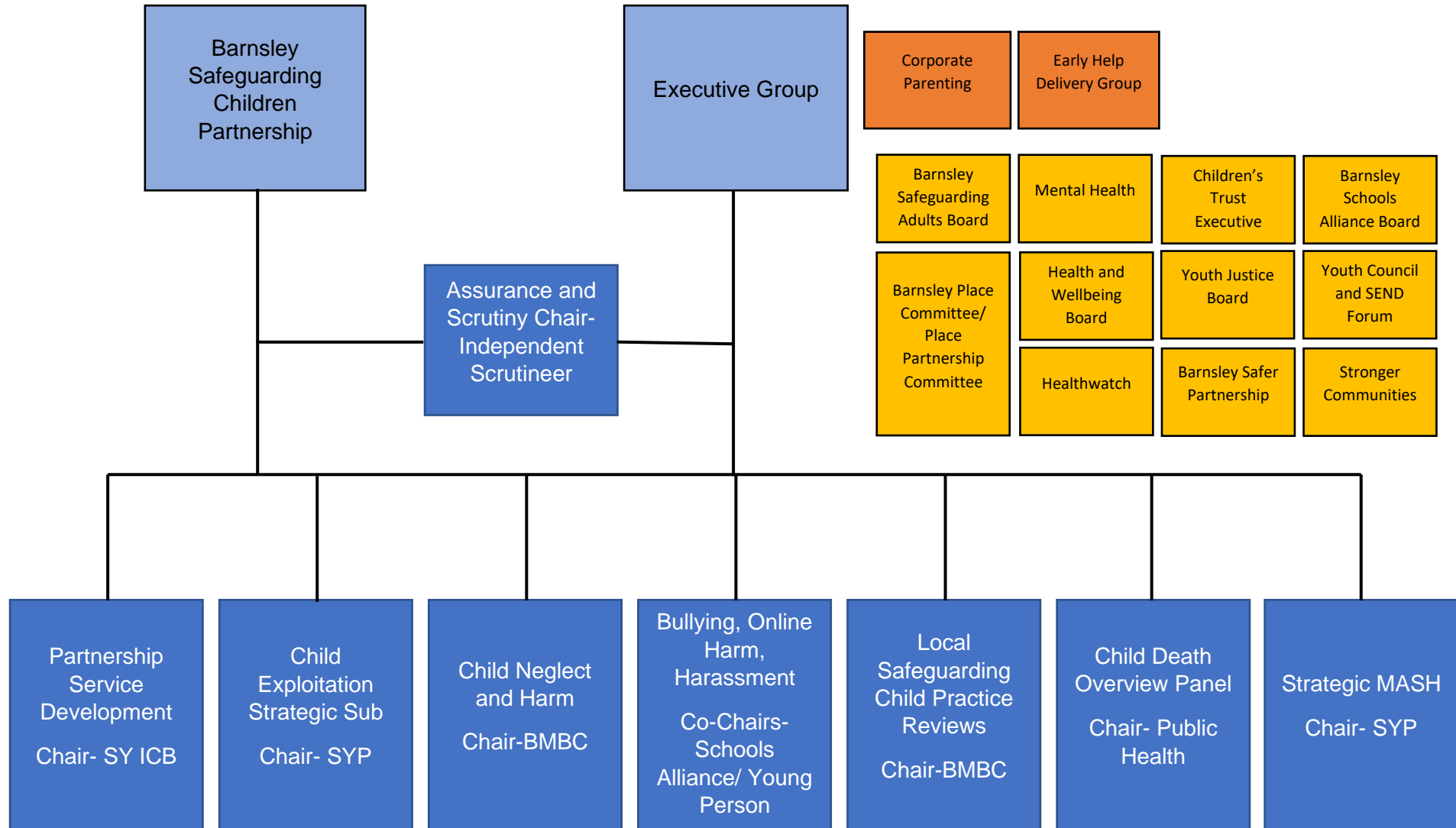
At risk	There is a risk that this action will not be completed and requires escalation to strategic oversight. A plan to mitigate risks must be implemented.	
Vulnerable	The action looks unlikely to be achieved on time which may have implications on improvements. This requires escalation to strategic oversight.	
On track	The action is on track for completion. No issues requiring escalation.	
Deferred	The action may need to be deferred due to unforeseen circumstances. Does not require escalation as mitigation is in place.	

Responsible Partners

Partners involved in delivery of the WSA, are included below. The roles outlined in grey comprise the accountable leads at the organisation level of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Barnsley Integrated Care Board South Yorkshire, South Yorkshire Police.

Role	Abbreviation	Organisation
Executive Director Children's Services	EDCS	BMBC: Children's Services Directorate
ICB Chief Nurse (Barnsley)	CN ICB	South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (Barnsley)
Chief Superintendent	Ch Supt	South Yorkshire Police
Detective Chief Inspector	DCI SYP	South Yorkshire Police
Service Director Children's Social Care & Safeguarding	SD CSC	BMBC: Children's Services Directorate
Service Director Education, Early Start and Prevention	SD ESIP	BMBC: Children's Services Directorate
Head of Safeguarding (ICB Barnsley)	HS SY ICB	South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (Barnsley)
Head of Service Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	HoS QA	BMBC: Children's Services Directorate
Head of Service Early Start Prevention and Sufficiency	HoS Early Help	BMBC: Children's Services Directorate
Head of Service Children and Family Services	HoS Front Door	BMBC: Children's Services Directorate
Head of Service: Educations and Partnerships	HoS EP	BMBC: Children's Services Directorate
Service Manager Youth Justice Team	SM YJT	BMBC: Children's Services Directorate

Our Governance Structure & Reporting System



JTAI Improvement Plan: written statement of action (WSA)						
Priority 1	Actions (What we will do)	LSP Lead	Action Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress (What steps have we taken so far)	RAG
The quality and consistency of all agencies gathering, recording, and responding to the expressed wishes and feelings of children with whom they work.	Main Findings The gathering, recording, and acting on the voice of the child are too variable, from individuals, single agencies and across the multi-agency partnership workforce. This means that not all children's views are being heard or their lived experiences fully understood by professionals.					
	To achieve consistency all agencies will implement necessary steps to ensure correct resources are in place to enable practitioners to seek and respond to the expressed wishes of children with whom they work.	EDCS CN ICB Ch Supt	HoS QA DCI SYP HS SY ICB HoS Early Help	30/11/2022	<p>All LSCP Multiagency audits include the voice of the child as a key line of enquiry from July 22. Review underway of current multiagency audit tool to ensure it specifically includes gathering, recording, and acting on the voice of child Sept 22.</p> <p>Children's Social Care Practice Standards are in development, first draft complete Sept 22. Audit tools strengthened in July 22 to better evidence gathering, recording, and acting on the voice of the child, to ensure consistency is being achieved. Social work capacity reviewed through workforce development task and finish group, established June 22, and a Workforce Development Action Plan developed in Aug 22. Increased agency staffing (currently 19, in Sept 22 across services) leading to a reduction of caseloads in the front door that is supporting practitioners to spend more time with children. Back to basics training workshops to include voice of the child being developed and implemented Sept 22. External scrutiny through independent review of children's social care commissioned and underway Aug to Nov 22.</p> <p>Relevant Police policies and procedures document capture of the voice of the child. It is currently governed through business intelligence performance in local and force wide governance. Force Wide CHILD MATTERS training of front-line officers, staff and partners Focuses on recognising and identifying neglect and the impact of domestic abuse. Focuses on child voice and the impact of trauma. Introduces the new Child Concern form which incorporates the SHARRD tool for assessment. The Quality Assurance Accreditation Team (QAAT) conducts Quality Assurance Thematic Testing – force wide audit of PVP and DA investigations specifically captures Voice of the child and enhanced Victims Code of Practice. Governance Investigative process – QAAT reviews by senior colleagues. Has 4 sections; victim element has to record VoC.</p> <p>The LSCP PPWPD subgroup has asked all agencies to review policies and procedures to ensure they support practitioners in seeking and responding to the expressed wishes of children and young people and provide assurance back to the November 2022 subgroup meeting.</p>	

JTAI Improvement Plan: written statement of action (WSA)						
Priority 2	Actions (What we will do)	LSP Lead	Action Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress (What steps have we taken so far)	RAG
The quality of referrals to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), including the timeliness of those from general practitioners (GP's).	Main Findings Multi-agency referrals vary in quality, detail, and analysis. This means that MASH practitioners often need to seek further clarification or do more research to fully understand the concerns. For a small number of children, SW's do not seek this additional information from referrers, contributing to the delay in the decision. A number of health professionals reported that GP's do not refer concerns for children to the MASH at the earliest opportunity. Risks identified are too often passed to other health professionals to respond to and refer on to MASH, should they decide to do so. This means that some children will experience delay in having risk to them assessed in a timely way.					
	Multiagency partners to embed the operational guidance in relation to the safeguarding hub (MASH) to better enable our multiagency practitioners, including GP's to consistently make good quality, timely referrals.	EDCS CN ICB Ch Supt	HoS Front Door DCI SYP HS SY ICB	30/11/2022	<p>Review of the MASH referral template in progress Sept 22. Audit programme updated to include quality assurance of MASH referrals July 22. Screening guidance updated and distributed Sept 22 which includes feedback to professionals making referrals. Progressing plans to ensure referrals are informed by an early help assessment by Mar 23. MASH operational guide shared with partners Sept 22. Review underway in MASH to identify training needs and supporting good examples Nov 22. Implement multiagency training for MASH practitioners specifically focused on better equipping staff to quality assure referrals Nov 22.</p> <p>The LSCP multiagency auditing schedule updated in Aug 22 to include an audit of referral quality.</p>	

				<p>These findings and operational guidance are shared with GPs to remind them of the need for timely referrals. Findings initially shared following the Inspection, again in August 22 and shared again at the Primary Care safeguarding forum early September 2022.</p> <p>Police attendance at Child Concern incidents is monitored on a daily basis through Force and local Daily Management meetings to ensure a timely response and therefore prompt submission of any referrals. All referrals are triaged by MASH supervisory staff. Any deficient ones are highlighted directly back to the submitting officer. Central Governance team conduct regular audits of referrals to ensure quality and consistency.</p> <p>A national Force-wide PVP Review is taking place to look at resourcing and structures within the Police arm of the MASH. It is expected that this will mean Police will take a more active role in initial joint screening. The Review outcomes are planned for implementation in March 2023</p>	
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JTAI Improvement Plan: written statement of action (WSA)

Priority 3	Actions – (What we will do)	LSP Lead	Action Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress (What steps have we taken so far)	RAG
The timeliness of the local authority sharing information with partner agencies, including the outcome of referrals and the minutes of child protection strategy meetings.	Main Findings SW's do not always inform all safeguarding partners of the outcome of their referrals. This means that professionals are too often required to chase the MASH staff for a response or might not be in receipt of important information that could inform their response with those children and families,					
	The agreed actions from strategy meetings are too often generic and do not address all of the information shared at the meeting. Children's social care professionals do not share the minutes of strategy meetings in a timely manner. This means that professionals rely on their own written records without the benefit of accessing the multi-agency agreed account of the meeting.					
	Children's social care to ensure information sharing is timely and effective and in particular strategy minutes and referral outcomes leading to a reduction in delay that supports partner agencies to have the right information at the right time.	EDCS	HoS Front Door	30/11/2022	Children's Social Care updated systems in place from Aug 22 with business support to ensure that action plans are shared immediately following strategy meetings. Operational guide for the MASH reviewed, updated, and shared with partners Sept 22. Practice standards developed and in draft Sept 22 to support improved timeliness of information sharing – next steps to agree how the practice standards are to be launched in Nov 22 and implemented to maximise practice improvement. Continuing to investigate options with new ICS system (Mosaic) to capture effective and timely information sharing with partners. Work underway with business intelligence colleagues to develop performance data that will support tracking in relation to timely decision making in the MASH overseen by the MASH Strategic group Nov 22.	
	All partner agencies will ensure that all practitioners have the necessary training which supports SMART action planning	EDCS	HoS QA	31/12/2022	SMART planning workshops delivered Childrens' Social Care in Sept 22. The LSCP PPWPD subgroup has reviewed all multiagency courses to ensure that where relevant, SMART principles are applied to strategy meeting processes and their preparation Additional workshops for multiagency practitioners developed in August 22 and launch planned Dec 22.	
	Main Findings The BSCP escalation policy is not used effectively. Strong professional working relationships in Barnsley often lead to informal conversations outside the agreed policy. This means there is a lack of transparency and recording of decisions made in relation to the safeguarding of children and young people.					
Relaunch the escalation policy across the partnership to ensure there is transparency of professional conversations and outcomes where there is disagreements about decision making for children and young people. This informs future best practice.	EDCS CN ICB Ch Supt	HoS QA DCI SYP HS SY ICB	30/11/2022	The LSCP and PPWPD subgroup reviewed the escalation policy and relaunched in July 22. This included an Easy Read version and the escalation form is now an online version for ease of access. The relaunch has been assured by the Performance and Quality Assurance subgroup and it has been promoted at the BSCP meeting in September 22. The Executive Group has oversight of escalations as part of its' standing items from September 22. Learning and best practice from escalations is taken into our learning cycle. Usage of the escalation policy is tracked and reported to BSCP meetings Sept 22. Adult Social Care has adopted the BSCP escalation policy Sept 22.		

Main Findings Although there is an education representative in the MASH, the effectiveness of this role is restricted because it provides limited information. The education representative's role does not require them to contribute to decision making for children.					
Representation of the MASH to be reviewed to include the Education input to ensure that all key agencies in children's lives share information and contribute to decision making in a timely way.	EDCS	HoS Front Door HoS Education DCI SYP HS SY ICB	31/12/2022	Colleagues in early help and health looking at system for how information is shared with GP's Dec 22. Education representative in the MASH has access to school information and is able to share with other practitioners June 22. Role and remit of the education representative in the MASH being revised with implementation set for Dec 22. Probation service has introduced a SPOC as MASH contact for checks and concerns for action May 22. Working towards co-locating SPOC in the MASH Dec 22.	
Main Findings For a small number of children, some key specialist agencies are not always invited to, or do not always attend, strategy meetings. This means that decisions are made without this potentially essential information being shared about the child.					
Key partner agencies will ensure that all specialist agencies attend strategy meetings where they are invited to attend and will hold to account non-attendance.	EDCS	HoS Front Door	31/12/2022	Team managers escalate non-attendance at Strategy Meetings June 22. MASH operational procedures set out agencies to be consulted and considered when seeking to gather information Sept 22. Stronger links being built with partners, health, and probation, support better information sharing June 22. Auditing schedule updated to ensure specialist agencies attendance at strategy meeting Dec 22.	

JTAI Improvement Plan: written statement of action (WSA)						
Priority 4	Actions – (What we will do)	LSP Lead	Action Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress (What steps have we taken so far)	RAG
Main Findings For a small number of children, decisions to step down to early help are overly optimistic regarding the sustainability of parental change and would be managed more effectively through statutory child in need intervention.						
The consistent application of thresholds for children stepping down to early help services	Thresholds to be reviewed and revised and the refreshed thresholds to be embedded across the multi-agency partnership to ensure application of thresholds is consistent and children get the right level of support at the right time.	EDCS	HoS Early Help HoS Front Door	31/01/2023	LSCP multiagency workshops scheduled in Nov 22 to review threshold document. PPWPD subgroup will promote once reviewed and embed in training February 2023	
	Step down protocol strengthened to include updated recommended practice delivered through training that ensures shared understanding and responsibilities amongst multi agency professionals.	EDCS	HoS Early Help HoS Front Door	30/11/2022	Step down protocol being strengthened with a focus on naming lead professional and formal step-down process being undertaken at the point of exit from social care Nov 22. Single and multiagency audits being scheduled post implementation to quality assure plans are SMART and jointly owned Nov 22. The outcomes of multiagency audits will be reviewed to evaluate training implementation in February 2023.	
Main Findings Workload demands for individual professionals across the partnership affect their capacity to consistently provide the right help at the right time. The variability in the quality and regularity of supervision affects how professionals progress their interventions to improve children's outcomes. It is of concern that a decision to reopen or change the direction of the planned intervention was identified for more than half the children of the sample. This means that the partnership cannot be wholly confident about the level of effective single agency management oversight and decision-making to safeguard all children.						

	<p>All partner agencies to ensure there is sufficient capacity within their service areas to ensure appropriate resource to enable the delivery of good outcomes for children and their families.</p>	<p>EDCS CN ICB Ch Supt</p>	<p>HoS QA DCI SYP HS SY ICB HoS Early Help</p>	<p>31/03/2023</p>	<p>Children's Social Care have established a workforce development group which will develop strategies to tackle workforce demand in June 22. Developed a workforce action plan to support recruitment and retention in Aug 22. Relunched the recruitment campaign in September 22 with an enhanced offer in CSC to support recruitment. Developed new microsite to attract interest in working for Barnsley completed Sept 22. Undertaking a benchmarking exercise to support the development of retention offer to children's social workers Jan 23. Increased offer of student placement in this cohort completed Sept 22. Developing additional supervisory support for ASYE's in CSC through recruitment of an AP in Practice Development Team, underway Sept 22. Developing APs to allow for reduced caseloads to support specialisms and promote learning in teams with AP support group in place Sept 22. Employment of agency staff to support capacity and reduce caseloads to promote a supportive operating environment for practitioners (19 agency in place Sept 22). Recruitment of agency managers to reduce span of control of team managers to support reflective decision making and critical thinking completed in front door service Aug 22 progressing in CYPT Sept 22. Enhanced and improved the training and development offer, to include a rolling programme of workshops to promote learning in CSC Sept 22. Developing induction for all new social work staff and reviewing progression framework underway Oct 22. Social work practice model under review to support consistency of practice Nov 22.</p> <p>Management decision making continues to be a key line of enquiry in all CSC audits Sept 22. An increase to monthly CSC full case file audits commenced June 22. Further CSC single agency audits with a focus on the front door scheduled for Oct 22, Nov 22, and Feb 23. Moderation for CSC audits is HoS led and commenced Aug 22.</p> <p>In Policing, capacity and capability of Local Referral Unit and Protected Vulnerable People Teams to be subject to ongoing scrutiny. Overall capacity and capability are subject to a Strategic Protected Vulnerable People Review, expected to bring proposals in the Autumn 22. PVP remains on the Force risk register. Documents track professional qualifications and training of staff Individual workloads of officers are tracked through PVP PAG monthly performance document.</p> <p>Like many agencies, Health have and are experiencing issues around staffing and recruiting to vacancies and joint work is taking place with social care to look at recruitment and promotions of careers in the NHS and social care sectors. Safeguarding professionals are in place in all health agencies to support and advise staff and act as a point of escalation.</p>	
	<p>All multi agencies to ensure that managers delivering supervision have the tools and capacity required to ensure good reflective supervision is delivered which supports good consistency safe decision making for children</p>	<p>EDCS CN ICB Ch Supt</p>	<p>HoS QA DCI SYP HS SY ICB</p>	<p>31/03/2023</p>	<p>Children's Social Care Supervision Policy has a relaunch planned for November 2022 to ensure that the managers and social workers understand their roles and responsibilities. Continuing to track the quality of supervision through monthly case file audit cycle – monthly from Sept 22. Planning to deliver training for children's social workers and managers around reflective supervision to support quality Dec 22. Increased tracking and monitoring of the frequency of supervision to children's social workers through data performance reporting system Sept 22.</p> <p>Police Force wide recruitment strategy including detective/Investigating Officer pathways to increase training and staff numbers is part of 5-year plan. Recruitment of detective resources, who staff child protection departments, is a national issue, with a shortage of Detectives and in PVP, in particular, are deemed hard to fill posts. The national strategy has led to the development of a number of different pipelines to recruitment that involve fast tracked and direct entry into the Detective realm. It is the requirement of our professional body that before officers can be specially trained in the investigation of child abuse that they must have their basic Detective qualification first. The force has a national programme of funding to uplift police numbers. The movement and training of that uplift into the Detective and then child protection world, is subject to short-, medium- and long-term strategic resource planning.</p> <p>All health agencies have supervision policies in place and processes to ensure relevant staff groups receive/access supervision. This is routinely reviewed through internal governance structures.</p> <p>All health agencies have in place safeguarding leads to support staff to undertake their safeguarding roles and responsibilities and provide adhoc supervision and advice/support as required.</p>	

JTAI Improvement Plan: written statement of action (WSA)

Priority 5	Actions – (What we will do)	LSP Lead	Action Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress (What steps have we taken so far)	RAG
The provision of an appropriate adult when children are arrested by the police.	Main Findings The provision of an appropriate adult for children arrested in Barnsley is ineffective. Out of hours, the appropriate adult service relies on volunteers who do not attend to police station to advocate for children unless to do so would expedite their release from custody. This means that children detained during those hours do not receive the appropriate support.					
	Develop and implement a robust and fit for purpose out of hours provision of appropriate adult service for children arrested.	EDCS	SM YJT	30/06/2023	The Youth Justice Service commissions the Appropriate Adult Service and has commenced immediate negotiations with contract owners to provide sufficient appropriate adult service June 22 by variation to contract. Review of Appropriate Adult Service to children is in progress with outcome set for Jan 23. Existing contract being challenged via Sheffield City Council, with a view to implementing an interim amendment by Oct 22. Retender exercise scheduled to commence in Jan 23 with a new service provision implemented by Jun 23.	

JTAI Improvement Plan: written statement of action (WSA)

Priority 6	Actions – (What we will do)	LSP Lead	Action Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress (What steps have we taken so far)	RAG
The timeliness of the police response to all incidents when there is an identified risk to children.	Main Findings Some children are not seen quickly enough when there is a reported police incident and there is an identified risk to children. The delayed response from police officers has left these children at potential risk of harm.					
	Evidence that all incidents are risk assessed and appropriate priority given to those where there is a risk to a child identified.	Ch Supt	DCI SYP	31/12/2022	Police will evidence that all incidents are risk assessed and appropriate priority given to those where there is a risk to a child identified Dec 22. All incidents are subject to a THRIVE assessment at the point of receipt and at intervals, including where deployment is delayed, or the incident remains unresolved. DA and Child Concern incidents are flagged and identifiable. Outstanding DA and CC incidents are addressed at local and force daily management meetings Dec 22	
	Main Findings Police officers take appropriate immediate action to safeguard children living in neglectful homes. For a small number of children, this could be better planned with social workers, prior to police protection powers being used.					
	Training/policy and objectives at a District level to increase the awareness understanding of prioritising the incidents and recording reasons for a delay.	Ch Supt	DCI SYP	31/12/2022	Police Training/policy and objectives at a District level to increase the awareness understanding of prioritising the incidents and recording reasons for a delay. On the current agenda for one to ones with District supervisors and will be addressed at quarterly Sergeants Away Days and bespoke training days.	

JTAI Improvement Plan: written statement of action (WSA)

Priority 7	Actions – (What we will do)	LSP Lead	Action Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress (What steps have we taken so far)	RAG
The availability of and the quality of the emergency duty team's	Main Findings The structure and function of EDT mean that it does not routinely provide partners or children with an effective response to meet the safeguarding needs of all children outside normal office hours. This means that some children do not receive the timeliest response to safeguarding concerns.					
	Implement a revised children's specialist service delivery model as an extension of an out of hours front door service.	EDCS	HoS Front Door	30/04/2023	Children's Social Care have completed an EDT review with new model to be implemented April 23. Review planned for in 3 months following launch July 23. Revised children's specialist service delivery model as an extension of an out of hours front door service is in development April 23.	

(EDT) response to children and partner agencies.	Police will document all interactions with EDT and escalate any concerns to the Local Authority and provide feedback to improve service delivery.	Ch Supt	DI SYP	31/12/2022	Police process in development to support feedback to local authority of interactions with EDT, in place by Dec 22. The Escalation policy will be applied for all areas of professional disagreement with findings shared to ensure continuous improvement.	
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JTAI Improvement Plan: written statement of action (WSA)

Additional Main Findings	Actions – (What we will do)	LSP Lead	Action Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress (What steps have we taken so far)	RA G
Main Findings						
The BSCP has recently experienced changes to all its executive partners. This has resulted in some delay in agreeing future priorities. Partners have started to make progress. For example, they have increased the frequency of meetings, created a MASH operational and strategic group, and are reviewing the performance data that the partnership receives. However, the pace of change has not always been sufficient to have a positive impact on improving children's lives.						
	Executive partners to agree a partnership improvement and performance framework and strategy that sets out and tracks priorities	EDCS CN ICB Ch Supt	SD CSC DI SYP HoS ICB	31/12/2022	The LSCP has invited National Safeguarding Partnerships Facilitators to work with us to build an effective partnership, help us gain some traction and pace Sept 22. Meeting due November 22. Continue to utilise the advice and critical challenge of the independent scrutineer Sept 22. Work has started in the Strategic MASH to build a performance framework to count what matters and measure outcomes Sept 22.	
	MASH operational and strategic groups to implement a fit for purpose service delivery performance scorecard	EDCS CN ICB Ch Supt	SD CSC DI SYP HoS ICB	31/12/2022	MASH operational and strategic groups now oversee delivery of required actions to achieve improvement. Task and finish group commenced to develop scorecard development Sept 22. Business Intelligence colleagues with colleagues across the partnership to progress scorecard development, which is experiencing some delay due to Mosaic implementation Nov 22.	
Main Findings						
The BSCP has a broad core membership, and this means that a range of professionals offer their knowledge and experience of front door services for children and contribute to forward planning. However, the private, voluntary, and independent education providers are not currently represented on the BSCP.						
	Membership to be reviewed to consider how private, voluntary, and independent education providers can be represented in the BSCP	EDCS CN ICB Ch Supt	HoS Education HoS QA	31/12/22	Executive partners to review representation of BSCP Nov 22	
Main Findings						
The commissioning of child safeguarding practice reviews does not always provide partners with all the information they need to implement learning from significant incidents.						
	Safeguarding practice review actions are SMART identifying learning that can be measured to ensure they lead to improved practice and better outcomes children	EDCS CN ICB Ch Supt	HoS QA	31/03/2022	With the support and challenge from the IS the LCSPR subgroup revisited the two latest practice reviews and a rapid review to ensure all learning has been captured in previous action plans and produced clear actions to support practice improvement going forward Aug 22.	

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – CORE SERVICES

TITLE: BARNSELY COUNCIL ANNUAL CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT – APRIL 2021 TO MARCH 2022

REPORT TO:	CABINET
Date of Meeting	19 October 2022
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Core Services
Key Decision	No
Public or Private	Public

<p>Purpose of report</p> <p>The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with an analysis and overview of the customer complaints and compliments handled under the Council’s management of customer feedback procedures during the period 1 April 2021 to March 2022.</p> <p>Council Plan priority</p> <p>The Council priority this report relates to is Enabling Barnsley.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>That Cabinet: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. receive and discuss the information contained in this report as required under the complaint’s legislation.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The data contained in this report was correct at the time of creation. However, there is a risk to some variation in future reported data due to updates.
- 1.2 The Council’s procedures are written as part of our statutory obligations under the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, and the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The report will also advise on the compliments received by the Council, and the improvements to service delivery that have arisen as a result of complaints made within this period.
- 1.3 The submission of compliments and complaints is an important means by which

people can let the Council know about their experiences. The number of complaints and compliment received by the Council are a good indicator of how accessible the procedures are for considering complaints rather than an indicator of how well or not a service is performing, it is the outcome of the investigations which tells us if things are working well or not. The aim is to ensure that compliments and complaints are recorded, acknowledged, and appropriately responded to.

- 1.4 It is vital for continuous service improvement to know when our customers are happy with the services they receive and share with us their positive experiences. We refer to these as compliments and each compliment received is shared with the service concerned. However, on those occasions when a customer's experience falls below what they expect and they wish to complain about this, this information is equally as valuable, as it provides an opportunity for the organisation to reflect on its practice and identify where things may have gone wrong, what can be done to learn from this, and offer redress to the customer where required. The complaints procedures enable this and is an alternative dispute resolution process which aims to:
- clearly identify a customer's complaint
 - investigate thoroughly and fairly in partnership with the customer and service
 - reach a swift resolution
 - reflect upon any learning and identify service improvements
- 1.5 Customer compliments and complaints are recorded, received, managed, and facilitated by the Customer Resolution Team which is a part of the Business Improvement, Human Resources and Communications Business Unit.
- 1.6 The Customer Resolution Team also receive contacts where customers are not specifically complaining about the actions of the Council but wish to offer suggestions, ideas or advice, or make requests for services, we refer to these as non-complaints. All non-complaints are acknowledged with the customer, and they are advised why their contact is not being handled as a complaint and which service their contact has been shared with.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 A total number of 414 customer compliments have been received by the Council, with 50% of these being received in the Environment and Transport business unit. It is pleasing to report that this is the fifth year this business unit has received the most compliments across all Council services. However, 2021-22 did see a decrease in the total number of compliments received from the figure reported last year (475). Work will continue to ensure that customers and staff members know how to share positive experiences with the Customer Resolution Team.
- 2.2 712 customer complaints have been registered during 2021-22. This is an increase on last year's total of 320. However, of the 712, 211 of these contacts were later discontinued by the customer either withdrawing their complaint or no longer wishing to engage with the process, bringing the total number of complaints which were resolved to 501. It is disappointing that some of our customers do not continue with their complaints or withdraw them, and this can be for a variety of reasons not always known to us. Whilst these concerns do not continue to be investigated as a complaint the concerns raised should be shared with the service for their attention

and awareness. A review of the process we have in place for the action taken on discontinued complaints has taken place in quarter 1 of 2022-23 with the aim of seeing a reduction in the number of complaints which are being discontinued.

2.3 A comparison table of this year's performance against last year's on complaint numbers and outcomes can be seen in appendix 2.

2.4 There are many different reasons to explain why an increase in complaints has been seen during 2021-22, and it is important that we understand the details of this to ensure that where we are upholding these complaints, services are learning and improving in response. During 2022-23 the Customer Resolution Team will be holding a workshop with those services who have received the most upheld complaints to identify opportunities to improve and learn from the feedback we have received both in the management of complaints and from the complaints themselves. In consultation with services the following reasons have been identified below that go some way to initially understanding where an increase in the number of complaints may have resulted from:

It may be that:

- This is the first full year report on complaints and compliments following the Pandemic and services are still feeling the impact of this in terms of resources.
- People may be more aware of their rights to complain as a result of staff training and internal/external communications.
- Making a complaint is more accessible and easier to do.
- The role of the Council may have changed for people during the Pandemic with more people engaging with us than we have had previously.
- Customers' expectations or perceptions of services may not be possible to meet which is giving rise to them making a complaint.
- Longer term solutions identified as service improvements are not implemented or yet embedded into service delivery

Core Directorate:

- During 2021-22 the Finance business unit have reported that they had a significant increase in workloads as a result of their response to support the borough with various government initiatives such as Business Rate Relief grants, Test and Trace Support and other grants such as the Household Support Grant, supporting residents of the borough in most need. This resulted in an increase in customer contact, more residents and businesses contacting us for help in the midst of a global pandemic, impacting on the number of calls and call waiting times. To put into context this business unit received 59 complaints in 2021-22 of which 29 were upheld. The business unit supports in excess of 114,000 households and 9,000 businesses, whilst they would always aim to deliver the best possible service to our customers, in comparison to the number of customers we deal with on a day-to-day basis the number of complaints upheld is less than 0.25%. The business unit always take on board learning from

complaints, adapting systems and processes to simplify and improve the customer experience and address staff performance through training and support to ensure we deliver a professional, and seamless service.

Place Directorate:

- The Regeneration and Culture business unit acknowledge that they have seen a significant increase in workload for all of its services (in particular the Planning Service) as well as changes to resources within the teams, which has likely impacted on the capacity to respond to the complaints received. This, along with the contentious nature of some of the service provisions in this area, and the increase in applications, are just some of the known reasons for seeing an increase in complaints. The service will continue to use the information from complaints to listen to customers and identify service improvements where required.
- The Environment and Transport business unit acknowledge that during 2021-22 the Pandemic was still very much having an impact upon the service in terms of resources. It is understood that many of the complaints received for services were matters which are easily resolved relating mainly to waste management service delivery. The business unit have been, and continue to, work closely with the Customer Resolution Team to identify opportunities to improve service delivery from the customer complaints received. As services are starting to see the impact of the Pandemic reduce, they are working hard to ensure right first-time collections for residents. A project of in cab technology is to be reinstated and it is anticipated that it will be introduced into service delivery during 2022-23. This solution will have a strong customer focus and allow customers to receive real time updates. The business unit values the customer feedback it receives and can report that during 2021-22 Waste Services successfully collected to schedule 99.92% out of the 8.2 million collections and are anticipating a further 10% reduction of reported missed collections this financial year.

Children's Services Directorate:

- Education, Early Start and Prevention business unit have reported that an increase in the number of people accessing their services has been seen during 2021-22, particularly in the Special Educational Needs service area (SEND) where an increasing number of families are requesting an assessment for an Education and Health Care Plan and an increasing number that have a plan in place. Families in receipt of services can often have a long-standing relationship with SEND services and experience a wide range of services throughout this time. Complaints can often be complex and include actions taken by health and education providers where the Council can influence practice but not always control. There is a system wide SEND Improvement Programme in place governed by the SEND Oversight Board to accelerate sustainable system wide improvements. As well as the business unit investing in the service to ensure timely and effective services to families including decision making, customer service and timely delivery of statutory processes.
- The Children's Social Care business unit recognise that there has been an increase in the number of complaints received during 2021-22, particularly in relation to communication with customers. They acknowledge that this increase

may be an impact from the significant challenges the service has experienced, and is continuing to manage, in relation to staff turnover and lack of practice standards and practice model in place. The services are working hard to improve delivery of services and reduce the impact of these challenges on our customers through development of standards and a practice model, staff training and through working closely with the Customer Resolution Team in the management and resolution of the complaints being received and escalated. The services recognise the importance of learning from complaints and the value of the customers experience is a priority for this business unit.

Adult and Communities Directorate:

- Adults Social Care business unit have explained that they have received an increase in the number of referrals being received by their team which handles first point of contact from customers. In addition to this the services have identified that they have noticed from the complaints they are receiving that there is an expectation of services from customers, based upon information provided by other organisations, which is then causing the customer to challenge assessment decisions made by Adult Social Care. A number of complaints received also relate to cross service concerns attached to delays in financial assessments. The business unit have identified from these complaints that improvements to communication and robust case note recording has been required and they are in the process of delivering training in this area. As well as the Quality Assurance Team regularly reviewing service delivery and working together with the Customer Resolution Team to identify trends and service improvements from the complaints being made.
- The Communities business unit have identified that there was an impact on service delivery as a result of resources and capacity being prioritised necessarily on the pandemic response, and in turn it is recognised that there may be an impact in complaints as a result of this. It is hoped that this will be addressed during this year as the services have returned to pre-pandemic operating models.

2.5 It is important to note that not all customer concerns are processed as a complaint. Where a customer has contacted the service direct and their concerns are resolved, there is often no requirement to escalate this through the Council's complaints procedure. However, it is vital that we make sure the customer is informed of their right to make a complaint should their concern remain unresolved, or they remain unhappy. Work continues within the Council to encourage this approach, thus ensuring complaints received are those where there is a real need to focus on investigating where a customer's experience has fallen below expectations.

2.6 There is a continuing trend which shows it is the customer in receipt of the service that is making the complaint, and the majority of complaints were made directly to the Customer Resolution Team (59%). In 2021-22, there has been an increase in customers making their complaint online (70% from 53%) and work continues to encourage our customers to access our online services.

2.7 99% of customer complaints received were acknowledged within a 5 working day timescale, with 100% Adults Social Care complaints being acknowledged within the statutory 3 working days. Performance in this area has improved when compared to

the figure reported last year for those complaints acknowledged within 5 working days (89%).

- 2.8 97% of complaints met their corporate and/or statutory timescale for completion at all stages in the process. Again, this is a positive increase compared to the figure reported last year, 87%. Furthermore, this year has seen a change in how most complaints have been resolved (501) with most complaints being resolved through early resolution, 329 and 172 requiring formal investigation.
- 2.9 The outcomes from complaints showed 261 cases being upheld, 123 partially upheld, 106 not upheld, 10 inconclusive and 1 pending completion. It is important to note that whilst 211 customers discontinued with their complaint during 2021-22, these concerns should have been shared with services for their awareness. A review of the process the Customer Resolution Team has in place for the action taken on discontinued complaints has taken place during quarter 1 of 2022-23 with the aim of seeing a reduction in the number of complaints which are being discontinued.
- 2.10 In 2021-22, 31 complaints progressed onto the review stage, of which:
- 11 were in Regeneration and Culture
 - 6 were in Environment and Transport
 - 4 were in Adult Social Care
 - 4 were in Education, Early Start and Prevention
 - 3 were in Children's Social Care and Safeguarding
 - 2 were in Stronger, Safer and Healthier Communities
 - 1 was in Financial Services.
- 2.11 There were also 15 complaints which progressed onto the statutory second stage of the Children's Social Care Procedures and 3 of these escalated to the third and final stage of the process.
- 2.12 The total number of complaints progressing to the next stage of the procedures is an increase on the number reported for 2020-21 (9). The purpose of the progression stage is to review our actions and response to the customer based upon what they believe remains outstanding from the first investigation undertaken. Whilst it is positive to note that the number of complaints progressing onto the review stage remains low compared to the number of complaints received (9%). On some occasions those customers who did tell us that they remained unhappy were supported by the Customer Resolution Team to resolve their concerns without the need to progress their complaint onto the next stage of the process.
- 2.13 Our records indicate that we have received 36 contacts from the Ombudsman office in 2021-22, this is an increase from the previous year's reported position (28). However, we believe the reduction in cases escalating to the Ombudsman office in the previous year was a direct result of the Ombudsman not accepting new complaints between March and June 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.14 3 of the contacts originated from the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) and 33 from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). 14 of these required the LGSCO to undertake a formal investigation, of which 9 cases identified fault with 8 of these causing an injustice. 7 cases required a form of financial

redress to be made as well as improvements to service delivery. The Council agreed with the Ombudsman's recommendations to resolve and redress these complaints.

- 2.15 The LGSCO annual review letter was also received by the authority on 20 July 2022. This letter provides details of annual performance statistics on the decisions made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council for the year ending 31 March 2022. The letter focuses on the outcomes of complaints and what can be learned from them – considering three key areas:
1. Complaints upheld
 2. Compliance with recommendations
 3. Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority
- 2.16 The Council's performance (based on a total of 13 investigations for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022) for complaints upheld was 69% which is an improvement on last year's position of (83%) but appreciating the number of complaints received is higher. Our compliance with recommendations continues to be 100% for all cases which is positive to note. In relation to satisfactory remedy, which relates to the number of cases that the Ombudsman considers to be resolved and remedied satisfactorily by the Council before reaching them, remains at 0%. Additional support measures were implemented following this result last year to support services in this area, which unfortunately we have not yet seen an impact in improved performance for during 21-22, work will continue to be undertaken to support services with the aim of seeing an improvement in our performance.
- 2.17 The Ombudsman's letter also makes reference to concerns held in respect of the resources and prioritisation given to complaint functions. We have recently introduced an additional resource into the team which manage our complaints service to ensure that we continue to prioritise complaints, detect early warning signs of problems and offer opportunities to improve service delivery.
- 2.18 As evidenced in the percentages reported, a significant amount of work has been undertaken to improve performance and in doing so, firmly embedding the importance of complaints. During 2020-21 we highlighted that additional work would be undertaken to continue to improve service delivery and we are pleased to report the Customer Resolution Team are:
- Continuing to proactively work with all services in maintaining high performance levels and striving to meet statutory/corporate complaint requirements and timescales
 - Impressing the importance of delivering a robust and effective complaints service; one that prides itself in resolving dispute matters swiftly and ensuring the needs of our customers is of paramount importance
 - Reinforcing this message with attendance at Directorate Management Team and other management meetings to discuss the nature of complaints received, explore where gaps may exist and working collaboratively to get this right next time
 - Undertaking targeted work with services where complaints trends and themes are emerging to understand where change needs to happen

- Ensuring the allocation of each complaint through the performance management system
- Taking customer complaints as an opportunity to learn and forge change in the delivery of our services. Reinforcing the application of our values that will enhance service delivery and the customer experience going forwards
- Learning more from what our customers are telling us and striving harder to get underneath what has gone wrong. Challenge the status-quo to make changes and improvements to how we deliver our services
- Continuing to adopt a 'critical friend' approach with services to support learning from complaints through embedding this in systems and processes

2.19 During 2022-23, we plan to continue to build on the above as well as undertake the following:

- Launch a POD training course on an introduction to complaints for all staff members.
- Hold a workshop with those services who are receiving the highest number of upheld complaints to review processes on how we manage complaints and learn from them.
- Review our online customer complaint and compliment form to improve how complaints and compliments are captured and routed through the organisation.
- Explore the option of creating a child friendly online form for children and young people to complete.
- Review present system for the management of complaints and compliments with a view to implement identified changes which will improve service delivery.
- Work with services to look at developing a wider policy for how unreasonable and persistent customer behaviour will be managed across the Council, not directly attached to a person who is making a complaint.

3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

3.1 Financial and Risk

Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer).

As part of the complaints process a number of formal resolution methods may have financial costs associated with them such as external investigations, reviews and appointment of mediators and financial settlement (where appropriate). The cost of these dispute resolution options is aligned directly to the business unit budget the complaint relates to.

As a resolution to a complaint, it is important that consideration is given when the Council is required to make improvements and how it can remedy the customer for any impact or injustice caused. This may also on occasions have (limited) financial

implications, again the cost of any remedy is done so in consultation with Legal Services and are aligned directly to the business unit budget the complaint relates to.

The effective resolution of complaints can lead to service improvements and complainant satisfaction.

3.2 Legal

The annual report is written as part of our statutory obligations under the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, and the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

3.3 Equality

Full Equality Impact Assessment not applicable as this is a performance report produced as part of regulations.

The Customer Resolution Team has worked in consultation with the Equality Service during 2022 with regards to capturing customer accessibility data in relation to the Council's complaints procedure. Actions arising from this will continue to be developed during 2022-23.

3.4 Sustainability

A decision-making wheel has not been completed as this is a performance report produced as part of regulations.

3.5 Employee

All staff should be aware of the complaint's procedures covering their area of work to enable advice to be given to service users of the options available to them.

Staff resources are needed in order to carry out investigations following a complaint. On rare occasions other procedures such as management investigations may be required following a complaint investigation.

It is recognised that there are a number of complaints each year where the complexity of the complaint can create a high volume of work and commitment for the services they relate to. The reasons for this, whilst individual to the circumstances of the complaint, are often related to dispute resolution, service delivery and procedural requirements (some of which are statutory). It is important to recognise the impact that complex complaints can have upon the workforce in respect of workload and wellbeing. To help mitigate this the Customer Resolution Team provide support to services in the handling of complaints, offer provisions such as training, and welcome staff feedback on our procedures and processes.

3.6 Communications

The report will be made available on the Council's website upon Cabinet approval.

4. CONSULTATION

Discussed at Senior Management Team on 13 September 2022

Circulated to Barnsley Leadership Team members

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Not applicable.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Not applicable.

7. GLOSSARY

LGSCO – Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

HOS – Housing Ombudsman Service

8. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Barnsley Council Annual Customer Complaints and Compliment Report – 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

Appendix B: Comparable performance table on complaint numbers and outcomes


9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

a) Management of Customer Feedback Procedure

b) Management of Children’s Social Care Customer Feedback Procedure

If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email governance@barnsley.gov.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made

10. REPORT SIGN OFF

Financial consultation & sign off	Senior Financial Services officer consulted and date <div data-bbox="608 1541 1414 1861" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"><p>Financial Implications/Consultation</p><p>14/09/22</p><p>..... <i>(To be signed by senior Financial Services officer where no direct financial implications)</i></p></div>
Legal consultation & sign off	Legal Services officer consulted: Sukdave Ghuman Service Director for Law and Governance

	<i>20th September 2022</i>
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Report Author: Claire Dobby
Post: Customer Resolution Manager
Date: September 2022

PERFORMANCE REVIEW TABLE

Directorate	Business Unit	Complaints Total			Complaint Outcomes	
		Total number of complaints reported in 2020-21	Total number of complaints reported in 2021-22	Increase/decrease	Total number of complaints upheld (full or in part) 2020-21	Total number of complaints upheld (full or in part) 2021-22
Core	Finance	28	59	Increase	13	29
	Business Improvement, Human Resources and Communications	3	4	Increase	1	1
	Customer Information and Digital Services	9	8	Decrease	9	2
	Business Support and Governance	2	4	Increase	0	2
	Legal Services	0	1	Increase	0	1
	Total	42	76	Overall Increase	23	35
Place	Regeneration and Culture	29	63	Increase	12	29
	Environment and Transport	128	339	Increase	73	224
	Total	157	402	Overall Increase	85	253
Adults and Communities	Adult Social Care	30	49	Increase	14	25
	Stronger, Safer and Healthier Communities	13	23	Increase	3	7
	Total	43	72	Overall Increase	17	32
Children's Services	Education, Early Start and Prevention	12	40	Increase	7	17
	Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	55	116	Increase	19	47
	Total	67	156	Overall Increase	26	64
Public Health and Regulation	Public Health (0-19)	3	1	Decrease	0	0
	Regulation Services	8	5	Decrease	1	0

	Total	11	6	Overall Decrease	1	0
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ANNUAL CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT 2021-22

Barnsley - the place of possibilities

**Healthy
Barnsley**

**Learning
Barnsley**

**Growing
Barnsley**

**Sustainable
Barnsley**

**Enabling
Barnsley**

We are a modern, inclusive, efficient, productive and high-performing council

COMPLAINTS

COMPLIMENTS

LEARNING

Barnsley - the place of possibilities



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Barnsley Council's annual complaints and compliments report, which provides the council, partners, and members of the public with important information on what our customers have told us about their experiences and expectations of the services they have received during 2021-22. This report looks at all the complaints and compliments that have been recorded by the council during the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, including those complaints received about Adult and Children Social Care services.

Whilst we have achieved so many great things this year, it is our aim to ensure that we respond to and manage rising customer expectations and demands, but also recognise the opportunities this presents. To achieve this, we need to listen to what our customers are telling us, manage their expectations and continuously improve our services. Therefore, customer complaints and compliments are important, and why it is our aim to ensure that our customers feel able to provide us with this information and know how to do this. We also aim to respond fairly, in partnership with the customer and reach a swift resolution where putting it right is at the heart of what we always consider.

The Customer Resolution Team are a part of the Business Improvement, Human Resources and Communication business unit and are responsible for the management, facilitation and collation of all customer complaints and compliments received for the council.

The council has two complaints procedures for managing complaints, one for Children's Social Care which has 3 stages and one for all other council services, including Adults Social Care, complaints which has 2 stages. For further information on either of these procedures please visit our internet page at <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/have-your-say/complaints-and-compliments/>



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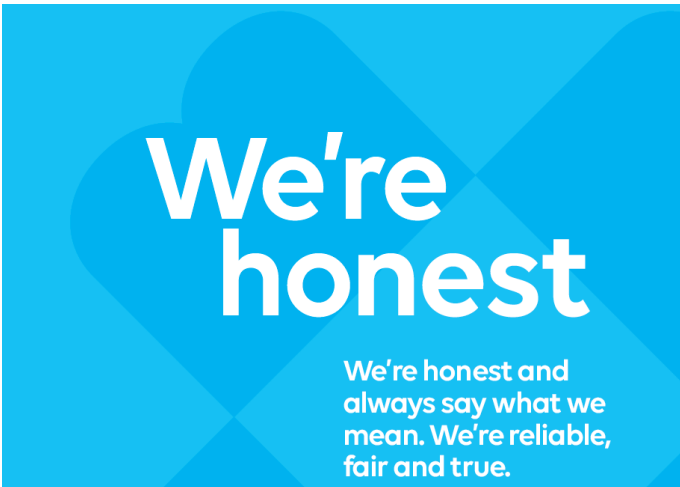
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Customer Complaints and
Compliments Data

WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK



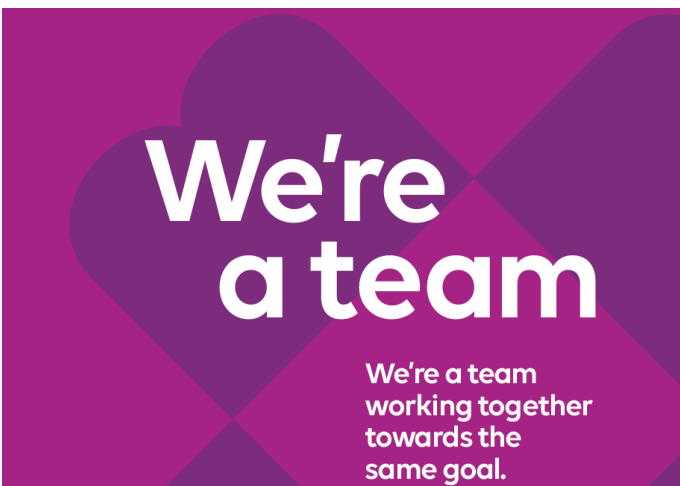
We've received a total of 414 compliments



We received 712 complaints and identified many learning actions to improve our services



There have been 36 Ombudsman contacts received and 9 of these were upheld



We listen to what our customer says and learn when things go wrong

DIRECTORATES INTRODUCTION

The complaints and compliments we receive from our customers are registered against the five main directorates of the council (as they were during 2021-22). What each directorate does is described below:

Core

This directorate provides both internal and external services which are core to how the council operates. These includes: Finance (such as payments and council tax); Human Resources (services for employees and health and safety); Business Improvement and Communications (such as performance management, marketing, and communications); Legal (such as law and compliance) and Governance, Members and Business Support.

Place

This directorate provides services that help to transform the borough, particularly in the creation of a Thriving and Vibrant Economy and enabling Strong and Resilient Communities. The types of services this includes: Environment and Transport (such and waste management, parks, highways and engineering, neighbourhood services, bereavement services and home to school transport); Regeneration and Culture (such as planning and redesign of the town centre and principal towns, museums and visitor sites, housing and energy, and employment and skills).

Children's Services

This directorate provides services that relate specifically to children and young people of the borough. This includes: Education (such as education welfare and attendance, Early Start (such as childcare services); Prevention (such as family centre services) and Children's Social Care and Safeguarding.

Adults and Communities

This directorate services the communities within the borough and includes services such as: Stronger, Safer and Healthier Communities (such as safer neighbourhoods and enforcement) and Adults Social Care.

Public Health and Regulatory Services

This directorate provides the services to the borough relating to health and regulation such as: 0 to 19 service (health visitors) and Regulatory Services (commercial regulations, food, hygiene, and pollution control).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

To help you with some of the terms we use in this report please see below a brief explanation for some of the key words.

Complaint: this is where a customer has told us that they are unhappy about something we may have done, the services we are delivering or how we have delivered the services.

Compliment: this is where a customer has told us that they are happy and satisfied with something we may have done, the services we are delivering or how we have delivered the services.

Early Resolution: we want to resolve complaints as quickly as we can for our customers and some complaints don't always need an in-depth investigation. We try to resolve these types of complaints within 2 to 5 working days.

Formal Investigation: sometimes we may need to take an in-depth investigation into a complaint and require a bit more time to resolve the complaint. We have two procedures for managing complaints one for Children's Social Care which has 3 stages and one for all other council services, including Adults Social Care, complaints which has 2 stages. For further information on either of these procedures please visit our internet page at <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/have-your-say/complaints-and-compliments/>

Timescales:

Timescale	Children's Social Care Complaints (CSC)	All other Council Services (Corporate inc Adult Social Care)
Early Resolution	2 working days	2 to 5 working days
Formal Investigation - Stage 1	10 working days	25 to 60 working days
Formal Investigation/Review - Stage 2	25 to 65 working days	10 to 30 working days
CSC Review Panel – Stage 3	50 working days	-

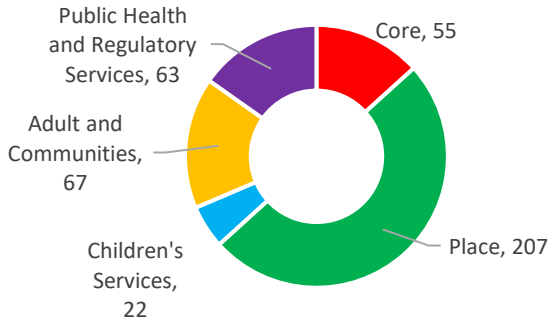
Discontinued/withdrawn complaints: these are complaints we have received but unfortunately the customer does not engage with us and the process further or they have decided, for whatever reason, to withdraw their complaint. A complaint which is resolved would not be classed as withdrawn. We still share these complaints with the relevant service for their awareness, but no formal response is issued.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman: will consider complaints about councils and adult care providers. A customer can complain to them if they remain unhappy after having their complaint considered by us through the complaint's procedure. For more information on what they do please visit their website at <https://www.lgo.org.uk/>

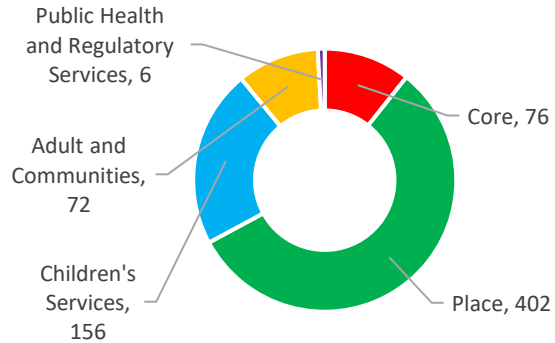
CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

ONE COUNCIL

Compliments by Directorate



Complaints by Directorate



712 complaints were received which is an increase from last year's position (320). **331** were registered as early resolutions and **381** formal investigations. Unfortunately, 211 customers decided to discontinue with their complaint either through withdrawing their complaint or through no further engagement in the process.



There were **36** Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman contacts (8 more than last year). The outcomes were 9 at fault, 1 no fault, 5 not enough evidence of fault, 4 outside of jurisdiction, 4 closed after enquires/investigation, 1 out of timescale, 6 council to pursue and 6 others.

Our customers told us overall they were unhappy with **how we were delivering our services** (our processes and procedures)

70% of complaints were made online. **81%** of complaints were made by the customer themselves.

EARLY RESOLUTIONS



331

OUTCOMES



Upheld	261
Partially upheld	123
Not upheld	106
Inconclusive	10
Pending	1

RESOLUTIONS



49 complaints were statutory Adult social care complaints
104 complaints were statutory Children's Social care complaints
559 complaints were corporate complaints

TIMESCALES



97% of complaints progressed through the procedure were responded to within the agreed timescale

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS DATA

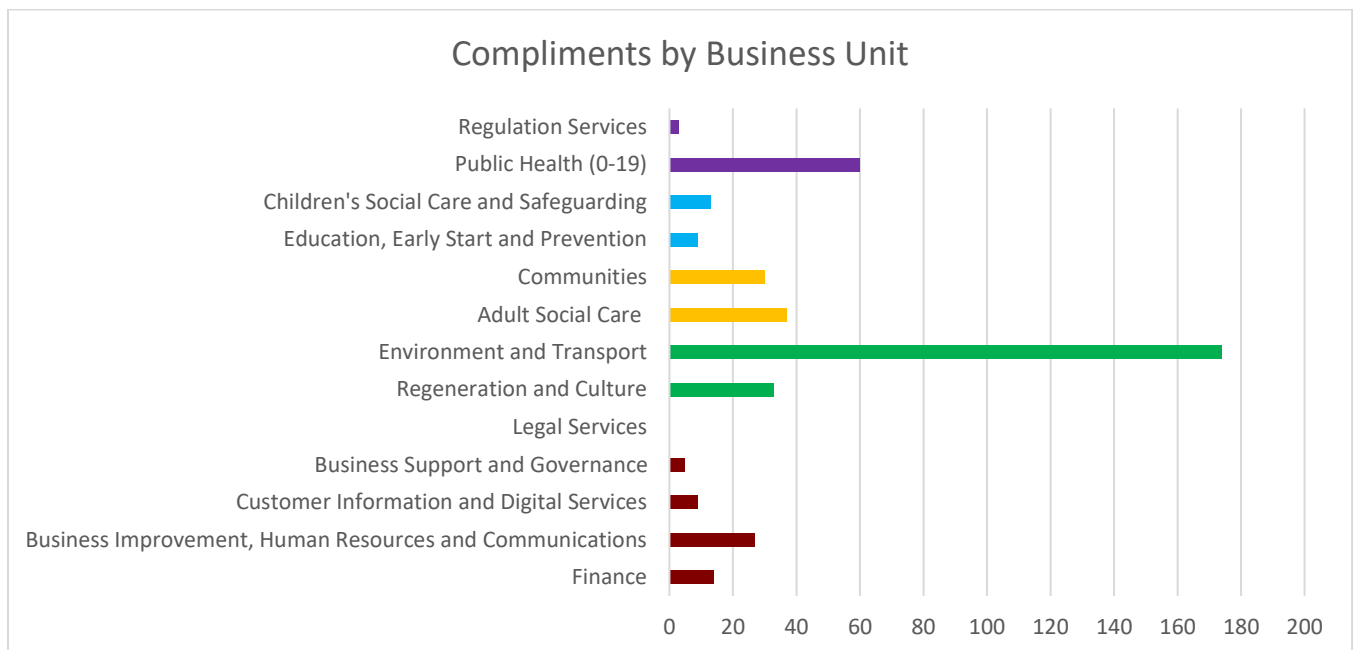
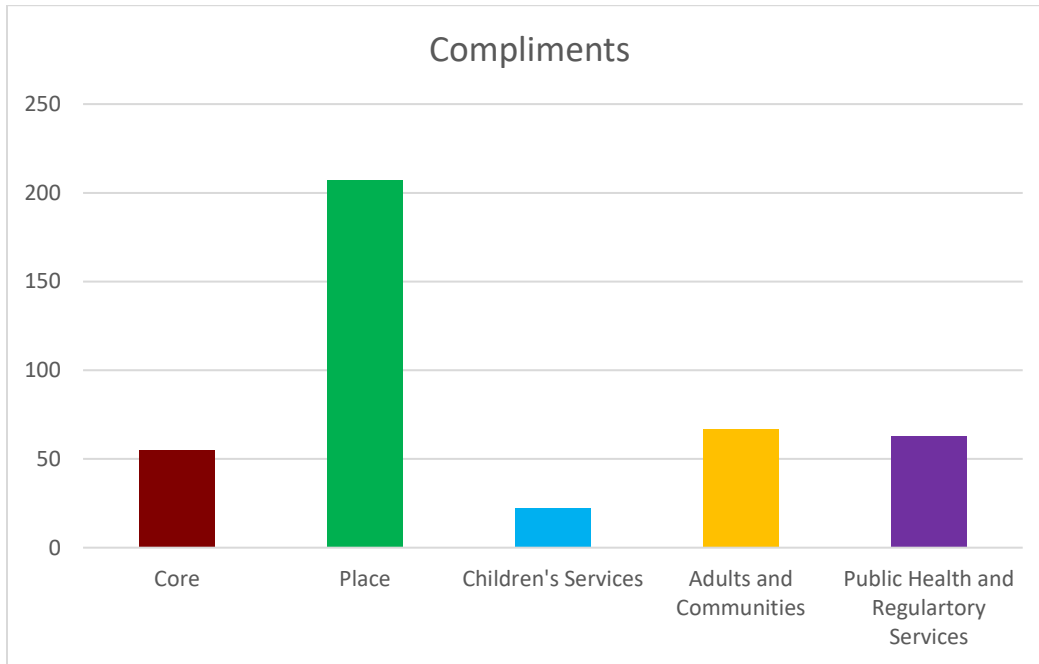
One of the aims of the Customer Resolution Team is to try and make the information we produce interesting and easy to read for our customers. We also understand it is important to be clear and transparent. It is for these reasons that we have included the key data that has supported the compilation of this report below, as well as then providing an overview of each Directorate's performance in the management of complaints and compliments.

Key areas to note

- This year we haven't received as many compliments as we reported last year, with a decrease of 61 complaints. We know from speaking with services that we do receive lots of positive feedback from customers, which could be compliments we could be recording. Therefore, we are working with services on how they can share this information with the Customer Resolution Team so we can use this information to learn and improve and understand what is working well for our customers.
- We have seen an increase in the number of complaints we have received this year. This is good news to us as it gives us reassurance that our customers know how to make a complaint when they are unhappy. Whilst not all these complaints have continued through the procedure due to the customer no longer engaging with the process or withdrawing their complaint, 501 complaints did receive a resolution. It is the resolution of the complaints which tell us if there are things we need to learn and improve upon from our investigations into these complaints.
- The number of complaints which are progressing to the next stage in our procedures has increased. We have also seen an increase in the number of complaints that are escalating to the Ombudsman office. This is disappointing to us as we are keen to resolve the complaint swiftly and effectively for our customers through working together. We will continue to ensure that staff members have awareness of the complaints process and of the good investigation principles which support resolution of complaints.
- Resolving complaints in statutory timescales or those we have agreed is important to us and 97% of complaints met their timescales. We will continue to strive to maintain and improve upon this performance area during 2022-23.
- We will be using the information we capture in our annual reports to continue to improve our complaints process, and in doing this working together to identify trends, themes, and any wider opportunities to improve our service delivery to our customers. As you will note there is a performance review table within this report which shows a comparison of the number and outcomes of complaints, we have received over the last two years. This information is helpful to us and supports focused conversations with these services around wider opportunities to improve.

1. NUMBER OF COMPLIMENTS

There has been a decrease in the number of compliments we have recorded this year, 414 compared to last year, 475. The Place directorate received the highest number of compliments with 50% of the total compliments being received in this directorate alone (207). Most of the compliment's we received related to our value of being excellent.



2. NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTION METHOD

Overall, we received 712 complaints during 2021-22 however, 211 of these were discontinued by the customer either withdrawing their complaint or no longer wishing to engage with the process, leaving 501 complaints which received a resolution. A review of the process we have in place for the action taken on discontinued complaints has taken place in quarter 1 of 2022-23 with the aim of seeing a reduction in the number of complaints which are being discontinued.

There has been an increase in the number of complaints we received this year compared to last year's figure (320), even when the number of discontinued complaints has been taken off the total number. Most complaints were resolved through early resolution this year, which is positive to note, with less complaints requiring formal investigation.

Directorate	Early Resolution	Formal Investigation	Total complaints
Core	29	25	54
Place	246	59	305
Children's Services	34	65	99
Adults and Communities	19	22	41
Public Health & Regulatory Services	1	1	2
Total	329	172	501

EARLY RESOLUTIONS



FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS



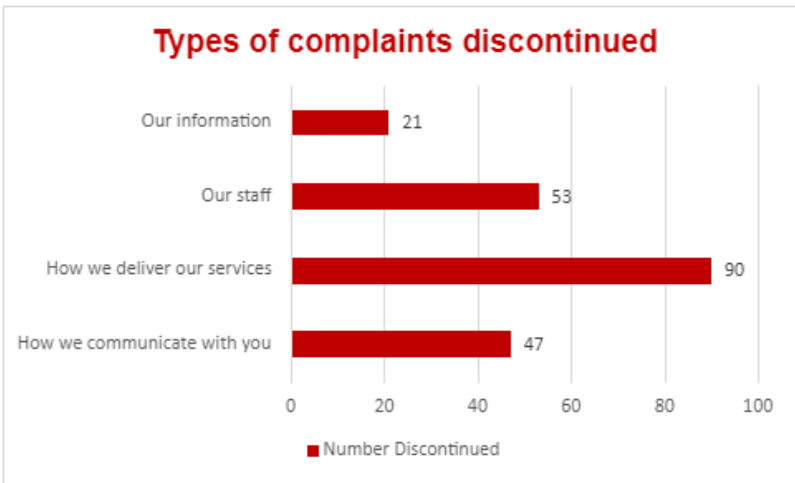
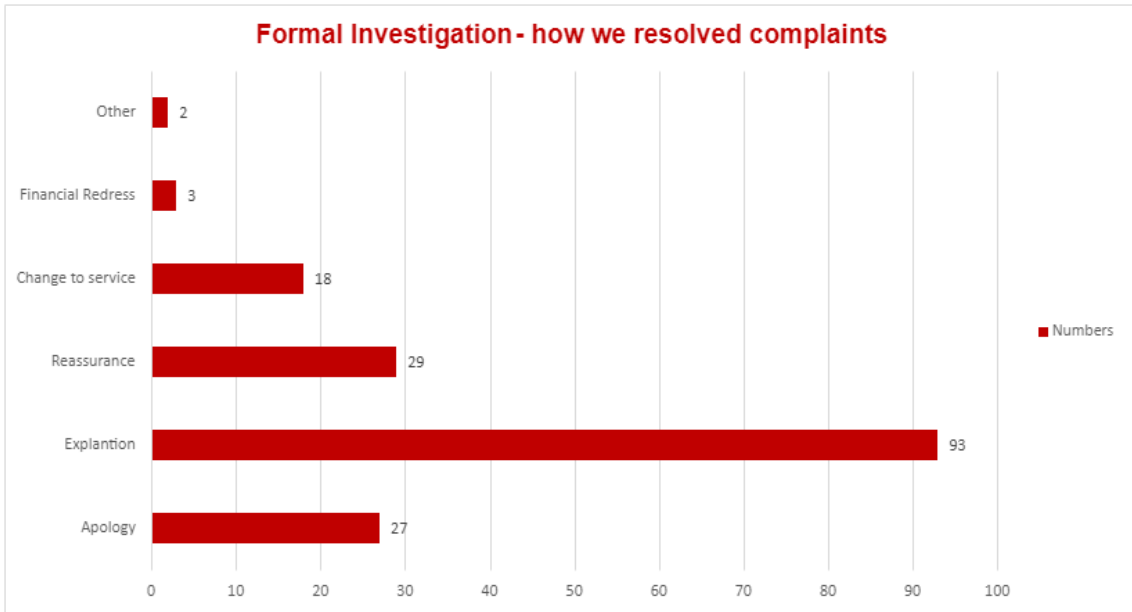
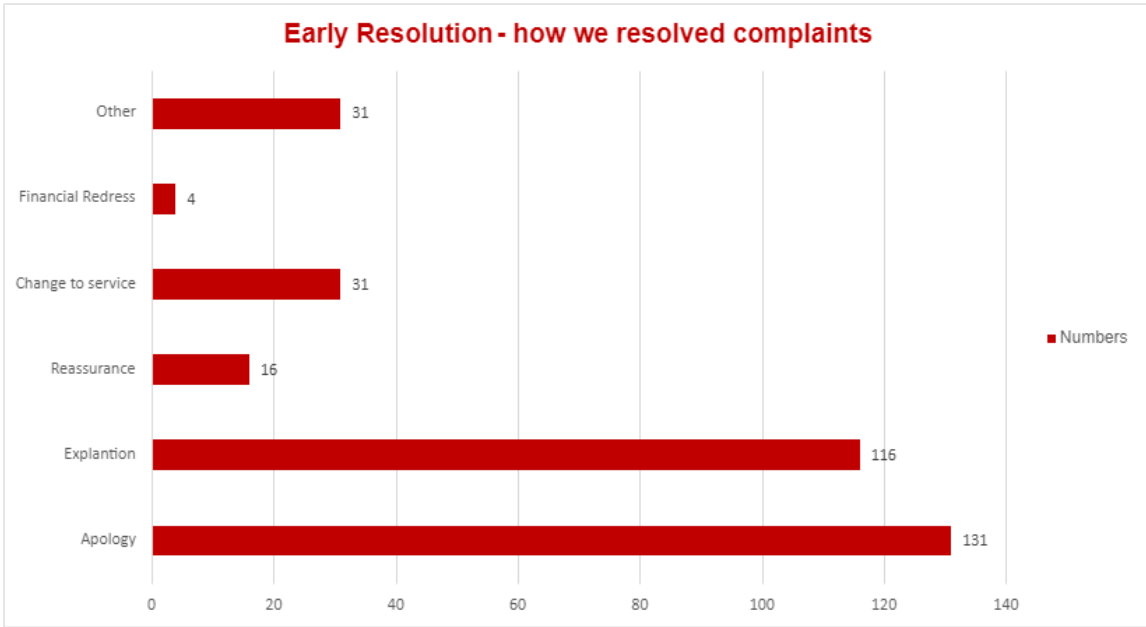
15 Children's Social Care complaints moved onto a stage 2 investigation of which 2 cases were upheld, 8 cases were partially upheld and 1 case was not upheld. 1 case was discontinued by the customer and 3 were still ongoing.



3 Children's Social Care complaints moved onto stage 3 and 1 was upheld whilst 2 were still ongoing.



31 Corporate complaints moved to the review stage of the process and 5 were upheld, 11 were partially upheld, 14 were not upheld and 1 was still ongoing.



211 complaints were discontinued during 2021-22 either through the customer withdrawing their complaint or through not engaging with the complaints process further. We've made some changes in 2022-23 to how we will handle these contacts moving forward

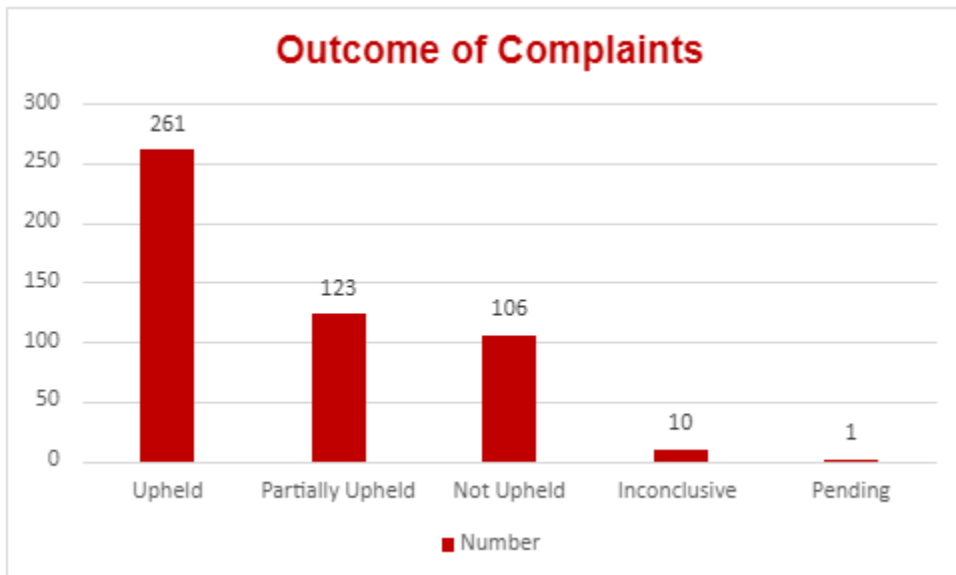
3. TYPE OF COMPLAINT



Most of our complaints were about how we deliver our services (our processes and procedures) and how we are communicating with our customers. It's important that we know this information so we can look at ways we can improve in these areas where we agree that our services have fallen below the expectations of what our customers should be receiving.



We acknowledge that we have either upheld or partially upheld most of the complaints we have received, therefore we are agreeing that we need to improve and learn from what our customers are telling us. In doing this we have provided an explanation to the customer as a resolution to their complaint to explain what went wrong and what we will do to address this.



Upheld = we agree with your complaint.

Partially upheld = we agree with some of your complaint.

Not upheld = we haven't found any evidence to support your complaint.

Inconclusive = we don't have enough evidence either way.

Pending = complaint still under investigation

4. TIMESCALES



We resolved **97%** of our complaints within timescales for all stages, and **98%** for those complaints considered at early resolution and formal investigation. This is an improvement upon last year's figure of **87%**. However, this means that we have not met timescales on **3%** of occasions.

We will continue to work to improve meeting the timescales as we know that this is important. However, sometimes due to availability and the complexity of some complaints these timescales are exceeded. We always aim to keep the customer up to date when there will be a delay with their complaint investigation.

Early Resolutions	Outcomes				Total	Timescales		Total
	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Inconclusive		Timescale met	Timescale not met	
Finance	15	3	6	0	24	24	0	24
Business Improvement, HR and Comms	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	2
Customer Information and Digital Services	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	2
Business Support and Governance	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Regeneration and Culture	9	5	7	1	22	22	0	22
Environment and Transport	172	23	23	6	224	223	1	224
Adults Social Care	6	3	2	1	12	12	0	12
Communities	5	0	2	0	7	7	0	7
Education, Early Start and Prevention	1	3	3	0	7	7	0	7
Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	7	11	9	0	27	27	0	27
Regulation Services	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Total	218	48	55	8	329	328	1	329

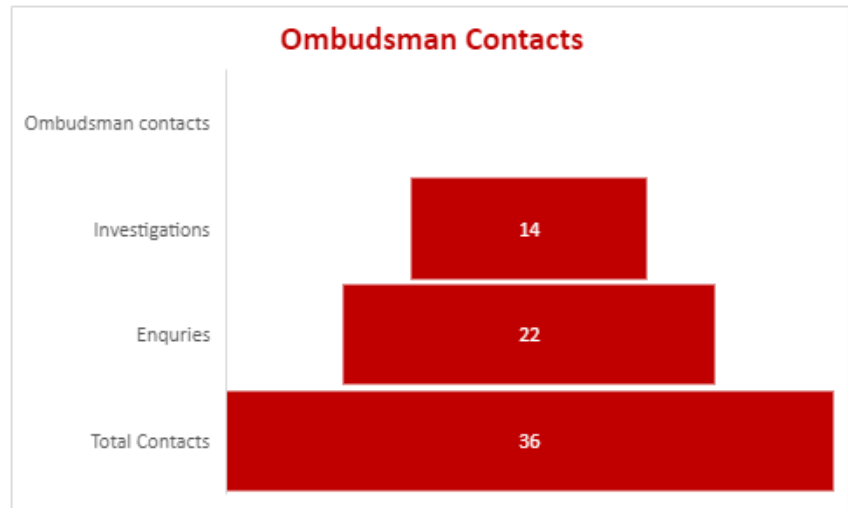
Formal Investigations	Outcomes				Total	Timescales		Total
	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Inconclusive		Timescale met	Timescale not met	
Finance	2	9	9	0	20	20	0	20
Business Improvement, HR and Comms	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Business Support and Governance	0	1	2	0	3	3	0	3
Legal Services	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Regeneration and Culture	5	10	9	0	24	21	3	24
Environment and Transport	12	17	5	1	35	31	4	35
Adults Social Care	7	9	3	0	19	19	0	19
Communities	1	1	1	0	3	3	0	3
Education, Early Start and Prevention	5	8	6	0	19	19	0	19
Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	9	20	16	0	45	44	1	45
Public Health	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
Total	43	75	51	2	171	163	8	171

5. OMBUDSMAN



This year has seen an increase in the number of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman contact compared to last year's total of 28. Our annual review letter was received in July 2022, where it outlined our performance in the areas of:

- Complaints upheld
- Compliance with recommendations
- Satisfactory remedy provided



Business Unit	Number of Enquiries	Outcome Status
Finance	2	1 Not considering as not enough evidence of fault 1 Local Authority to pursue
Legal Services	1	Outside Ombudsman's jurisdiction
Regeneration and Culture	5	3 Local Authority to pursue 1 Outside of Ombudsman's jurisdiction 1 No fault or injustice
Environment and Transport	2	1 Out of Ombudsman's jurisdiction 1 Not considering as not enough evidence of fault
Adult Social Care	2	1 Out of timescale 1 Closed after initial enquiries
Communities	1	Not considering as not enough evidence of fault.
Education, Early Start and Prevention	2	1 Local Authority to pursue 1 Linked into an already ongoing investigation.
Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	5	1 Local Authority to pursue 1 not considering as not enough evidence of fault 1 outside of Ombudsman's jurisdiction 1 closed after initial enquiries 1 pending
Berneslai Homes	2	1 discontinued investigation 1 pending
Total	22	

Business Unit	Number of Investigations	Outcome Status	Remedy
Regeneration and Culture	5	3 Fault with injustice 1 Fault with no injustice 1 Closed after initial investigation	3 cases resulted in financial redress being accepted and learning identified for services to complete
Adults Social Care	4	2 Fault with injustice 1 not considering 1 pending	1 resulted in financial redress and learning identified for services to complete. 1 resulted in the council clearing a debt and learning identified
Education, Early Start and Prevention	3	3 Fault with injustice	2 Financial redress 1 Ombudsman satisfied with action and remedy taken
Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	1	Closed after initial enquiries. To pursue with Information Commissioner's Office	
Berneslai Homes	1	Local settlement reached	Local Settlement
Total	14		

OMBUDSMAN ENQUIRIES



OMBUDSMAN INVESTIGATIONS



6. WHO, HOW, WHERE?

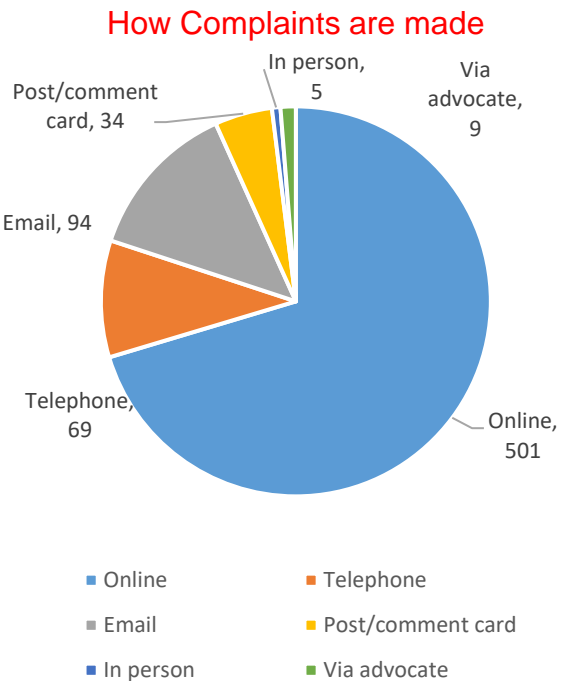
81% of complaints were made by the person who was in receipt of the service. 19% were made by someone who was representing or advocating for the person in receipt of the service, this could be a family member, an advocate, or another person who the person who was in receipt of the service had agreed for them to act on their behalf.



An independent advocacy service is available for Children's and Adult Social care complainants through Dial Barnsley.



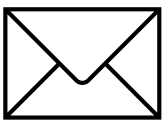
70% The number of complaints made online has increased this year from last year's position of 53%.



13% More complaints are being made via email than telephone.

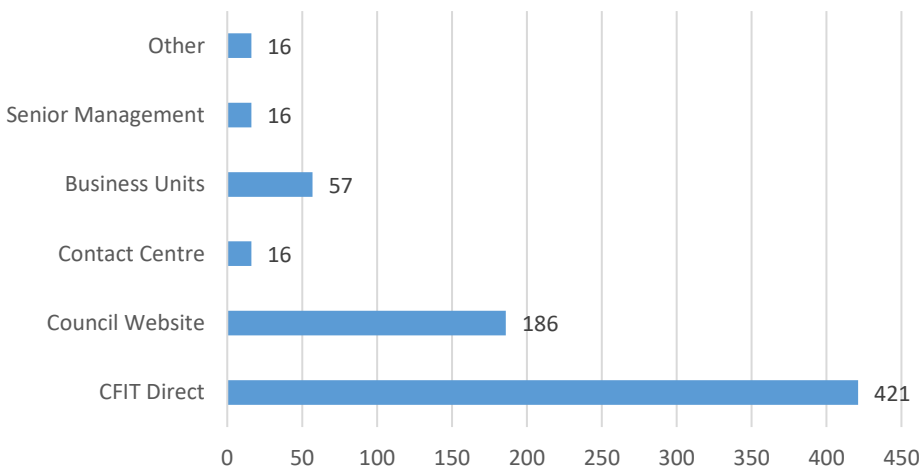


10% Complaints received by telephone has reduced again this year from 19% last year.



4% There has been a further reduction in complaints being made by post, with 5% being made this way last year.

Where complaints are being received



The trend continues that most of the complaints are being raised directly with the Customer Resolution Team. However, this is a decrease in number from 75% last year.

LEARNING FROM FEEDBACK

Learning from our investigations is important to us. During the investigations we undertake we look at what may have gone wrong, why and what we can do to improve the services we provide. Below are a few examples of the learning we have identified from our complaint investigations and improvements we are working towards achieving.

CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION

We recognise the importance of how we communicate with our customers, and we have identified opportunities to learn from what our customers have experienced in the following areas:

Children's Social Care and Safeguarding agreed to look at the different types of social care assessments that we do and provide clarity on these and how they link to legislation and their thresholds for access. We agreed to do this through looking at our local offer.

Highways identified where notifications for reports of road defects are received communication between departments was to be improved where it is identified that the road is unadopted but is owned by the council.

PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

Customers shared with us their experiences of using our services and from this we identified opportunities where we could improve our procedures, so that our customers experienced improved service delivery and our staff had clearer guidance. Here are a few improvements we identified:

Financial services have reviewed their telephone system with a view to implementing a more user-friendly service to create a better customer services experience.

Waste management agreed to review their fly tipping processes and IT system with a view of improving the clarity of information made available on the online fly tipping status update map in relation to progress status associated with each report.

WORKING TOGETHER

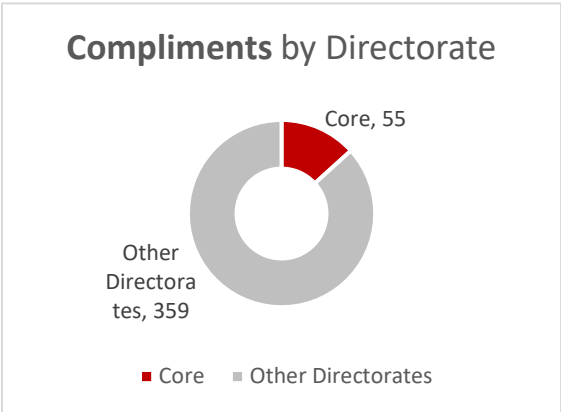
It is important that we are seen by the customer as one council and therefore the services we provide are seamless and coordinated as much as it is possible. We have therefore listened and learnt from our customers who have told us this has not always been the case and below are a few of the improvements we are working to achieve:

Planning Services identified several changes that they needed to make to their masterplan framework consultations in relation to engagement with stakeholders, consideration of demographic profiles and requirements for additional support.

The **Contact Centre** agreed to work with Waste Management services to look at how we received information to enable timely feedback to be provided to customers where collections have been missed.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

CORE DIRECTORATE



A total of **55** compliments have been received. This is a decrease on the numbers reported last year (70).

The Business Improvement, Human Resources and Communications business unit received **27** compliments, the highest number for this directorate.

76 complaints were received this is an increase from last year. **30** were registered as early resolutions and **46** formal investigations. Unfortunately, 22 customers decided to discontinue with their complaint either through withdrawing their complaint or through no further engagement.



There were **3** Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman contacts, and none of these progressed onto investigation.

82% of complaints for this directorate were made online. **89%** of the complaints were made by the customer themselves.

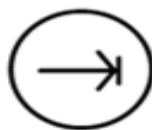
For this directorate our customers told us they were unhappy with **how we were delivering our services** (our processes and procedures)

EARLY RESOLUTIONS



30

OUTCOMES



Upheld	22
Partially upheld	13
Not upheld	19
Inconclusive	0

RESOLUTIONS



Most complaints were resolved through an explanation

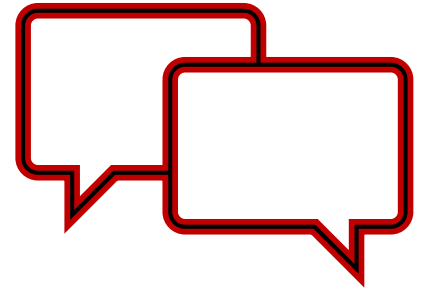
TIMESCALES



100% of complaints progressed through the procedure were responded to within the agreed timescale

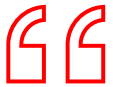
CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

CORE DIRECTORATE



Here are some examples of the compliments we've received:

A compliment was received for the Customer Resolution Team from a customer who said:



I would like to thank you for your effort to get my complaint resolved. You are a credit to your employer, and I hope that they realise what a conscientious employee you are.



The Legal Service received this positive feedback from a customer:



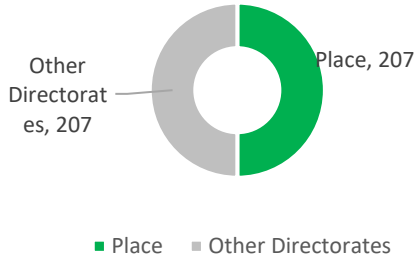
I would like to give my sincere thanks to both yourself and your team for your assistance, patience and thoroughly professional handling of this situation, Barnsley Council are lucky to have you in their service.



CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

PLACE DIRECTORATE

Compliments by Directorate



A total of **207** compliments have been received, meaning that **50%** of the total compliments received by the council were received for this directorate. This is an increase from the 197 reported last year.

The Environment and Transport business unit received the highest number of compliments.







402 complaints were received this year, this is an increase on last year. **246** were registered as early resolutions and **156** formal investigations. Unfortunately, 97 complaints were discontinued by the customer withdrawing their complaint or through not engaging with the complaints process further.



For this directorate most of our customers told us they were unhappy with **how we were delivering our services** (our processes and procedures).

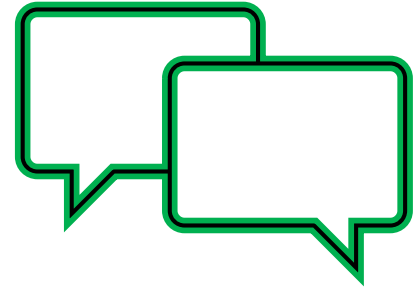
There were **12** Ombudsman contacts for this directorate. 5 of these were investigated by the Ombudsman with outcomes of 3 fault with injustice, 1 fault with no injustice and 1 was closed after initial investigation.

83% of complaints for this directorate were made online. **95%** of the complaints were made by the customer themselves.

EARLY RESOLUTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESOLUTIONS	TIMESCALES
			
246	Upheld 198 Partially upheld 55 Not upheld 44 Inconclusive 8	Most complaints were resolved through an apology	97% of complaints progressed through the procedure were responded to within the agreed timescale

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

PLACE DIRECTORATE



Here are some examples of the compliments we've received:

A Waste Management customer told us



"I called on 06/22 to request a bulky collection. The gentleman that took my call was very polite and helpful and logged my request providing me with full details of what he was doing. Two lovely men then arrived on 06/22 to collect my item. They were very friendly and pleasant. They came and just got on with the job which was brilliant. Excellent customer service all round!"



The Planning Service received this positive feedback from a customer:



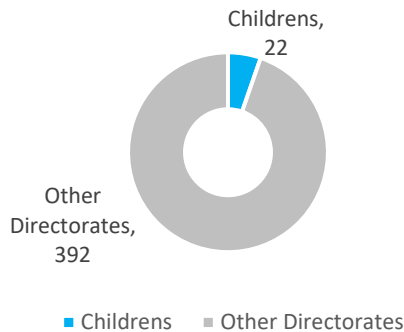
I just wanted to write to thank M and the surveyor for the prompt, polite and friendly service and it has saved me days/weeks of stress and potentially sped up the sale of my house. Thank you to both of them. The whole process really put my mind at ease as I was concerned there may be delays"



CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Compliments by Directorate



A total of 22 compliments have been recorded which is a decrease on the 37 recorded last year.



Children's Social Care Directorate received the highest number of compliments for this directorate with 13.

156 complaints were received this year, this is an increase on last year. 35 were registered as early resolutions and 121 formal investigations. Unfortunately, 57 complaints were discontinued by the customer withdrawing their complaint or through not engaging with the complaints process further.



There were 11 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman contacts. 4 of these were investigated by the Ombudsman with outcomes of 3 fault with injustice, and 1 was closed after initial enquiries.

For this directorate most of our customers told us they were unhappy with how we were delivering our services (our processes and procedures)

For this directorate 55% of our customers made their own complaint of which 6 complaints were made by children/young people.



EARLY RESOLUTIONS



35

OUTCOMES



Upheld	22
Partially upheld	42
Not upheld	34
Pending	1

RESOLUTIONS



Most complaints were resolved through an explanation

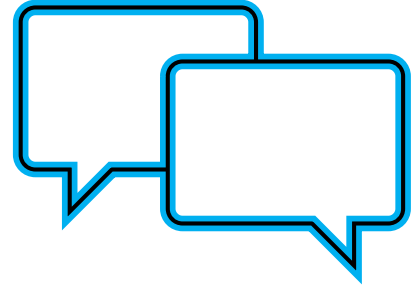
TIMESCALES



92% of complaints progressed through the procedure were responded to within statutory or agreed timescale.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE



Here are some examples of the compliments we've received:

A customer told us in relation to our Education, Early Years and Prevention Service:



So, we just want to say a huge thank you to you all! You have truly taken a girl and spun her round; she is just doing fantastic and has a really bright future.....So thankful to you all you have been amazing, we finally did it!"



Children's Services received this positive feedback:

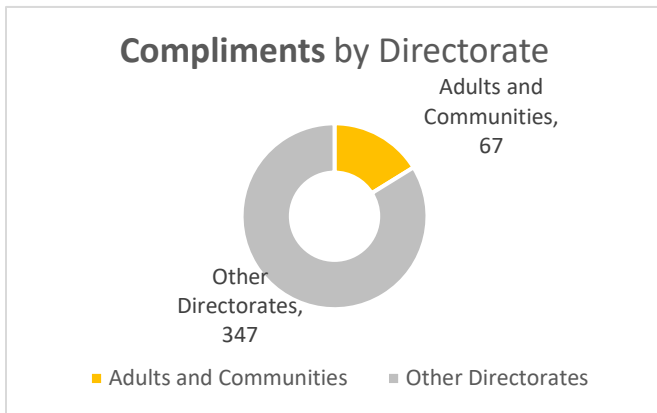


Thanks from the bottom of our hearts, you had the courage to see this through. X has now been given the best chance in life. Thank you very much.



CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

ADULT AND COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE



A total of **67** compliments have been recorded which is a decrease on the 85 recorded last year.

The Adults Social Care Directorate received the highest number of compliments for this directorate, **37**.



72 complaints were received this year, this is an increase on last year. **19** were registered as early resolutions and **53** formal investigations. Unfortunately, **31** complaints were discontinued by the customer withdrawing their complaint or through not engaging with the complaints process further.




There were **7** Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman contacts. 4 of these were investigated by the Ombudsman with outcomes of 2 fault with injustice, 1 was not pursued further and 1 was pending a decision.

For this directorate most of our customers told us they were unhappy with **how we communicated and consulted with them**.


For this directorate **52%** of our customers made their own complaint. **53%** of our customer made their complaints online.

EARLY RESOLUTIONS




19

OUTCOMES




Upheld	19
Partially upheld	13
Not upheld	8
Inconclusive	1

RESOLUTIONS



Most complaints were resolved through an explanation

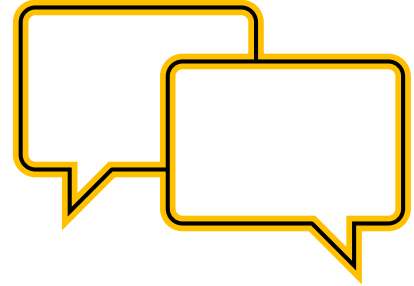
TIMESCALES



100% of complaints progressed through the procedure were responded to within statutory or agreed timescale.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

ADULT AND COMMUNITIES' DIRECTORATE



Here are some examples of the compliments we've received:

An Adults Social Care customer told us:



"God bless you, social service called this morning & are looking into any help available ... so I hope you know how thankful I am for all your help in difficult circumstances. You do good work & people like me have their lives enhanced by people like you & I cannot thank you enough. Please pass on my regards to the team, & once again, a HUGE thanks for all your help



A safer Neighbourhood's customer told us:



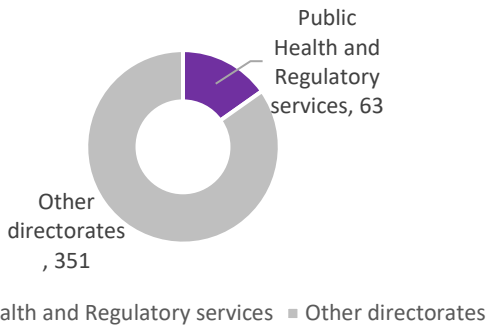
I would like to thank Barnsley Council for their swift action regarding a dispute over land and parking of abandoned vehicles. The gentleman from BMBC was an ASB Warden, Safer Neighbourhoods Service. This matter has been resolved within days of my first email into BMBC. The outcome was not the one that we would have liked but at least now the matter has been resolved and we all know where we stand regarding the land in question. I cannot thank this warden enough for his actions regarding this matter.



CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

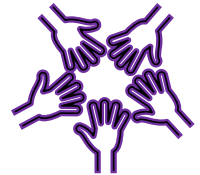
PUBLIC HEALTH AND REGULATORY SERVICES

Compliments by Directorate



A total of 63 compliments have been recorded which is a slight decrease on the 65 recorded last year.

The Public Health service received the highest number of compliments for this directorate, 60.



6 complaints were received this year, this is an increase on last year. 1 was considered through our early resolution stage and 5 required a formal investigation. Unfortunately, 4 complaints were discontinued by the customer withdrawing their complaint or through not engaging with the complaints process further.



There were no Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman contacts.

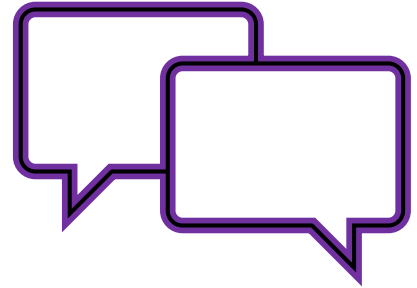
For this directorate most of our customers told us they were unhappy with how we were delivering our services (our processes and procedures)

For this directorate 83% of our customers made their own complaint. 83% of our customers made their complaints online.

EARLY RESOLUTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESOLUTIONS	TIMESCALES								
<p>1</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Upheld</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Partially upheld</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not upheld</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inconclusive</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>	Upheld	0	Partially upheld	0	Not upheld	1	Inconclusive	1	<p>Most complaints were resolved through an explanation</p>	<p>100% of complaints progressed through the procedure were responded to within statutory or agreed timescale.</p>
Upheld	0										
Partially upheld	0										
Not upheld	1										
Inconclusive	1										

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

PUBLIC HEALTH AND REGULATORY SERVICES DIRECTORATE



Here are some examples of the compliments we've received for our public health service:



Last week we had our 2-year review with an Officer within the team, we just want to say how helpful we found it. The Officer was really friendly & chatty. It was really reassuring to know that we are on track with development & to be able to ask a professional about potty training & dummy weaning etc. Thank you to the Officer for her patience whilst we made a game of doing the little one's height & weight. The whole service has been amazing, even the SPA service couldn't be more helpful. I love the Facebook messaging service, thank you for making it easy to reach out. Thank you so much for everything you are all doing"



I just want to say a massive thank you for everything you've done for us since July. You've really been there every step of the way. If it hadn't had been for you, I really don't think we would still be breastfeeding. You have been so supportive throughout all our ups and downs, and it would have been so easy for me to doubt myself and give up. I know Health Visitors tend to get a bad name, but you have been an absolute godsend for me and my child. The care and compassion you've shown is second to none and I will forever be grateful to you and for you.



PERFORMANCE REVIEW TABLE

Directorate	Business Unit	Complaints Total			Complaint Outcomes	
		Total number of complaints reported in 2020-21	Total number of complaints reported in 2021-22	Increase/decrease	Total number of complaints upheld (full or in part) 2020-21	Total number of complaints upheld (full or in part) 2021-22
Core	Finance	28	59	Increase	13	29
	Business Improvement, Human Resources and Communications	3	4	Increase	1	1
	Customer Information and Digital Services	9	8	Decrease	9	2
	Business Support and Governance	2	4	Increase	0	2
	Legal Services	0	1	Increase	0	1
	Total	42	76	Overall Increase	23	35
Place	Regeneration and Culture	29	63	Increase	12	29
	Environment and Transport	128	339	Increase	73	224
	Total	157	402	Overall Increase	85	253
Adults and Communities	Adult Social Care	30	49	Increase	14	25
	Communities	13	23	Increase	3	7
	Total	43	72	Overall Increase	17	32
Children's Services	Education, Early Start and Prevention	12	40	Increase	7	17
	Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	55	116	Increase	19	47
	Total	67	156	Overall Increase	26	64
Public Health and Regulation	Public Health (0-19)	3	1	Decrease	0	0
	Regulation Services	8	5	Decrease	1	0
	Total	11	6	Overall Decrease	1	0

CONTACT US



If you need help understanding this document:

Contact: The Customer Resolution Team

Email: customerresolutionteam@barnsley.gov.uk

Westgate Plaza

Westgate

Barnsley

S70 2DR

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BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CORE SERVICES

TITLE: HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT GRANT OCTOBER 22 TO MARCH 23

REPORT TO:	CABINET
Date of Meeting	19 October 2022
Cabinet Member Portfolio	CORE SERVICES
Key Decision	No
Public or Private	Public

Purpose of report

To provide an overview of the conditions for use of the 3rd iteration of the Household Support Grant (HSG), and proposed spending plans covering the period October 22 to March 23 to support those in most need through the winter period.

Council Plan priority

The proposals in this report will contribute towards:

Healthy Barnsley – reducing inequalities in health and income across the borough, by providing targeted support to those in most need with the cost-of-living crisis.

Growing Barnsley – supporting people to have safe, warm and sustainable homes through provision of energy grants and the affordable warm homes programme.

Sustainable Barnsley – provision of more energy efficient and sustainable methods of heating.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:-

- 1. Note the grant conditions associated with the use of the Household Support Grant, as set out in section 2.1 to 2.4.**
- 2. Agree to the proposed spending plan set out in section 2.5.**
- 3. Agree to proceed with the priority schemes as outlined in 2.5.3**
- 4. That the Service Director Finance S151 Officer make any necessary changes to the scheme following receipt of final guidance and funding allocation.**

1.0 **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In September 2021 the Government announced a funding package of £500M to help vulnerable households fund essential costs over the winter period covering October 21 to March 22. In March 22 the fund was extended by a further £500M to cover the period April to September 22. To date Barnsley has received £4.7M Household Support Grant for the borough.
- 1.2 A further extension to this grant has been committed with another £2.3M expected to be received for Barnsley to cover the period October 22 to March 23. This paper is to provide an overview of the spending plans for use of this funding allocation.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 Conditions of Grant

- 2.1.1 Draft guidance has been released by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), final guidance is anticipated to be issued sometime before the 1st October 22.
- 2.1.2 The funding allocation has yet to be confirmed but is anticipated to be similar to previous rounds, being £2.3M. Funding is to cover the period October 22 to March 23. No funding can be carried over from this or previous periods.
- 2.1.3 Schemes must be in place for 1st October 22 and spending plans must be submitted to the DWP by 28th October 22.
- 2.1.4 Previous rounds have required ringfencing in terms of targeting support at specific cohorts of households, in this round no ringfencing has been stipulated, LA's have the discretion on exactly how the funding can be used, within the scope of DWP guidance.
- Funding should be used to support those that are not eligible for other government support:
 - Those not eligible for the cost-of-living payments & energy rebate schemes
 - Those who may have become eligible after the qualifying date
 - Those claiming Housing Benefit only
 - Those who cannot access the £400 energy support payments
 - Those eligible for benefits but had a nil award in the qualifying period due to, for example, a fluctuation in income
 - The Fund is intended to cover a wide range of low-income households including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers, and people with disabilities.
 - Local Authorities should prioritise supporting households with costs associated with:
 - *Energy* – providing support that can make a quick but sustainable immediate and long-term impact to energy costs.
 - *Food & Water* – support with the cost of food and water bills

- *Wider Essentials* – support with other household bills not linked to energy and water
 - *Housing Costs* – in exceptional circumstances where other support schemes are not available
- LA's can deliver the scheme through a variety of routes including providing vouchers to households, making direct provision of food or goods, or issuing grants to third parties.
 - At least part of the scheme should be on an application basis.
 - LA's must have a clear rationale or documented policy/framework outlining their approach including how they are defining eligibility and how households access the fund.

2.2 Reporting Requirements

- 2.2.1 2 returns are required to be submitted to the DWP setting out actual delivery for the period Oct to Dec and Jan to Mar, with returns to be submitted in January and April 23.
- 2.2.2 Additional management information is required than in previous rounds to allow DWP to assess how LAs are using the fund to support households. For example, reporting on actual output delivered by community groups. We will work with the Councils Internal Audit colleagues to ensure robust controls are in place for spending and reporting arrangements.

2.3 Funding Allocations

- 2.3.1 Final funding allocations will be confirmed sometime in September but are expected to be similar to previous rounds at £2.3M.
- 2.3.2 Funding allocations will be paid in arrears following receipt of data returns. Tranche 1 will be paid in February / March 23 and Tranche 2 paid in June / July 23.

2.4 Communications

- 2.4.1 DWP guidance stipulates the following:
- The Authority must, as appropriate and practical, reference that the grant is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions or the UK Government.
 - Local Authorities must make public their plans for The Fund

2.5 Spending Plan

- 2.5.1 On the 7th September a paper was presented to Senior Management setting out a number of proposals to support households with the cost-of-living crisis, included in this paper were a number of schemes that were proposed as being eligible to be funded from this round of Household Support Grant. As detailed guidance has now been provided, below sets out the final proposed schemes that are eligible to be funded, along with some additional schemes that meet the criteria of the grant.
- 2.5.2 The proposals have been split between priority schemes that are required to be progressed in accordance with DWP guidance and other schemes that have more flexibility, whilst still being restricted to tight delivery timescales.

2.5.3 Priority Schemes

- **Energy Rebate Scheme:** To provide £150 energy rebates via a bank transfer, to those households who were not entitled to the Government's £150 Council Tax energy rebate. This scheme is designed to support those in Council Tax bands E and above not on LCTS, that can demonstrate financial hardship, and those who became eligible for council tax on or after 2nd April 22. This would be delivered on a means tested, application basis.
- **Cost of Living Payment (part 1a):** To provide £326 cost of living payment (bank transfer) to those in receipt of qualifying benefits who were not eligible for the first Government cost of living payment due to becoming eligible after the qualifying date. This scheme would be delivered on an application basis, applicants would need to demonstrate they become eligible between 26th May and 31st August 22.
- **Cost of Living Payment (part 1b):** To provide £150 cost of living payment (bank transfer) to those in receipt of a disability benefit that were not eligible for the Government scheme due to becoming eligible after the qualifying date. This scheme would be delivered on an application basis, applicants would need to demonstrate they become eligible between 26th May and 31st August 22.
- **Cost of Living Payment (part 2):** To provide £650 cost of living payment (Post Office Vouchers) to those in receipt of Housing Benefit but did not qualify for the Government cost of living payment. This payment would be made via automatic award and not application based. Proposed to make this payment in 2 instalments similar to the Government scheme, with the first payment by 31st October 22 and the second 31st January 23.

2.5.4 Other Schemes

- **Support to residents:** This would be delivered by community groups who would be required to bid for grant funding setting out how they would help people in the community over the winter period in line with the grant conditions. This would include a continuation of existing community schemes that are already funded from the April to September HSG.
- **Christmas Holiday Clubs:** Provision of holiday club places through the Healthy Activities programme for non-free school meal children.
- **Local Welfare Assistance:** Funding to ensure the continuation of the existing scheme to the end of the financial year, which would otherwise run out in December. Providing support to those in financial hardship with the cost of essential bills and white goods.
- **Free School Meals:** The Healthy Holiday government funded scheme only provides provision during Easter, Summer, and Christmas school holidays. To ensure vulnerable children are supported across all non-term time periods there is an opportunity to provide a £15 voucher to families during the October 22 and February 23 holidays to cover the cost of food.
- **Affordable Warmer Homes:** To contribute towards the overall Affordable Warmer Homes programme (subject to a separate Cabinet report). Providing residents with financial support to help with energy debts, and inefficient heating systems by providing sustainable solutions

that help to reduce energy consumption therefore reducing energy bills, this would make an immediate and long-lasting sustainable impact to addressing fuel poverty.

- 2.5.5 The funding allocation allows for reasonable administration costs to enable Authorities to deliver The Fund. No staffing admin costs are currently assumed in the above schemes, it is assumed the admin burden can be absorbed within current resourcing arrangements.
- 2.5.6 Due to the tight timescale to deliver the above schemes, the requirements of DWP to have schemes in place from 1st October, and the need to get funding out to support residents over the winter period, necessary arrangements have been made to deliver priority schemes in anticipation of approval whilst this report has been progressed through the governance system.

3.0 IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Financial

- 3.1.1 Consultations have taken place with the Council's Service Director Finance (Section 151 Officer).
- 3.1.2 The Household Support Grant is a ring-fenced grant which the Council administers on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions, the grant must be spent in line with the guidance and grant determination letter provided by DWP (summary details set out in section 2.1). There are no implications to the Councils medium term financial strategy.
- 3.1.3 Spending plans and data returns are required to be submitted to DWP as set out in section 2.2, which require Section 151 Officer approval.
- 3.1.4 Grant allocations will be received in arrears following satisfactory submission of data returns as referred to in section 2.3.
- 3.1.5 Any underspend of funding allocations will be returned to the DWP and can not be used for other purposes or carried over into periods past March 23.
- 3.1.6 The Councils Internal Audit will be consulted on the arrangements for processing and monitoring spend and outputs to ensure robust controls are in place to meet the requirements of DWP and mitigate the risk of fraud.
- 3.1.7 The table on page 6 summarises the financial implications associated with this scheme.
- 3.1.8 The Affordable Warmer Homes scheme is part of a wider programme which is subject to a separate Cabinet report. It is proposed to contribute an element of the HSG towards this scheme to reduce reliance on Council reserves.

Scheme	Provider	Lead Directorate	Application	Funding	Delivery
Priority Schemes					
Energy Rebate Scheme £150 payment to those not eligible for CTAX rebate	Council - B&T	Core	Yes	£93,550	Mar 23
Cost of Living Payment (1a) £325 payment to those who did not qualify for the first Gov't COL payment	Council - B&T	Core	Yes	£200,000	Mar 23
Cost of Living Payment (1b) £150 to those who did not qualify for the first Gov't COL payment	Council - B&T	Core	Yes	£60,000	Mar 23
Cost of Living Payment (2) £650 Voucher to those not eligible for the Gov't COL payment 933 households	Council - B&T	Core	No	£303,225	Oct 22 Jan 23
Total				£960,000	
Other Schemes					
Supporting residents with help towards food, fuel, clothing, white goods, household goods.	Community Groups	Public Health & Communities	Yes	£500,000	March 23
Christmas holiday clubs for non-free school meal families	Existing Holiday Club providers	Public Health & Communities	No	£60,000	Dec 22
Local Welfare Assistance top up	Council – Housing Options Team	Public Health & Communities	Yes	£64,000	Mar 23
Free School Meal vouchers (October & Feb) £15 Voucher to 11,200 children	Council - B&T	Core	No	£168,000 £168,000	Oct 22 Feb 23
Affordable Warmer Homes	Council / BH	Growth & Sustainability	Yes	£380,000	Mar 23
Total				£1,340,000	
TOTAL SPEND				£2,300,000	

3.2 Legal

3.2.1 The use of the HSG is subject to conditions determined by the DWP.

3.2.2 There are no Subsidy Control implications as no one individual recipient will receive funding in excess of the threshold being £315,000.

3.3 Equality

3.3.1 The proposals set out in this report for maximisation of the Household Support Grant are determined within the parameters set out by the DWP, therefore are in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty and no concerns over unlawful discrimination.

3.4 Sustainability

3.4.1 The sustainability decision-making wheel has been produced for this project and the overall impacts are positive, particularly around reducing carbon emissions, reducing poverty and improving health and well-being of residents.



3.4.2 Pollution from the insulation manufacturing process along with embedded carbon in the supply chain are highlighted as areas of negative impact. However, work is on-going with the procurement team to address how we can build a more sustainable supply chain going forwards.

3.5 Employee

3.5.1 There are no employee implications associated with this report, schemes will be administered within existing resources.

3.6 Communications

- 3.6.1 Timely and accurate information will be communicated to residents via the appropriate channels, press releases, social media, council websites and direct engagement with key stakeholders.
- 3.6.2 As set out in section 2.4, the Authority must, as appropriate and practical, reference that the grant is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions or the UK Government in any communications.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultations have taken place with representatives of Finance, Communities, Housing and Sustainability Business Units when forming spending plan proposals to ensure schemes are developed and targeted at that support those in most need, within the scope of the DWP guidance.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1 There are no other options due to the Household Support Grant being a ring-fenced government fund. LAs are best placed to administer this fund on behalf of central government.
- 5.2 Alternative spending plans could be explored; however, these would take time to develop and implement and we are bound by time restrictions to have plans developed and in place for 1st October 22.
- 5.3 Should any of the proposals outlined in this report not be delivered or realise any underspend on the grant funding, alternative options will be explored through the provision of direct payments and/or additional cash vouchers, targeted at those in most need to ensure funding is maximised to support borough and not returned to central government.

6.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The recommendations associated with this report are intended to ensure that the Council and partners are positioned to be able to effectively administer and deliver the requirements of DWP and maximisation of the HSG to support residents of the borough.

7.0 GLOSSARY

HSG – Household Support Grant
DWP – Department for Work and Pensions

8.0 APPENDICIES

Appendix A – Financial Implications

9.0 REPORT SIGN OFF

Legal consultation & sign off	Legal Services officer consulted and date Jason Field 28/09/22
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Report of the Executive Director Core

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

i) Capital Expenditure	<u>Prior Years</u> (£)	<u>2022/23</u> (£)	<u>2023/24</u> (£)	<u>2024/25</u> (£)	<u>Total</u> (£)
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
To be financed from:					0
					0
					0
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
ii) Revenue Effects	<u>Prior Years</u> (£)	<u>2022/23</u> (£)	<u>2023/24</u> (£)	<u>2024/25</u> (£)	<u>FYE</u> (£)
Household Support Grant Scheme		2,300,000			0
	<u>0</u>	<u>2,300,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
To be financed from:					0
Household Support Grant		-2,300,000			0
	<u>0</u>	<u>-2,300,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Revenue Position:					0
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

Impact on Medium Term Financial Strategy			
	<u>2022/23</u> (£)	<u>2023/24</u> (£)	<u>2024/25</u> (£)
Not applicable in this report	0.000	0.000	2.528
	<u>0.000</u>	<u>0.000</u>	<u>2.528</u>

Agreed by: On behalf of the Service Director-Finance, Section 151 Officer

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BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY

TITLE: AFFORDABLE WARMTH CHARTER

REPORT TO:	CABINET
Date of Meeting	19 October 2022
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Regeneration and Culture
Key Decision	Yes
Public or Private	Public

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide details of the Affordable Warmth Charter which aims to help residents in Barnsley live in a warm, healthy, energy efficient home.
- Inform cabinet members of the terms of the Charter and endorse the promotion of the Charter to encourage partners to become members

Council Plan priority

Healthy, Growing, Learning, Sustainable and Enabling Barnsley

Recommendations

That Cabinet: -

1. Endorses the Affordable Warmth Charter as a measure of commitment for achieving affordable warmth across the borough.
2. Agree to the sign-up process for the Affordable Warmth Charter.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Affordable Warmth Charter has been developed with the aim of achieving the following vision:

‘A Barnsley where everyone lives in a warm, healthy, energy efficient home.’

In 2019 approximately 18.6% of Barnsley households were classed as fuel

poor. The increase in fuel prices has seen this number dramatically increase to a predicted 37.1%. This is equivalent to 40,000 households in Barnsley. This figure is set to increase further in October with the next fuel price increase.

A recent study in the BMJ has highlighted:

'Evidence strongly suggests that growing up and living in cold homes and poor housing have a direct and detrimental effect on health. For older people, living in cold temperatures increases the risk of strokes and heart attacks. Respiratory diseases, including flu, are more common, as are falls, injuries, and hypothermia. Children growing up in cold, damp, and mouldy homes with inadequate ventilation have higher than average rates of respiratory infections and asthma, chronic ill health, and disability. They are also more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and slower physical growth'

In addition, many households face stark choices between energy and other household essentials such as food and falling into debt. This has significant impacts on residents physical and mental wellbeing.

The development of the Affordable Warmth Charter aims to bring together knowledge, expertise and resources focusing on preventing health inequalities arising from fuel inefficient properties. In addition, it will enable residents to seek help in relation to fuel poverty and energy efficiency.

2. PROPOSAL

2.1 The Affordable Warmth Charter can be found in the Appendix.

The Charter brings together our partners across the borough to share knowledge, expertise and resources to collaborate on tackling the health inequalities caused by fuel poverty. The Charter requires partners to make a commitment/pledge using one or more of the five key priorities listed in the charter. These are:

Energy efficient homes - Partner organisations are committed to energy efficient homes. Residents on a low income, older people, those with health conditions and young families are most vulnerable to the effects of fuel poverty and cold homes. Households that cannot afford to spend money on fuel to keep their homes warm are more vulnerable to cold and damp related illnesses.

Affordable energy - Partner organisations are committed to schemes that ensure affordable energy for all households. Energy affordability is affected by household income, fuel prices and home energy efficiency. Low disposable income is a key cause of fuel poverty in Barnsley and many households are not accessing the benefits they are entitled to. These income related factors affect a household's ability to affordably heat and make their home warm and healthy to live in.

Employment, Education, and skills - Partner organisations are committed to promoting and delivering best practice education and workforce skills development. Straightforward advice and education are effective ways to help

households gain knowledge and skills to save and better manage their home energy. Raising awareness of the help available, particularly amongst vulnerable and marginalised groups can make a substantial difference to help access support for making homes warmer and healthier.

Partnership Working - Fuel poverty and cold homes can only effectively be tackled by a range of services and organisations working together; this helps to maximise and make best use of the resources available and reach those in the greatest need.

Low Carbon Commitments - Partner organisations are committed to schemes that contribute to affordable warmth, energy efficiency and low carbon targets and in the longer-term support low-income households in the transition to low-carbon heating, in line with Barnsley Zero 2045 targets. As part of the commitment, organisations support affordable warmth by reducing energy demand and ensuring homes are thermally comfortable and energy efficient.

Partners who make this commitment will be awarded the Affordable Warmth Charter Mark to display on websites and literature.

- 2.2 Key targets have been set to measure impact of the scheme, as outlined in Section 3.6

3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

3.1 Financial and Risk

- 3.1.1 There are no financial implications beyond the budget allocated from Public Health to promote the Affordable Warmth Charter.

3.2 Legal

- 3.2.1 There are no legal considerations associated with the adoption of the Affordable Warmth Charter.

3.3 Equality

- 3.3.1 An Equality Impact Assessment Pre-screening has been completed in consultation with Equality & Inclusion officer. This determined that a full EIA is not required due to the documentation being web-based and fully accessible.

3.4 Sustainability

- 3.4.1 A sustainability assessment has been undertaken using the sustainability wheel. The Affordable Warmth Charter will be the umbrella which pulls together knowledge, expertise, funding, and service provision to prevent health inequalities arising from fuel inefficient properties.



3.5 Employee

3.5.1 There are no direct implications for employees arising from the recommendations within this Report.

3.6 Communications

3.6.1 The Affordable Warmth Charter will be published as a web page, with a direct link to sign up to the Charter on the page. The decision was made to publish online to ensure equality and accessibility to the target audience. The Charter will initially be aimed at businesses within the borough. As a result, there does not need to be a direct marketing campaign to residents at the initial launch.

3.6.2 The promotion of the Charter will be conducted via existing partnership forums such as the Housing Developer Forum. By adopting this approach, costs are reduced, and we can target an actively engaged audience who have a keen interest in affordable warmth. There is a current plan to hold a larger event in Autumn 2022 to celebrate our members commitment to the Charter and encourage new sign ups. The following targets have been set:

- Achieve a sign-up rate of 15% of the attendees from the launch event
- Launch a fully inclusive sign-up procedure which takes no longer than 15 minutes to complete and can be completed on one side of A4.
- Achieve 25 sign ups before the end of the financial year
- 60% of all sign ups within the first year submit evidence to demonstrate actions taken towards the Charter and therefore achieve Charter status.

3.6.3 Enterprising Barnsley have also agreed to promote the Charter to their stakeholders using email leaflets and flyers. In the future, officers plan to use social media to raise awareness of the Charter Mark itself and what it stands for.

3.6.4 The Charter is also being reported into several partnership forums including the Collaborative Cold Weather group, Affordable Warmth Taskforce and Early Help Adults strategy group.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 The action plan has been developed following consultation with stakeholders across service areas with Growth and Sustainability, Public Health & Communities and Core services, along with external partners. The Affordable Warmth Taskforce has also endorsed this report.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 During initial consultation, officers discussed the options of creating either a Charter or a full strategy document. It was felt given the current climate, that a Charter would provide a proactive, practical tool for partners. We also consulted with neighbouring local councils to inform how we would develop our own scheme.

5.2 There were various options discussed about how best to launch the Charter. The initial concept was to launch at a large stakeholder event. However, given the current climate, it felt that a more appropriate approach would be to introduce the concept at a range of existing stakeholder forums to encourage sign up.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The report highlights the impact that energy price increases and the cost of living is having on our residents right now. An immediate response is required to ensure that we can achieve a Barnsley where everyone can live in a warm, healthy, energy efficient home. We need to empower our contractors and suppliers to achieve affordable warmth for the residents of Barnsley both in new builds and existing housing developments.

7. GLOSSARY

7.1 AW – Affordable Warmth

8. LIST OF APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1 Affordable Warmth Charter

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email governance@barnsley.gov.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made

10. REPORT SIGN OFF

Financial consultation & sign off	Senior Financial Services officer consulted and date <i>Phil Danforth 27/09/2022</i>
Legal consultation & sign off	Legal Services officer consulted and date <i>Jason Field 18/08/22</i>

Report Author: Leyla Nayeri

Post: Senior Health Improvement Officer

Date: 28 September 2022

Affordable Warmth for Everyone

Barnsley's Charter for Affordable Warmth 2022

Vision

A Barnsley where everyone lives in a warm, healthy, energy efficient home

Many households in Barnsley face challenges in heating their home, particularly over the winter months. With rising and potentially unstable energy prices, many more households live in homes that have poor energy efficiency levels which cannot be kept warm at a reasonable cost. Fuel poverty can mean making stark choices between energy and other essentials or falling into debt. For some, the result is living in a cold home, which can have significant impacts on residents' health and wellbeing.

Strategic fit

Our Affordable Warmth Charter supports the Government's strategy "Sustainable Warmth: Protecting Vulnerable Households in England" Feb 2021. This strategy sets out the Government's commitment to tackling fuel poverty and helping the most vulnerable by increasing the energy efficiency of homes, reducing the cost of bills, contributing to low carbon targets, and supporting households in the transition to low carbon heating.

This document aligns with Barnsley 2030 ambitions and supports strategies such as the Housing Strategy, Private Sector Housing strategy, Sustainable Energy Action Plan, and the Collaborative Cold Weather Plan 2021-22.

Collective priorities

1. Energy efficient homes

Partner organisations are committed to energy efficient homes.

Energy efficient homes bring a range of benefits:

- **Health and wellbeing:** households living in more efficient, warmer homes are less vulnerable to cold and damp related ill health and falling into fuel poverty,
- **Environmental:** increased efficiency can lower greenhouse gas emissions to address climate change,
- **Economic:** accessing energy efficiency supply chain can lower individual utility bills and improving energy efficiency of housing on a large scale can boost the green economy, creating local jobs and training opportunities.

Residents on a low income, older people, those with health conditions and young families are most vulnerable to the effects of fuel poverty and cold homes. Households that cannot afford to spend money on fuel to keep their homes warm are more vulnerable to cold and damp related illnesses.

Insulation and heating improvements are the most effective way to improve home energy efficiency and achieve affordable warmth.

Building on our commitments:

- Seek out and maximise long term funding opportunities for the delivery of home insulation measures for fuel poor households.
- Develop partnership pathways for Affordable Warmth to enable relevant frontline services to refer for energy efficiency support.
- Delivery of Affordable Warmth programme for private sector housing, including funded boilers and first-time heating, and in the longer term to decarbonise heating whilst ensuring affordable warmth.
- Implement the private sector housing action plan to improve housing conditions and energy efficiency.
- Scale up of retrofit of private and social housing over the next 10 years to raise EPC levels to C and above.
- Implement the private sector landlord accreditation scheme. Take a proactive approach to helping tenants to maintain house heating to adequate level.

2. Affordable Energy

Partner organisations are committed to schemes that ensure affordable energy for all households.

Energy affordability is affected by household income, fuel prices and home energy efficiency. Low disposable income is a key cause of fuel poverty in Barnsley and many households are not accessing the benefits they are entitled to. These income related factors affect a household's ability to affordably heat and make their home warm and healthy to live in.

Building on our commitments:

- All new Council housing to be built to the Barnsley Low Carbon Standard to ensure all new homes are wholly affordable.
- Targeted support for the most vulnerable households, based on up-to-date data and insights.
- Provision of a Warm Homes team to support households to improve the energy efficiency of their properties across tenure, including signposting to funding opportunities and other organisations for relevant advice and support to maximise income;

- Introduce a training and awareness scheme for social housing tenants in receipt of whole house retrofit measures to ensure that they can maximise the efficiencies of the new low carbon technology;
- Investigate opportunities to introduce low carbon heat networks to provide affordable energy to new and existing householders on a geographic basis.

3. Employment, Education & skills

Partner organisations are committed to promoting and delivering best practice education and workforce skills development.

Straightforward advice and education are effective ways to help households gain knowledge and skills to save and better manage their home energy.

Raising awareness of the help available, particularly amongst vulnerable and marginalised groups can make a big difference to help access support for making homes warmer and healthier.

We will strive to develop a competent pro-active and local workforce to upgrade our existing homes making them more energy efficient. A whole house approach will be adopted by improving the fabric of the building first and then introducing renewable energy and heat sources, such as solar panels and heat pumps where suitable.

Building on our commitments:

- Work at a regional level to scale up ability to deliver retrofit of energy efficiency measures on a regional scale and enhancing local supply chain and contracts.
- Updating procurement processes to include social value and sustainability criteria.
- Working with construction companies to up-skill the workforce around residential retrofit and low carbon technologies to develop sustainable supply chains.
- Develop a pilot Sustainability Property Investment Fund via Goldthorpe Town Deals to enable businesses and industries to invest in retrofit and low carbon measures.
- Investigating opportunities for the delivery of Modern Methods of Construction at scale.

4. Partnership Working

Partner organisations are committed to collaborative working to tackle energy efficiency and fuel poverty.

Fuel poverty and cold homes can only effectively be tackled by a range of service and organisations working together; this helps to maximise and make best use of the resources available and reach those in the greatest need.

It is important that national, regional, and local policy reflect our local issues to best support our work to improve home energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty.

Influencing the importance of tackling fuel poverty with local politicians, policy makers and funders is an ongoing priority. This includes the Affordable Warmth taskforce contributing to consultation processes, influencing emerging policy, as well as highlighting our local fuel poverty priorities. It is proposed that the Affordable Warmth taskforce will oversee and coordinate the delivery of the Affordable Warmth Charter.

Building on our commitments:

- Working alongside partners and developers to ensure high energy efficiency standards for new builds across our region, seeking to influence standards via a Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- Working closely with partners to ensure those at most risk of rough sleeping in cold weather are supported to access advice, support, and accommodation.
- Create warm homes and fuel poverty networks with providers and Community & Voluntary Sector across the region.
- Improve data sharing, research and sharing best practice.

5. Low Carbon Commitments

Partner organisations are committed to schemes that contribute to affordable warmth, energy efficiency and low carbon targets and in the longer-term support low-income households in the transition to low-carbon heating, in line with Barnsley Zero 2045 targets.

As part of the commitment, organisations support affordable warmth by reducing energy demand and ensuring homes are thermally comfortable and energy efficient.

Building on our commitments:

- Working towards targets for sustainable housing across the borough, as outlined in the Sustainable Energy Action Plan, Housing Strategy, and emerging Climate Change Strategy.
- Retrofitting homes to significantly increase energy efficiency and provide a long term, right first-time solutions for fuel poverty which also reduces carbon and future proofs against rising fuel costs.
- Expand carbon literacy training for all key sectors.
- Continue to engage with members of the Positive Climate Partnership to promote cross-organisational working to tackle fuel poverty and affordable warmth issues linking with the Barnsley 2030 Board.

Signing up to collective priorities

If your organisation is working towards the vision and principles of the Charter, then contact us to sign-up to the Charter. Organisations who make this pledge will be awarded the Barnsley Affordable Warmth Charter Mark to demonstrate their commitment and may also be invited to join the Affordable Warmth Charter group.

What to do next

- Complete the online Charter Registration Form, setting out what you will do to promote the principles and objectives of the Charter.
- Join Barnsley Affordable Warmth Charter group. Here you can attend regular meetings where you can share information, learning and best practice with other partnership members
- Demonstrate you have contributed to the promotion of affordable warmth, display your Barnsley Affordable Warmth Charter Mark.

Ways of achieving Affordable Warmth

Easy wins:

- Making an official statement of your commitment to the objective of helping homes to achieve affordable warmth.
- Working in partnership with other affordable warmth stakeholders as part of the Affordable Warmth Charter group.
- Looking at what your organisation can do to help achieve affordable warmth.
- Engage with your staff about their own experiences of affordable warmth and fuel poverty.

Making a Difference:

- Referring your service users for home energy advice and energy efficiency improvements; If you are responsible for housing; by making energy efficiency improvements to the housing to reduce fuel poverty.
- Encouraging your organisation's staff to undertake home energy and fuel poverty awareness training.
- Committing resources to help with the delivery of fuel poverty and home energy efficiency schemes.
- Helping to promote and publicise local home energy efficiency and income maximisation schemes by distributing and cascading information.

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