

Help Shape Early Help in Hackney

Consultation Report

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Introduction

This report presents a summary of the feedback received from the engagement activity targeted at staff, partners and children, young people and families involved in early help services.

Background

The Council is undertaking a review of the early help that London Borough of Hackney provides for children, young people and their families and identify opportunities for providing that help in a more effective and more efficient way.

The focus of the review is on work directly done or commissioned by:

- a.** Children's Centre and Children's Centre Family Support Multi-Agency Team (MAT)
- b.** Young Hackney
- c.** Family Support Service

The review will also look at the work the First Access and Screening Team (FAST) does in processing Early Help (EH) referrals.

Where appropriate, the review will also consider work directly delivered or commissioned by other services and functions in London Borough of Hackney which fits the definition of early help.

Consultation & Engagement Approach

The engagement exercise ran from 28 January to 31 March 2020.

Staff and practitioners were sent an email signposting the [online survey](#) available on the Council's online engagement platform citizenspace.

Collection of online feedback from all key stakeholders.

We launched the collection of feedback using a [survey](#) on the Council's online engagement platform, citizen space. We felt that an online feedback mechanism, with its associated anonymity, would be particularly helpful for gathering views of children, young people and families that had accessed targeted intervention services, who may feel uncomfortable providing feedback within an open workshop session.

The survey sought to garner views on:

1. residents' experiences of EH, what they would like to see improved
2. partners' experiences of helping to deliver early help

3. all stakeholders' views on the current EH offer and their future aspirations for EH in Hackney.

1:1 interviews/ feedback sessions with parents or young people

In January 2020, the Early Help Working Group commissioned a series of interviews with children, young people and families who were accessing or had previously accessed targeted early help from Hackney Council. Interviewers spoke to 26 people from 17 different families: 7 young people, 19 parents or carers.

The objectives of that interview series were:

- To provide information that could give the Early Help Working Group a richer and more nuanced understanding of how well the Council's existing early help offer has been meeting the self-identified needs of families and individuals who have been referred to targeted early help services in the past two years.
- To enrich the Early Help Working Group's understanding of what additional non-council early help families and individuals have accessed and benefited from in a way that helps them identify other organisations/stakeholders that the council's early help services could work with more or in a different capacity.
- To give children, young people and parents who have accessed targeted early help services a platform to have their voices heard and an opportunity to play a part in service design in a way that makes them feel more empowered and strengthens their trust in the council.

Deliberative workshops with internal staff and partners

Deliberative workshops were held with staff and practitioners involved in delivering and co-ordinating EH. Key topic areas and questions explored at those sessions were:

Topic 1: Our Vision For Early Help In Hackney

- What outcomes should we be working towards with our early help offer in Hackney?
- How do we want children, young people and families to feel about early help?

Topic 2: Early Help Needs In Hackney

- What key needs or issues does the Early Help system in Hackney need to address?
- Which of these are already being addressed well?
- Which needs to be addressed better?

Topic 3: How We Deliver Effective Early Help

- Where are we already delivering effective early help in Hackney? What do we need to make sure we keep doing?
- What is working well in other contexts that we could try in our Early Help services?
- Are there any new approaches/new ideas we could try?

Topic 4: Barriers To Achieving Our Vision

- What is currently preventing us from addressing key needs and achieving our vision as well as we can?

Response Rate

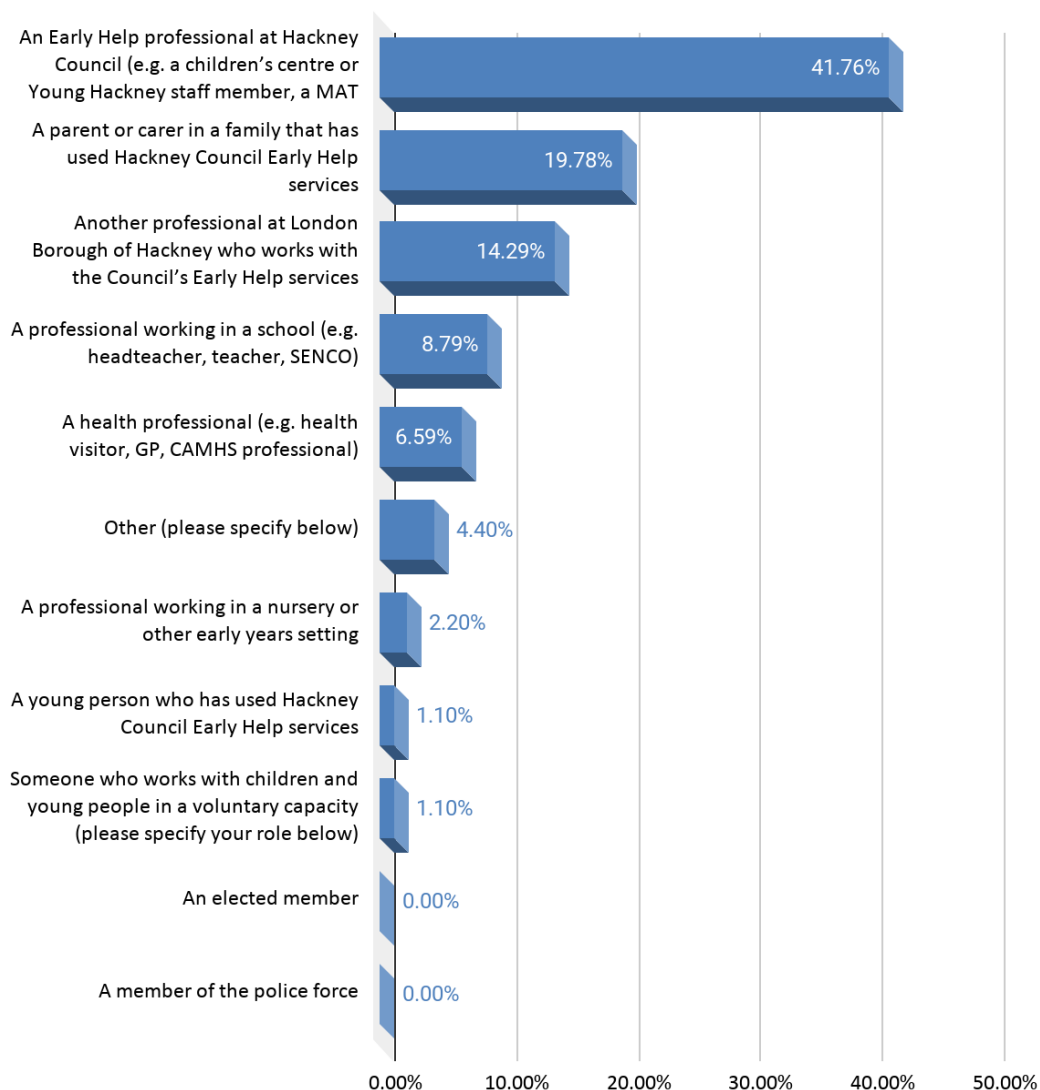
- A total of 91 responses were received via the online survey on citizen space
- More than 80 staff and practitioners took part in the workshops
- 1:1 interviews/ feedback sessions with 26 parents or young people from 17 different families

Overview of results

The following section provides an overview of the results from the online survey which ran from 28 January to 31 March 2020.

Your involvement with Hackney Council Early Help services

I am responding to this survey as (please select the option that best describes you): (Base 91)

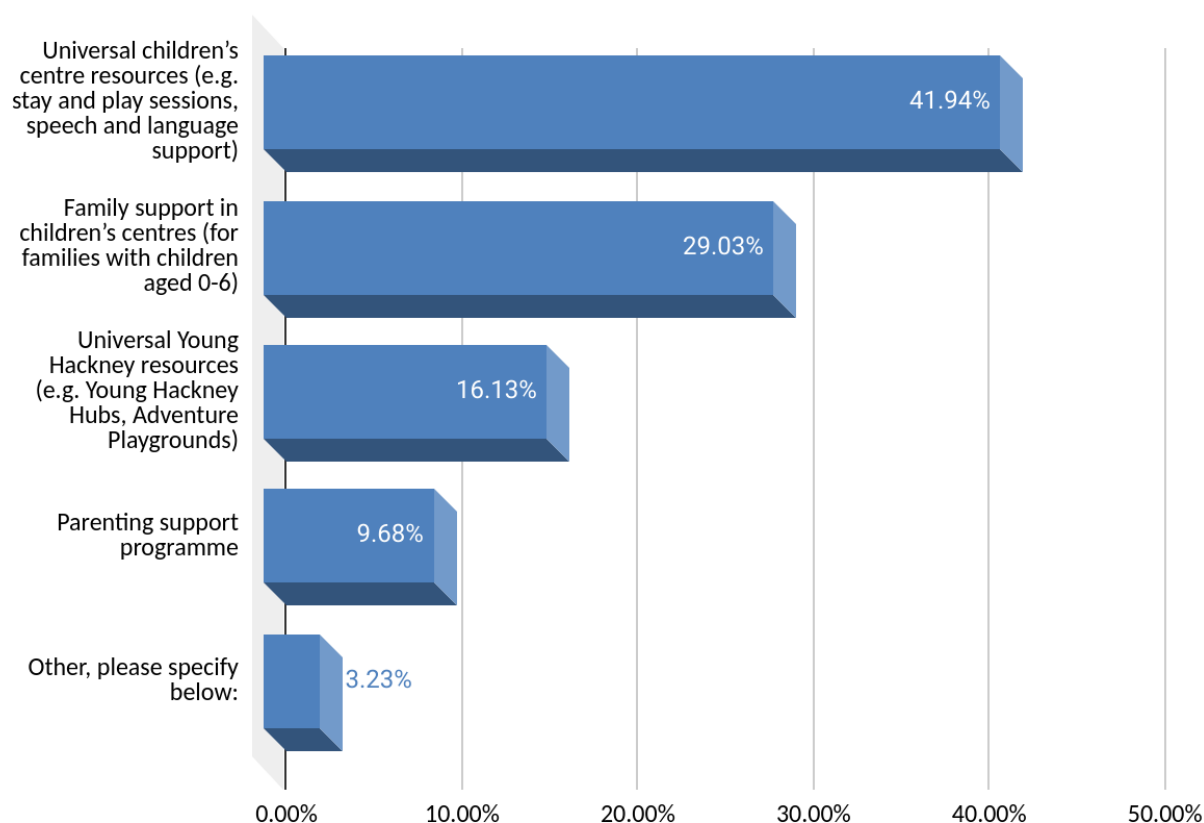


The top three respondents were “an Early Help professional at Hackney Council” (38) with the highest percentage of respondents, followed by “a parent or carer in a family that has used

Hackney Council Early Help services” (18) and “another professional at LBH who works with the Council’s Early Help services” (13).

Your experience of using Hackney Council Early Help services

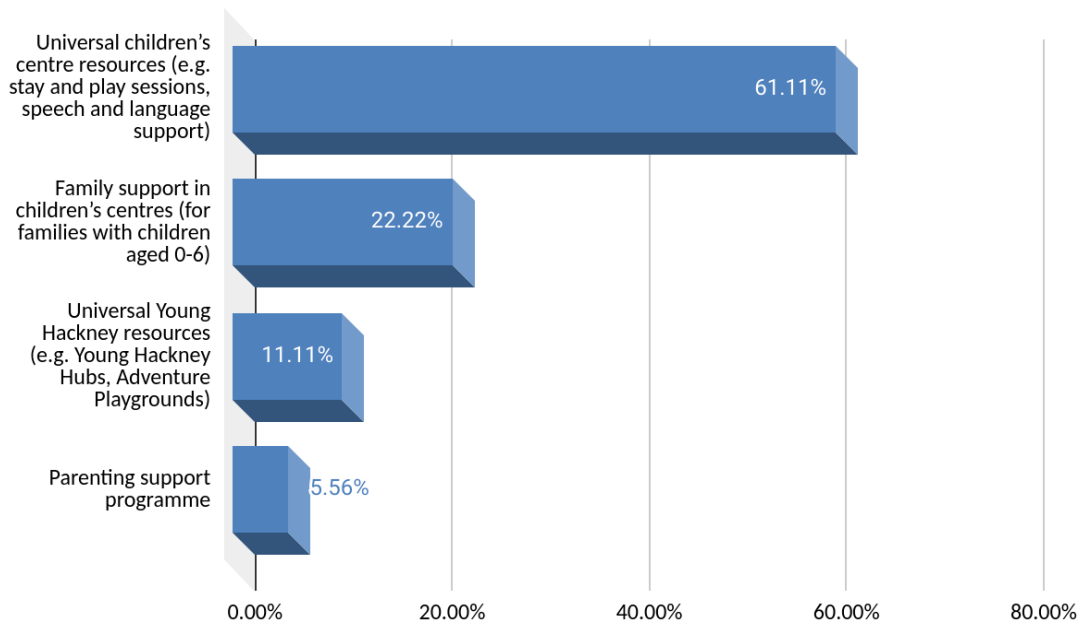
What type of Hackney Council Early Help have you or your family used? (Tick all that apply) (Base 31)



The highest percentage response, at almost 42%, relates to those who have used “Universal children’s centre resources” (13). This is followed by “family support in children’s centres” (9), “Universal Young Hackney resources” (5), “parenting support programme” (3) and “Other” (1).

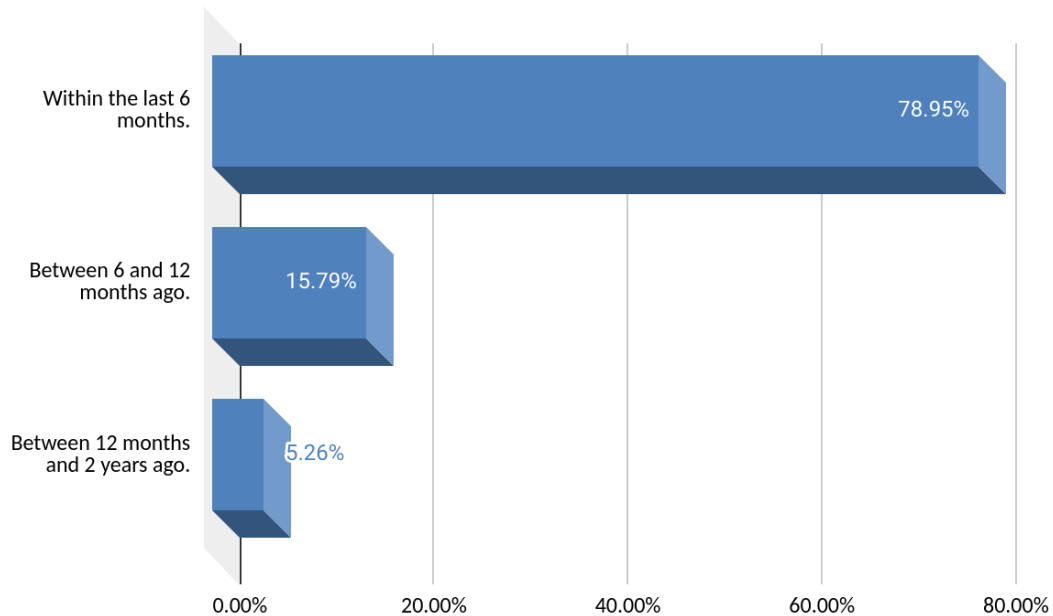
The one respondent who selected “Other” stated that they have used ‘First Steps’ which is an NHS psychology service for children and young people aged 0-18 years and their families.

Of these types of Early Help, which have you accessed most recently? (Please tick one) (Base 18)



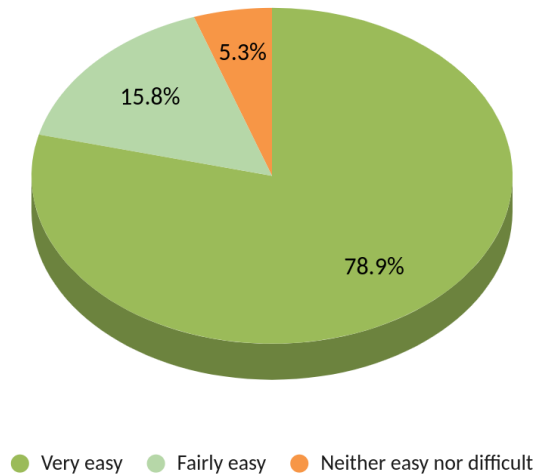
The majority of respondents, at just over 61%, stated that they have accessed “Universal children’s centre resources” most recently (11).

When did you last access this type of Early Help? (Base 19)



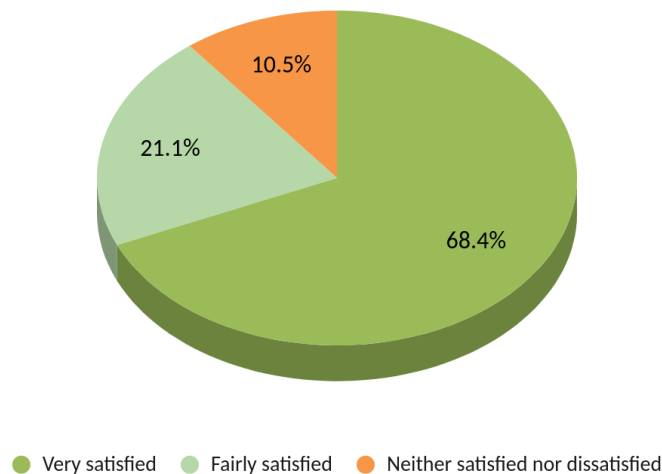
The majority of respondents stated that they last accessed their Early Help service “within the last 6 months” (15). A much smaller percentage stated “between 6 and 12 months ago” (3), and one respondent stated “between 12 months and 2 years ago” (0).

How easy or difficult did you find it to access this type of Early Help? (Base 19)



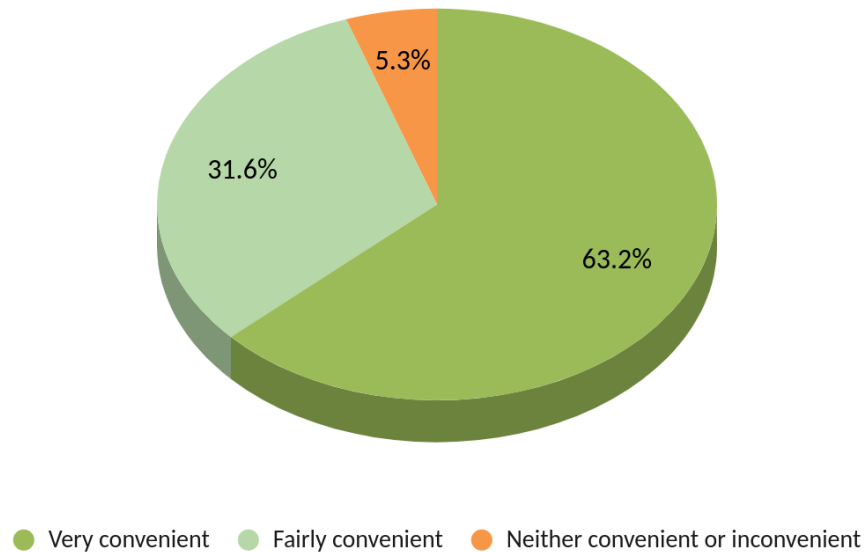
The majority of respondents stated that they found it easy to access their Early Help service (18 - 94.74% - very easy and fairly easy combined). Only one respondent stated “neither easy nor difficult”.

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the length of time it took to start getting this type of Early Help? (Base 19)



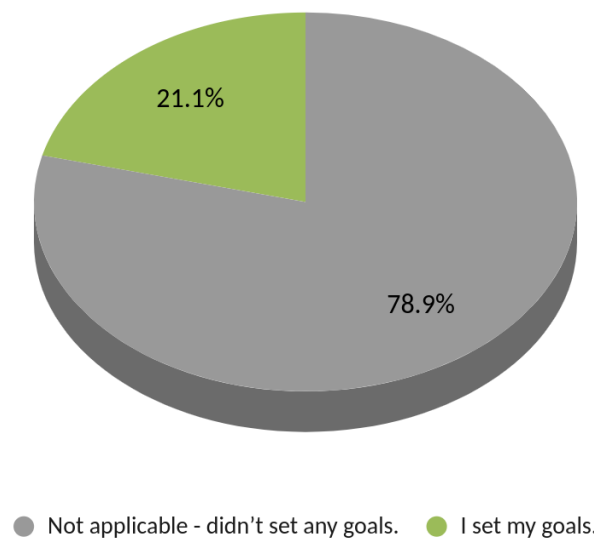
The majority of respondents stated that they were satisfied with the length of time it took to start getting help from their Early Help service (17 - 89.47% - very satisfied and fairly satisfied combined). Two respondents stated “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”.

How convenient or inconvenient were the time(s) and setting(s) where you accessed support and/or opportunities? (Base 19)



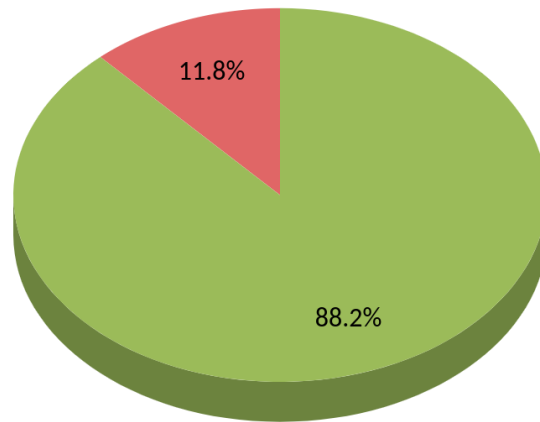
The majority of respondents stated that the times and settings where they accessed support and/or opportunities were convenient (18 - 94.74% - very convenient and fairly convenient combined). Only one respondent stated "neither convenient or inconvenient."

How were your goals for what you wanted to get out of Early Help set? (Base 19)



The majority of respondents stated that this is not applicable as no goals were set (15). 4 respondents stated that they set their goals themselves.

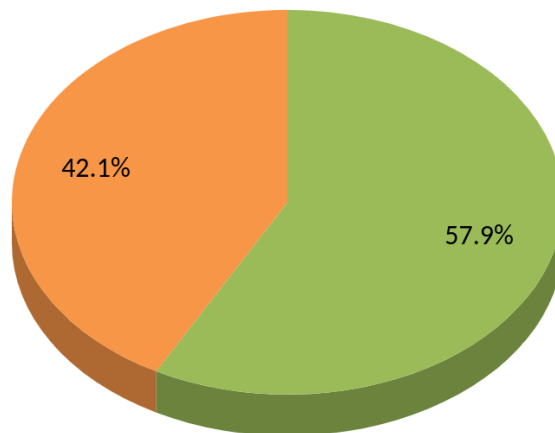
How do you feel about the length of time you were supported for? (Base 17)



● I was supported for the right length of time. ● I was not supported for long enough.

The majority of respondents feel that they were “supported for the right length of time” (15). Only two respondents felt that they were not supported for long enough.

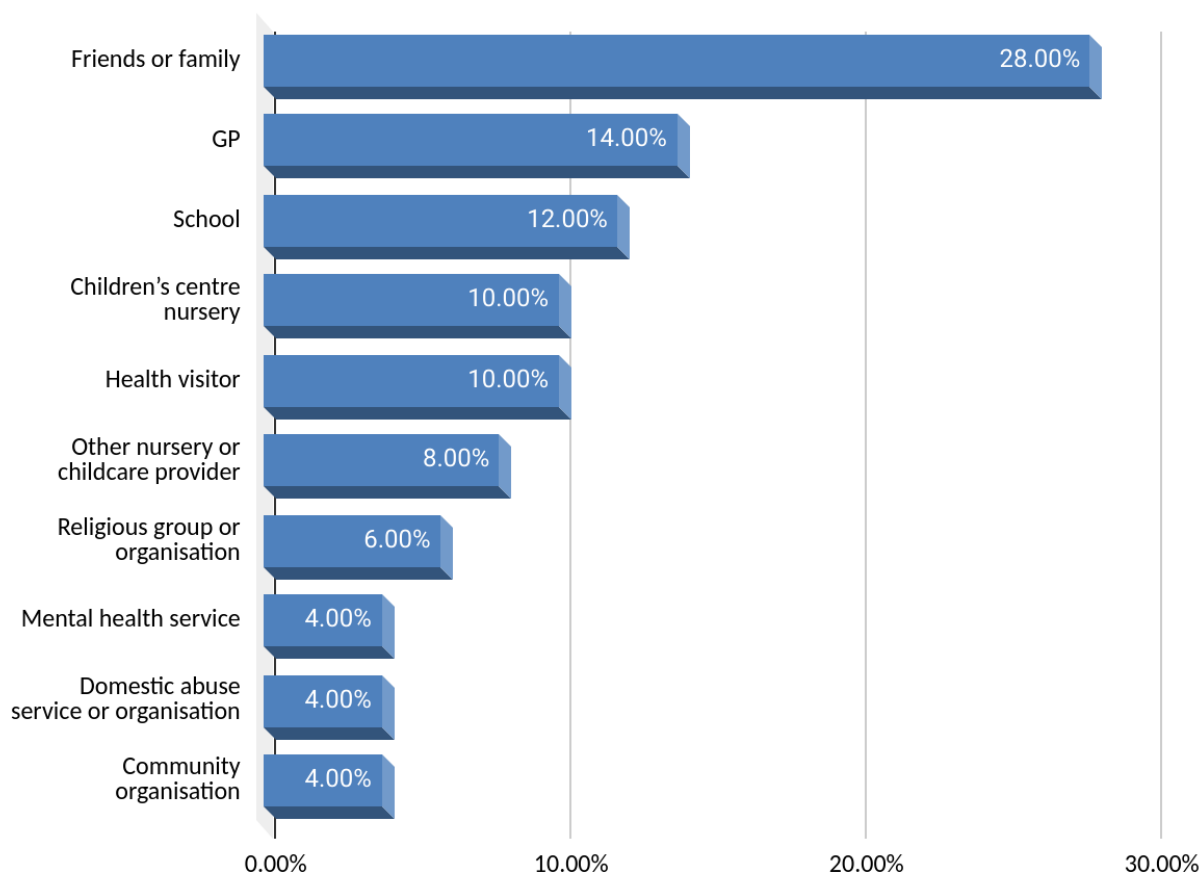
How much of a difference do you feel Early Help has made to your family’s life? (Base 19)



● It has made a lot of difference. ● It has made some difference.

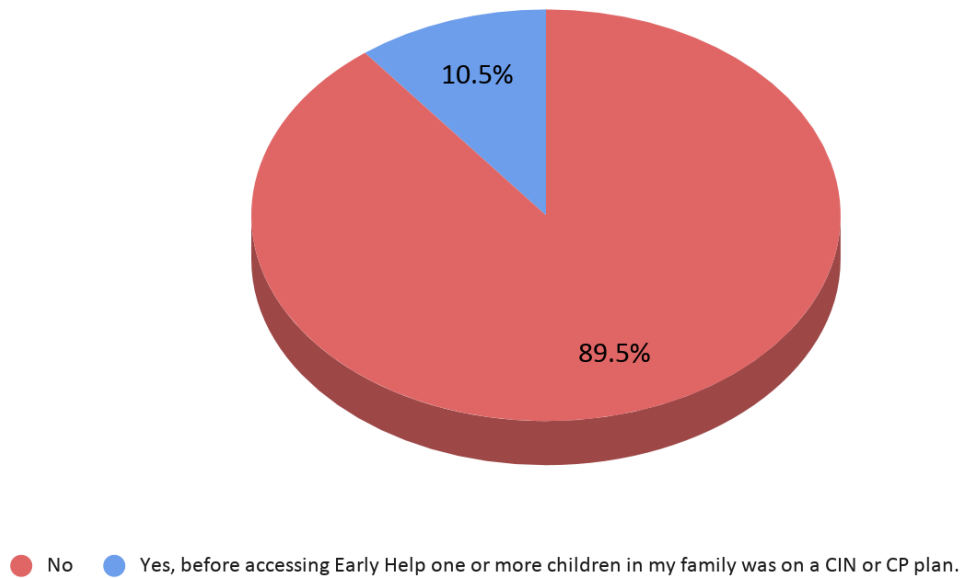
Just under 58% of respondents feel that Early Help “has made a lot of difference” to their family’s life (11). Just over 42% feel that “it has made some difference” (8). None of the respondents stated that they feel it has made no difference.

Aside from Hackney Council, who else have you had support from to manage your or your family's health, wellbeing and development needs? (Please select all that apply) (Base 50 responses)



The highest percentage response relates to those who have had support from “friends or family” (14). This is followed by “GP” (7), “school” (6), “children’s centre nursery” and “health visitor” (5 each), “other nursery or childcare provider” (4), “religious group or organisation” (3), “mental health service”, “domestic abuse service or organisation” and “community organisation” (2 each).

Have any of the children in your family ever been put on a Child in Need plan or a Child Protection plan?



The majority of respondents stated that none of their children in their family have been put on a Child in Need or Child Protection plan. Only two respondents stated that they had, before accessing Early Help.

Your experience of working with Hackney Council Early Help services

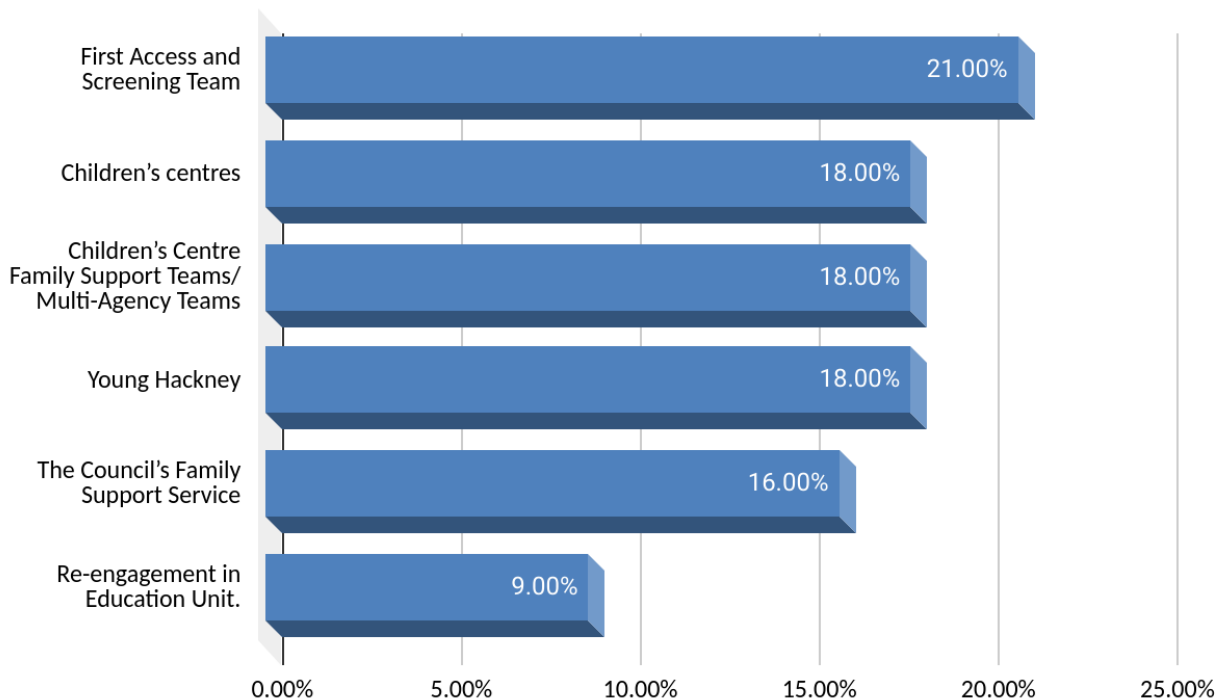
Before we ask you about how well Early Help is working for the children, young people and families you work with, we want to know a bit more about your experience of working with Hackney Council's Early Help services.

What organisation do you work for? (Base 28)

The list below shows the different organisations that respondents to this part of the survey stated that they worked for. This list does not show how many specified the same organisation:

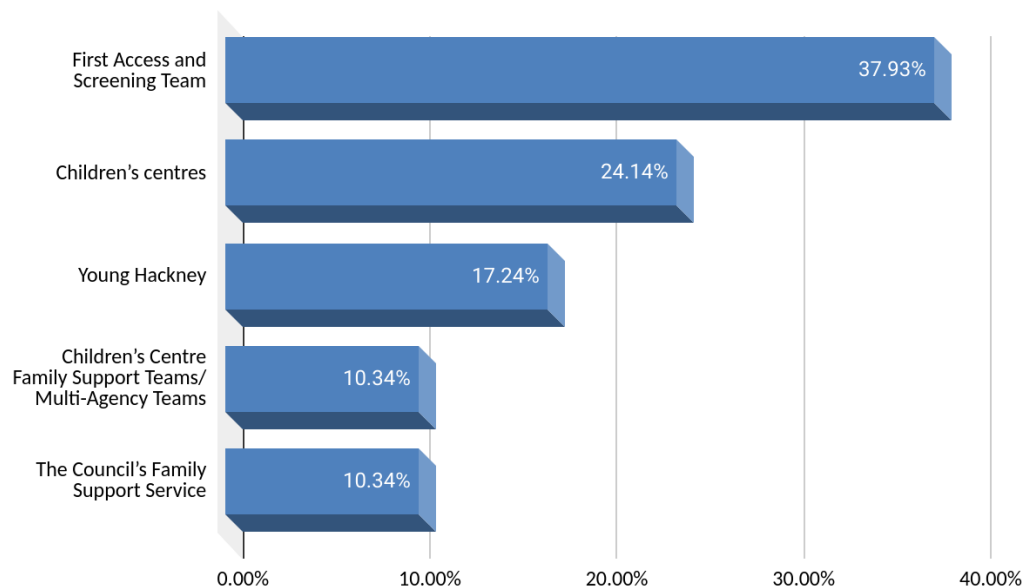
- Childminder
- Children & Families Service
- City and Hackney CCG, GP in various practices in Hackney over the years
- City of London Academy Shoreditch Park
- First Steps
- Hackney CFS
- Hackney Children's Services
- Hackney Council
- Hackney FISS
- Hackney Learning Trust
- Halley House School
- HUHFT
- Jobcentre co-located to Hackney Council working within Family Support Services
- Mapledene Children's centre
- NHS - Speech and Language
- NHS Family Nurse Partnership
- Re-engagement Unit
- St Dominic's Catholic Primary school
- The Garden School
- The Petchey Academy
- Youth Offending Team

Which of Hackney Council's Early Help services have you worked with or liaised with to get a child, young person or family support they need? (Please select all that apply) (Base 100 responses)



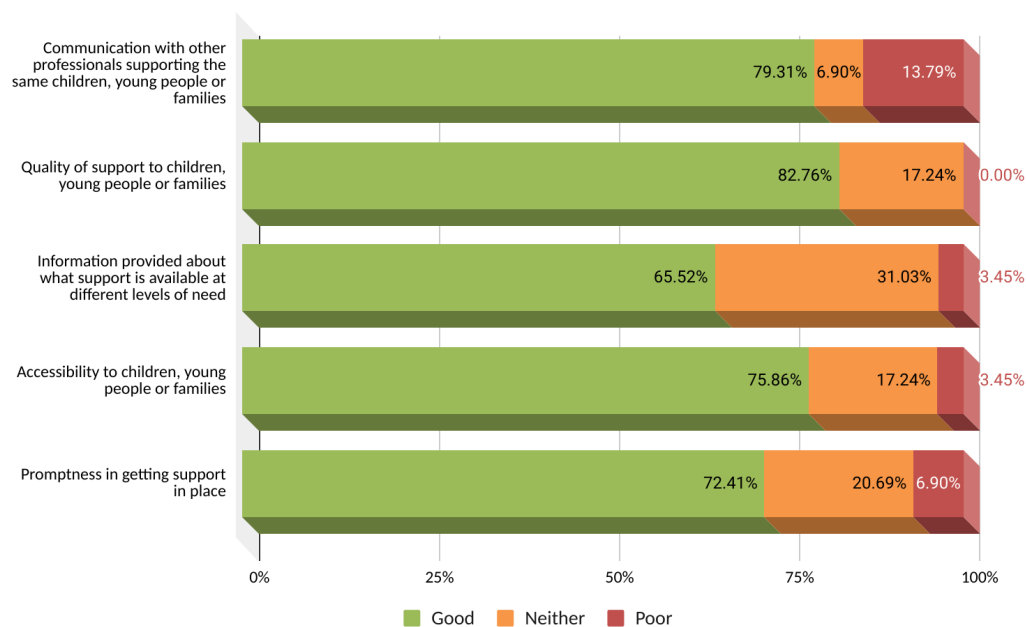
The highest percentage response relates to those who have worked or liaised with “First Access and Screening Team” (21). This is closely followed by “Children’s centres”, “Children’s centres Family Support Teams/MATS” and “Young Hackney” (18 each), “the Council’s Family Support service” (16) and “Re-engagement in Education Unit” (9).

Which service would you say you work with most frequently? (Please select one)
(Base 29)



The highest percentage response relates to those who work most frequently with the “First Access and Screening Team” (11). This is followed by “Children’s centres” (7), “Young Hackney” (5), “Children’s centres Family Support Teams/MATS” and “the Council’s Family Support service” (3 each).

How would you rate this service for: (Base 29 for each option)



The majority of respondents stated that all the services provided were good (very good and fairly good combined).

“Communication with other professionals supporting the same children, young people or families” had the highest negative response of almost 14%, but this is still low in comparison to the positive response of almost 80%.

“Information provided about what support is available at different levels of need” had the lowest positive response at just under two thirds of respondents (66%), but the negative response was very low at just over 3%.

Overall, the average positive response is 75.17% across all the options.

In what ways does this Early Help service work or liaise well with your organisation?

A total of 26 comments* were made, with the following key themes mentioned:

Key theme	Count
Information exchange/sharing/communication	12
Quick access to services	6
Professional staff	4
FAST	4
Direct case allocation	1
Learning opportunities	1
Long-term support	1

**All comments are available upon request.*

Information exchange/sharing/communication

All comments made were positive, specifically around timely, clear and responsive information sharing and communication. Communication between service users about cases and support is very good.

Quick access to services

Positive comments about Social workers, Family Support, Young Hackney, FAST and Managers providing quick access to other services due to the links with colleagues in each area.

Professional staff

Early Help and Multi-Agency teams are “passionate” about the work that they do, and Social Workers and Practitioners have a great understanding of the work and services required.

FAST

A comment made stated that “FAST undertakes a gatekeeping role for the whole service and this is something that they manage well”. FAST are “always quick to respond” and their advisors “take the time to listen to queries or concerns”.

Direct case allocation

Early Help services work well directly with case allocations.

Learning opportunities

One comment said, “It allows children from all different backgrounds and social classes to have equal opportunities to outstanding learning opportunities. The children’s centre means that daycare parents can access support and we can liaise with outside professionals to meet the children’s needs. It also creates a home from home environment where the local community can access services within the centre.”

Long-term support

Young Hackney and Family support links provide longer-term support for users.

In what way could this Early Help service work or liaise better with your organisation?

A total of 22 comments were made, with the following key themes mentioned:

<u>Key themes</u>	<u>Count</u>
Better communication	5
Information sharing	4
Better working together	4
Referrals	3
Co-located	2
Involvement	1
Training	1

*All comments are available upon request.

Better communication

More regular and better communication with school professionals, inter-borough, worker to worker, FAST staff, social workers, case workers, and about evidence based interventions.

Information sharing

Information is not always shared or relayed between services, or even shared in a timely manner, which can cause issues with families getting the correct support that they require.

Better working together

Improved support between practitioners and service, inter-borough links and connections. Consistent joint working opportunities to be more readily available.

Referrals

Single referrals to avoid different worker input on a case. Essential to get feedback on referrals. Greater opportunity for schools to see advice for a case by referral with more priority.

Co-located

Being co-located would be a benefit to those working with Early Help, as it would improve communication, decision making, and the overall relationship between services.

Involvement

One comment related to this theme, which said, *"More clarity regarding involvement. Usually ceases once open to YOT, is this always the case. Scope for more ad hoc sessions, more group work sessions etc."*

Training

One comment related to this theme, which said, *"Training to raise awareness on both sides."*

Your experience of working with Hackney Council Early Help services

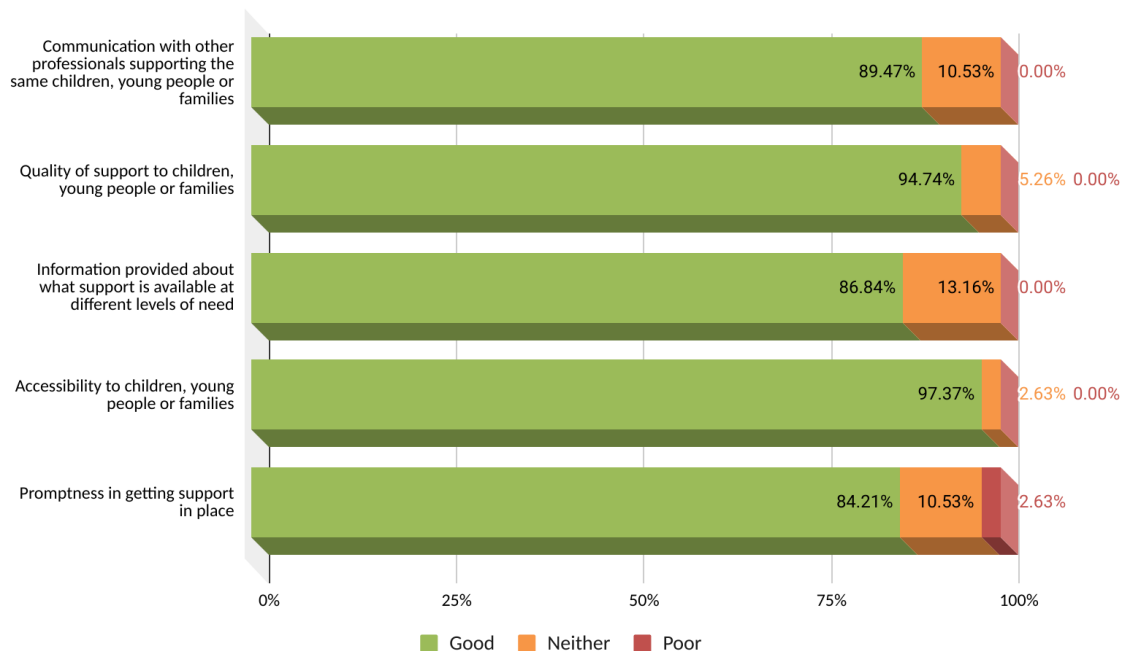
Before we ask you about how well Early Help is working for the children, young people and families you work with, we want to know a bit more about your experience of working for and with Hackney Council's Early Help services.

Which service do you work for? (Base 38)

The list below shows the different services that respondents to this part of the survey stated that they worked for. This list does not show how many specified the same organisation:

- Children's Centre
- Children's Centre - Family Support Team
- Children's Centre - Early Years
- Children's Centre - Hackney Learning Trust
- Early Years
- Early Years - Learning & Standards
- Early Years Multi-Agency Team (MAT)
- Family Support
- Hackney Learning Trust
- MAT Family Support
- Young Hackney
- Young Hackney - Health and Wellbeing
- Young Hackney - Substance Misuse Service

How would you rate your own service for: (Base 38)



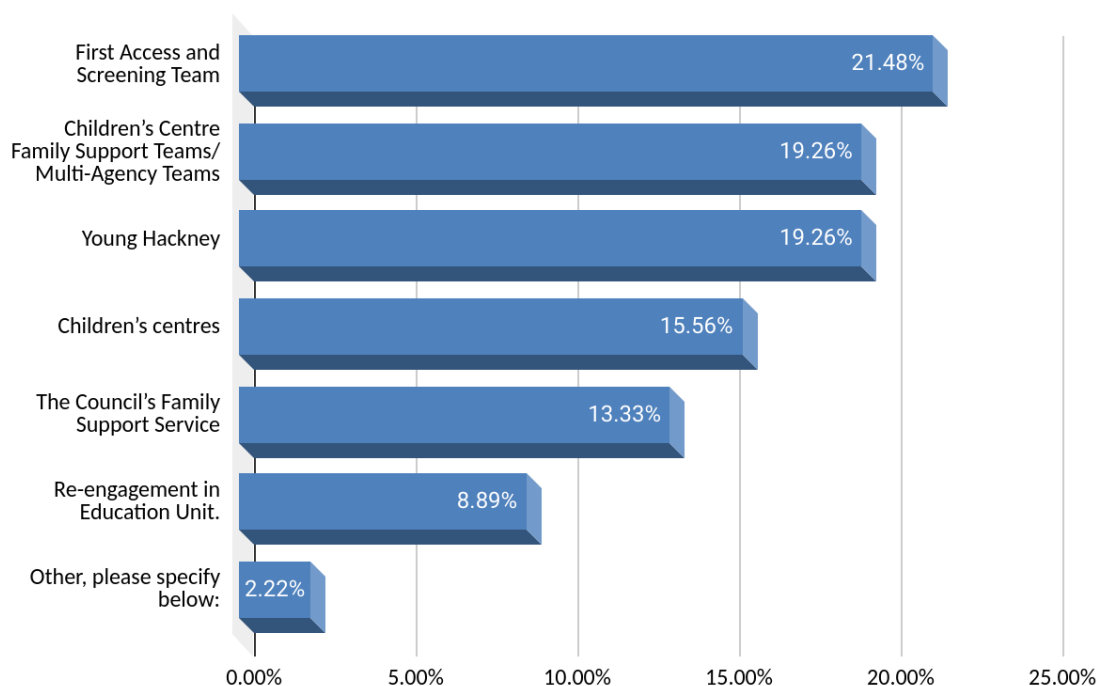
The majority of respondents stated that their own services were good (very good and fairly good combined).

The negative response across all but one option was zero, with “promptness in getting support in place” showing a very small response of just under 3%.

“Accessibility to children, young people or families” had the highest positive response at just over 97%.

Overall, the average positive response is 90.53% across all the options.

Which of Hackney Council's Early Help services have you worked with or liaised with to get a child, young person or family support they need? (Please select all that apply) (135 responses)

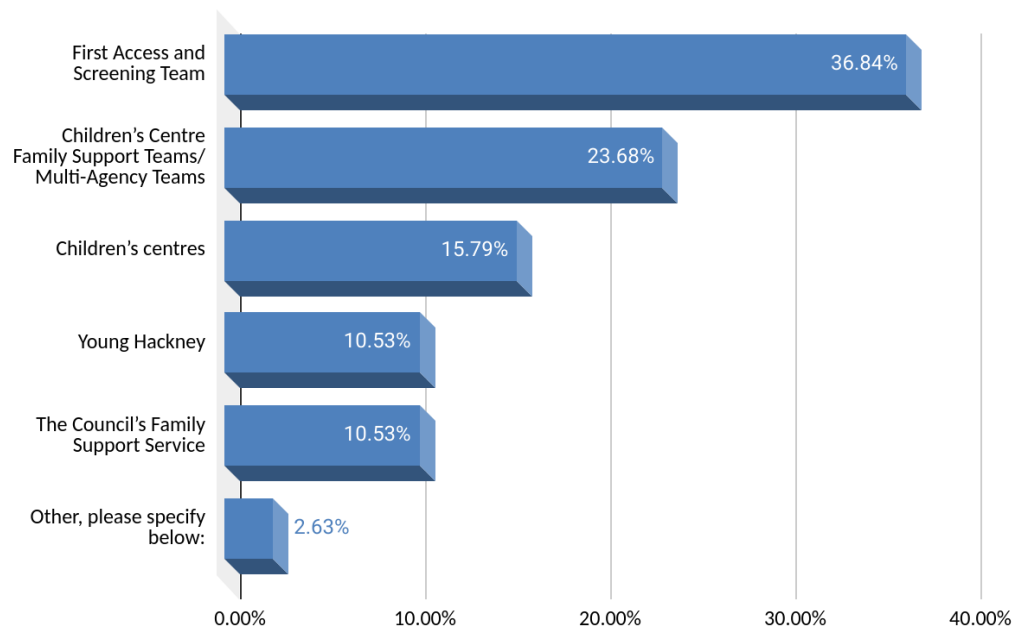


The highest percentage response relates to those who have worked or liaised with “First Access and Screening Team” (29). This is closely followed by “Children’s centres Family Support Teams/MATS” and “Young Hackney” (26 each), “Children’s centres” (21), “the Council’s Family Support service” (18), “Re-engagement in Education Unit” (12) and “Other” (3).

Those who stated “Other”, and those who wanted to comment anyway, gave the following responses:

- First Steps (CAMHS)
- Rapid Response, FLIP, Substance Misuse Service
- Schools
- Schools, CAMHS, Police, IGU, Hackney Ark, YOT, First Steps, A&A, CIN
- All CFS departments

Which service would you say you work with most frequently? (Please select one)
(Base 38)

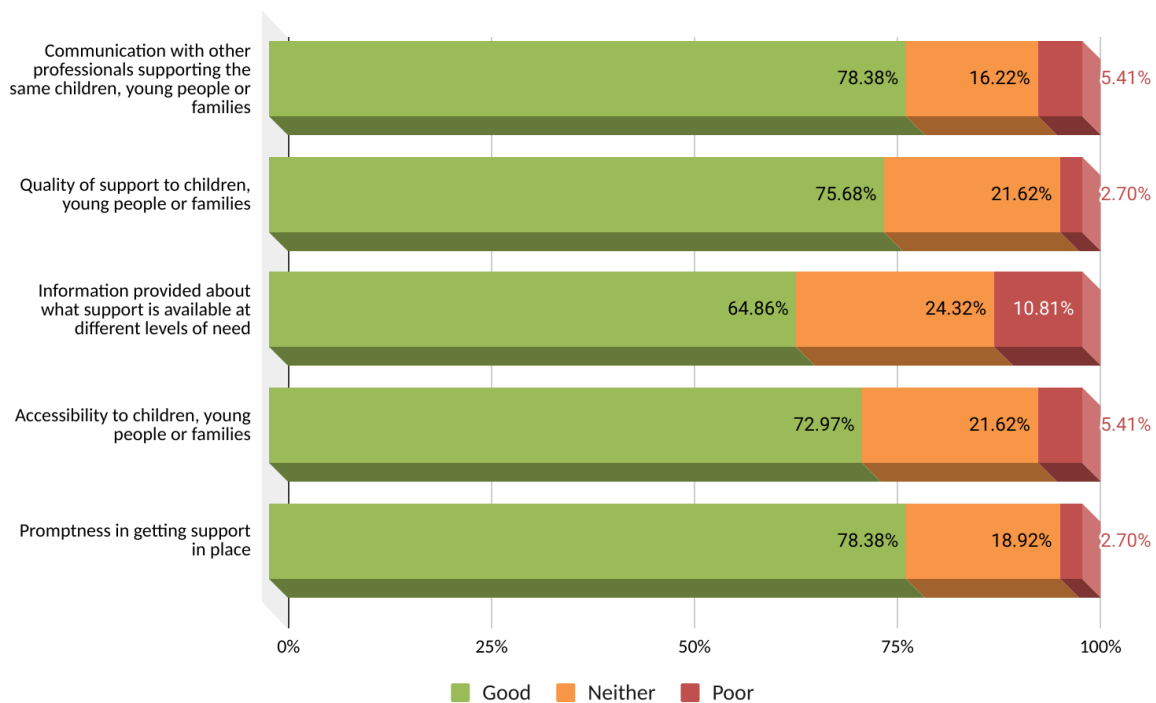


The highest percentage response relates to those who work most frequently with the “First Access and Screening Team” (14). This is followed by “Children’s centres Family Support Teams/MATS” (9), “Children’s centres” (6), “Young Hackney” and “the Council’s Family Support service” (4 each), and “Other” (1).

Those who stated “Other”, and those who wanted to comment anyway, gave the following responses:

- As part of the family support service we tend to hold the case.
- I also frequently work with YOT police, school staff and CSC colleagues in CIN and A&A

How would you rate this service for:



The majority of respondents stated that the services they had worked with most recently were good (very good and fairly good combined).

“Information provided about what support is available at different levels of need” had the highest negative response of almost 11%, and also the lowest positive response at just under 65%.

Overall, the average positive response is 74.05% across all the options.

In what ways does this Early Help service work or liaise well with your service?

A total of 29 comments* were made, with the following key themes mentioned:

<u>Key themes</u>	<u>Count</u>
Family support	10
Sending/receiving referrals	7
FAST	5
Young people	4
MAT	3
Sharing information/systems	3
Informing parents	1

*All comments are available upon request.

Family support

Joint working with Family Support is effective, and communication is good which leads to a greater level of support for families. Working with multi-agencies.

“Having the same goals in mind; supporting families to achieve positive outcomes for their children”.

Sending/receiving referrals

Sending and receiving referrals by email or phone. Clear systems in place for receiving referrals from Early Help.

FAST

FAST provides a large number of referrals, request information, and are available to discuss cases and concerns of young people.

Sometimes allocations are often inappropriate and families have not agreed support.

Young people

Joint working and effective parallel planning. Young Hackney service being supportive and positive for young people, children and their families.

MAT

Strong multi-agency partnerships work through MAT, and fortnightly MAT review meetings.

Sharing information/systems

Prompt sharing of information for families that informs work and support they need. Mosaic system so professionals are easily identified, which leads to collaborative and partnership working.

Informing parents

Regarding opportunities to get back to work, free childcare and health wellbeing initiatives.

In what way could this Early Help service work or liaise better with your service?

A total of 21 comments* were made, with the following key themes mentioned:

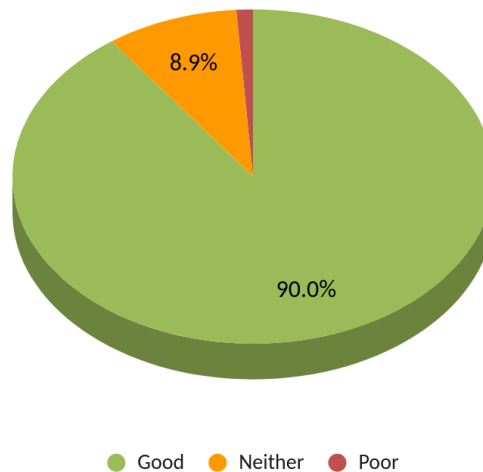
<u>Key themes</u>	<u>Count</u>
Better information sharing	4
More/better joint working	4
Better communication	4
More time to work together/for referrals	3
Better understanding	3
Better quality referrals	3

**All comments are available upon request.*

Making Early Help work for everyone

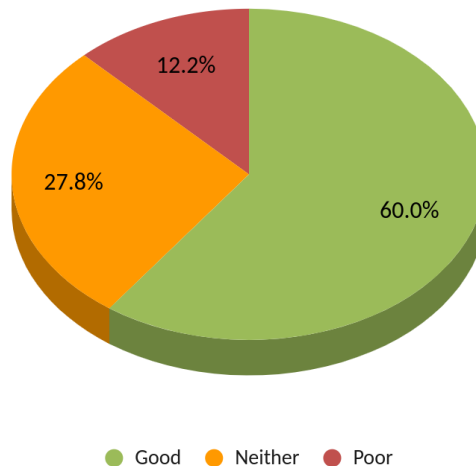
We want to know how well our Early Help offer is working for children, young people and their families now and what we need to do to more effectively meet people's needs in the future.

Overall, how would you rate Hackney Council's Early Help offer to children, young people and their families? (Base 90)



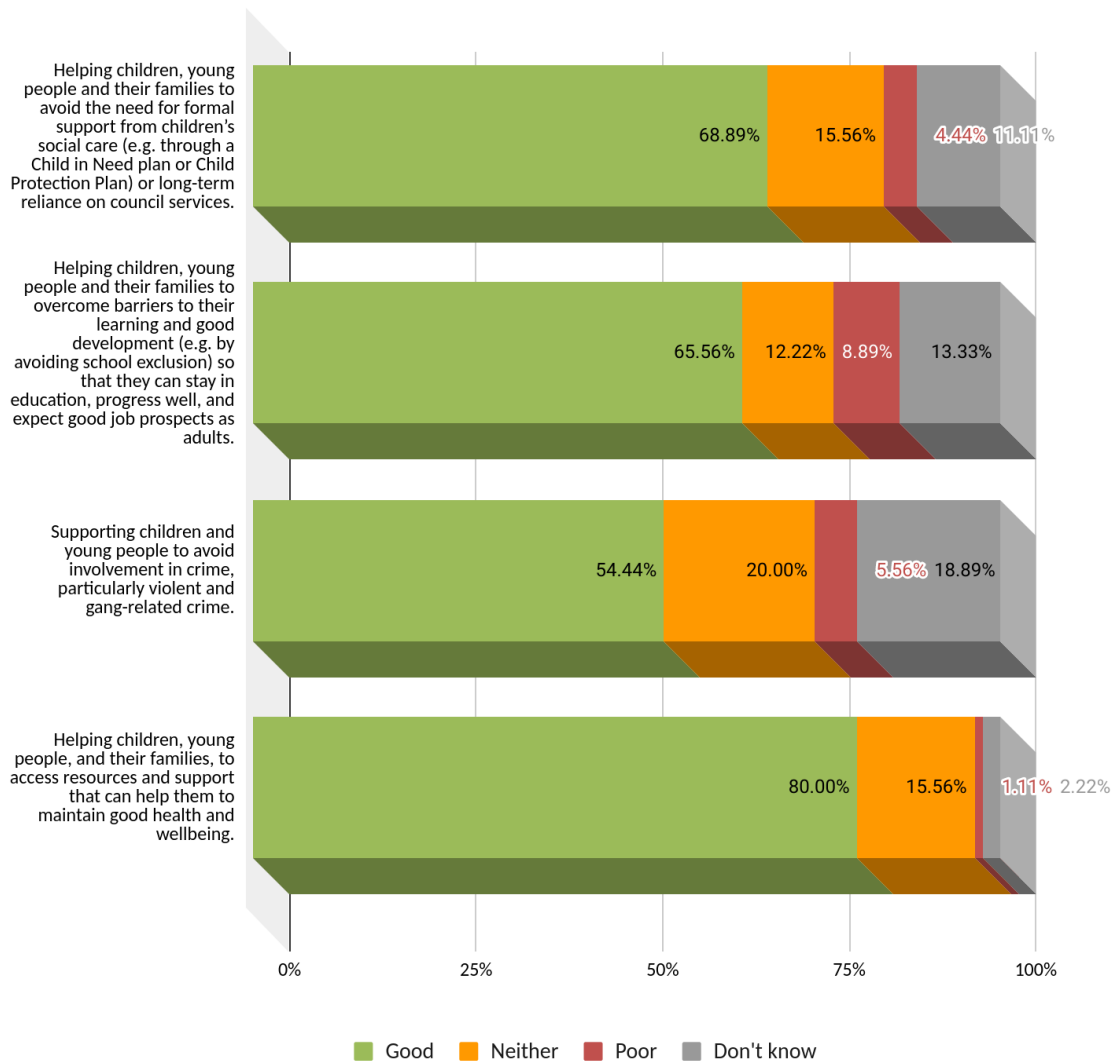
The majority of respondents stated that they would rate Hackney Council's Early Help offer as good (81). Just under 9% stated "neither" (8) and only one respondent stated "poor".

How good is Hackney Council at making people aware of its Early Help offer? (Base 90)



The majority of respondents stated that they think Hackney Council is "good" at making people aware of its Early Help offer (54). Just over a quarter of respondents stated "neither" (25), and just over 12% stated "poor" (11).

In your opinion, how good or poor is the Early Help provided by Hackney Council at the following? (Base 90)



The majority of respondents stated that they feel all the options above are “good”, with the lowest positive response at just over 54% and the highest at 80%.

The negative response was low across all options, with the highest response being just under 9%.

Please tell us about any services and opportunities that the Council provides as part of our Early Help offer that you feel are particularly valuable for children, young people, or their families.

A total of 66 comments* were made, with the following key themes mentioned:

<u>Key themes</u>	<u>Count</u>
Young Hackney	17
Family support	16
Children Centres	16
Multi-Agency Team - MAT	7
Speech and language	4
Youth hubs	4
Universal services	3
SENCO	2
Clinical services	2
Schools	2
Hackney Ark	2
Co-location work	1
FLIP	1
First Response Team	1
Home visits	1
Variety of services	1
CAMHS	1
Early years	1
Portage	1
Social workers	1
Mental Health	1

** All comments are available upon request.*

Please tell us about any gaps you feel there are in the Council's Early Help offer. Are there certain needs people are not getting enough help with? Are there particular groups of people who are not getting the support they need?

There were a total of 48 comments* to this question, and responses were very specific and varied to each service and organisation. Some of the key themes related to more support, whether this is regarding families or young people. There were mentions around the Early Help offer not being as effective as it could be, which would lead to required improvements, better communication, co-working and partnership, plus others.

**All comments are available upon request.*

In your opinion, what features would an excellent Early Help offer to children, young people and families have? What sorts of support would be available? Who would families or young people go to for help getting the right support or opportunities?

There were a total of 55 comments* to this question, and responses were very specific and varied to each service and organisation. Some key themes were around providing support, mentoring schemes, quick and efficient service response and Children Centre's, plus others.

**All comments are available upon request.*

Please tell us about any barriers you think could prevent children, young people and their families accessing Early Help from Hackney Council.

There were a total of 55 comments* to this question, and responses were very specific and varied to each service and organisation. Some of the main key themes were around lack of communication, time, resources, trust, understanding and awareness of services, plus others.

**All comments are available upon request.*

APPENDIX

Early Help Secondary Data - Summary Report

This report gives a summary of the types of services young people (aged 16-24) use in Hackney, and some of their views. It looks across various datasets from consultations and secondary data.

Young Futures

The most popular comment was around the use of parks in the borough, including Shoreditch, Finsbury, Springfield, London Fields, Clissold, Victoria, Haggerston and Hackney Marsh.

Many stated they like to go out with their friends, whether to play football, hang around, attend events/activities at Finsbury Park especially, as well as walking the dog, going for a walk or a run. There was a lot of mention about feeling unsafe in parks, mainly the increase of knife crime, which is connected to muggings and gangs. Also the use of drugs and alcohol was a reason that some did not use the parks.

This may have prompted a response from many young people who stated that their favourite place in Hackney was their own home because they felt safe. Problems raised about issues at home, inequalities, not enough space, overcrowding, lack of wifi, no access to books at home and libraries closing too early.

Youth hubs was another popular comment, but there is a general consensus that there are not enough of them around, and definitely not local enough. Youth hubs are so important for getting young people off the streets and actually doing something productive with their time. It also helps with their social and interaction skills.

Other popular choices were leisure centres (Britannia and Queensbridge), Hackney City Farm and the Dalson area in general.

As well as the above, the following were also mentioned:

- McDonalds
- London Fields Lido
- Laburnum Boat Club
- Arcola - Youth events
- Libraries
- Young Hackney
- Lee Valley Skating and Horse Riding
- The Princes Trust
- Dalston Curve Garden
- ELATT
- Haggerston Community Centre - Ballet classes

- Suzuki Hub Music School - Violin classes
- Hackney Empire
- Petchey Academy
- Markets
- Mouth that Roars

Young Hackney 'Critical Conversations' Summary Report 2018

Young people were asked about giving suggestions regarding resources or further provisions they would like to have at their youth clubs. A total of 77 young people took part in this consultation, with the majority between the ages of 13-19 and a group of 7 ages 6-12.

Youth clubs are an integral part of the community for young people, and ensuring that the facilities and resources are adequate is imperative to the running of the youth clubs and to keep young people coming back.

There was mention around improvements such as IT facilities, suitable outdoor furniture, appropriate equipment for games and cooking activities. Later opening times was suggested, which is a way of keeping young people off the streets at night which prevents loitering, especially gangs.

Hackney Wick Through Young Eyes

Between January and July 2017, Hackney Quest engaged with over 400 young people aged between 8 and 20.

There is much in the Hackney Wick area which is valued and appreciated by young people.

They generally love the parks, playgrounds and neighbourhood sports cages. The immediate proximity of places to play or hang out was an important factor in this. This comes down to neighbourhood territories which is led by gang culture and fear of being in danger by crossing into another neighbourhood where young people are not known to those gangs.

Youth centres were spoken very highly of, and the different community projects they are able to get involved in.

One area in particular, east of the A12 in the Trowbridge area, was found to have a lack of good-quality facilities. The Old Baths has been a wasted facility for a long time, and if renovated, could become a good community facility. A sports club or youth organisation could run informal sports sessions in this facility.

SEND Co-Design

Parents recognise the impact investment has had on educational attainment, however there are concerns over cuts to budgets and this has on provision within the borough.

Concerns that not enough attention is paid to early years diagnosis and interventions for children with SEND. This results in children not receiving early help which could prevent them needing greater support later on.

Transitioning is a major problem for children. Many children do not get the support needed when transitioning between settings.

Need more support for SENCos in primary years.

Children and Young People's Mental Health Consultation

In total approximately 200 young people from a range of cultural backgrounds and ethnicities took part in this consultation along with youth workers and six voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations.

Access came up with some surveyed young people. Location of services was also raised as a barrier, more flexibility and knowledge of what's available.

Across the rest of the consultation work it has not come up frequently with the exception of one clear and recurring point, young people would like to access mental health support in a familiar, safe and comfortable context. A particular place was not named as preferable but the CAMHS offices at Homerton Row came up on a number of occasions as a place young people did not like attending.

Discussions with regards to online support came up twice, with a group of younger children all insisting they wouldn't access support online and online material being complimented for content but could be made more age appropriate for adolescents.

Flexibility of service and presence in the community were themes that were present throughout the consultation. Young people identified that the placement of the

intervention was important, that it should be identifiable as familiar, comfortable and safe and it does not necessarily need to be a clinical setting. Accessing mental health support in schools was not mentioned by young people as necessarily increasing their likelihood of engagement or proactively seeking support. The features they expressed they looked for and emphasised were: safe, comfortable, familiar and knowing what to expect or knowing more about what access and intervention might look like.

Hackney Young Futures Commission - Background and Initial Analysis Findings Report (April - September 2019)

Hackney Young Futures Commission (HYFC) is the largest consultation undertaken with young people, aged between 10-25 years.

Young people reported that they like a wide range of activities and events in Hackney. These included cultural activities and local services such as the cinema, theatre and museums and specific events such as Carnival and festivals. Also Lee Valley Ice-skating Rink and Hackney City Farm.

Young people spoke about healthy activities they were able to participate in such as a range of sports, spending time in outdoor spaces, taking part in leisure centre activities and using estate-based facilities.

Young people talked at length about the range of activities within play and youth provisions and community services in the Borough, recognising the enjoyment they get from activities such as cooking, sports, filming, setting up a new business, meeting new people and being in a safe space.

The number one reported 'place' young people liked was Victoria Park, which is a park in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Clissold, Finsbury and Springfield Parks were the next highest ranked parks.

Young people specifically mentioned areas of Hackney they liked which housed key shops and restaurants, this included Ridley Road Market, Dalston, Boxpark, Shoreditch and McDonalds, Hackney Central.

Young people also mentioned that they liked places such as their own homes, their "nan's house" and "their church". These are places where they feel safe.

Young people made a number of suggestions such as more activities in schools, communities and youth clubs. There is a general call for more youth clubs in the

borough, and this is something that has been mentioned through many consultations with young people. Young people feel safe when at youth clubs as they are surrounded by other people, they get to have fun, socialise and make friends.

Secondary Data Research List

- Hackney Wick Through Young Eyes (Full Report) - *Hackney Wick Youth Voice*
- Hackney Wick Through Young Eyes (Summary Report) - *Hackney Wick Youth Voice*
- Hackney Central Area Action Plan - *Hackney Council*
- Young Hackney 'Critical Conversations' Summary Report 2018 - *Hackney Council/CCG*
- Children and Young People's Mental Health Consultation - *Hackney Council/CCG*
- Young Hackney Case Studies - *Hackney Council*
- Young Hackney I'm Cool - *Hackney Council/CCG*
- SEND Co-Design Workshop report - *Hackney Council*
- Young Hackney 'Critical Conversations' Summary Report 2018 - *Hackney Council*
- Hackney Young Futures Commission - Background and Initial Analysis Findings Report (April - September 2019)

Early Help Staff and Practitioner workshops

1. Introduction

This report presents a summary of the feedback received from the engagement activity targeted at staff and practitioners involved in delivering early help services.

2. Background

The Council is undertaking a review of the early help that London Borough of Hackney provides for children, young people and their families and identify opportunities for providing that help in a more effective and more efficient way.

The focus of the review is on work directly done or commissioned by:

- d.** Children's Centre and Children's Centre Family Support Multi-Agency Team (MAT)
- e.** Young Hackney
- f.** Family Support Service

The review will also look at the work the First Access and Screening Team (FAST) does in processing Early Help (EH) referrals.

Where appropriate, the review will also consider work directly delivered or commissioned by other services and functions in London Borough of Hackney which fits the definition of early help.

3. Qualitative engagement with Early Help Practitioners

Invitations to the workshops were sent to staff in the Early Help services in scope for the review, fellow LBH staff who work alongside them or support the same families and young people, and partners from other organisations and agencies who are part of the wider Early Help system in Hackney.

The workshops were held on 25th February and 2nd March 2020. A third session had been planned to take place on 30th March, but this was cancelled due to the pandemic.

About 80 staff attended the sessions across the two workshop dates.

4. Deliberative workshop discussion areas

The roundtables discussions were facilitated by managers from across the service and by members of the consultation & engagement team.

Attendees were asked to discuss a number of questions, covering four areas:

1. Our Vision for early help in Hackney
2. Early Help Needs In Hackney
3. How We Deliver Effective Early Help
4. Barriers To Achieving Our Vision

5. Key themes that emerged from the workshops

Topic 1: Our Vision For Early Help In Hackney

What outcomes should we be working towards with our early help offer in Hackney?

Health and wellbeing

- Children to have good emotional wellbeing- Improving wellbeing and safety of children and young people -grow, develop & learn to be responsible
- Children and young people feeling safe in the borough
- Working in a multi-agency way to improve Children's future in educational and economic outcomes- especially improving outcomes for young black men
- Children to access opportunities which will stimulate learning & development
- Children are given support at an early age- feeling warm and safe- then building up from that to improve outlook of the child
- Children and young people thriving, not just surviving.
- Children and young people feel like there is a place for them in society
- Reduction in teenage pregnancies, STI reduction - health and wellbeing as preventative measures

Improving outcomes for young black men

- Black young men are heavily mis/over-represented in the justice system- need better understanding & need representation from those communities in these services

- For young people to see and accept help through targeted engagement- without it feeling Council heavy- lead to reduction of offending/reoffending
- Take young people case by case rather than if the shoe fits- children and their experiences are different

Opportunities for children, young people and their families

- Resilient families, able to manage challenges in their lives
- Confidence of families (especially targeted groups) to use early years services; to help their child
- Early help that is preventative- support for the parent, not just the child- the parent may feel several pressures from outside which can affect their child.
- Shortening the gap between disadvantaged families and other-The gap between is wide- the difference between classes- middle and lower classes is very obvious between children centre's
- Not only intervene when things go wrong. Strengths-based focus. People to make decisions for themselves. How do we present services: primary, secondary, so that people make self-referrals
- The places for the extra classes and support is usually taken by those who are more affluent
- Family support: referral, then help, sometimes self referrals. Stigma of social workers. People need to recognise we are there to help; more self referrals
- Children and young people stay engaged in education
- More equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes
- Plan put in place by LA to keep child safe/ support family needs- t this isn't always properly explained to the family and hence contributes to a lack of empowerment/ control over journey

Miscellaneous

- Universal, within community, not only hubs, schools. Effectively identifying children with Tier 2 needs- these are children with low-level additional needs. Above universal help but not at tier 3 threshold of multiple needs.

- There are so many different roles in early help: it's hard for everyone to have the same outcomes.. An outcome depends on what we're looking at e.g. school inclusion, keep person in school, a positive outcome for the school
- Children's Centre: issue with referral process: working with schools quite difficult. Family as a whole is important. Schools can take a shorter perspective. Need to take a longer perspective.

How do we want children, young people and families to feel about early help?

- That early help, schools and Young Hackney are united and work together, rather than separate.
- They are being supported by a flexible service with a 'can do' attitude
- They can be themselves and express themselves
- They are in a safe space, physically and psychologically
- We're doing work 'for' them not 'to' them
- Want young people to have **trusted relationships**, to feel **safe**, not to feel like statutory social care for families that mistrust/have a difficult relationship with statutory social care services.
- Young people and their parents don't feel like there is a power differential between them and their early help worker
- Young people and their parents feel respected and fairly treated
- Youth hubs give young people a space where they feel like they can be themselves and express themselves.
- Youth hubs are a safe space for people, physically and psychologically
- There is equal access to early help across different communities.
- Shouldn't be using a deficit-based model: strengths-based instead.
- They can get support without stigma
- Services are accessible
- Empowered
- Respected, like equals
- Fairly treated

- The way they feel at the moment: intrusive, families told they need support. They need to feel it is a service that they go to, rather than services telling them. Families feel that they have to work with us.
- Message is not clear what early help is. Should be rebranded and marketed in a better way. Some families feel it is firefighting. Message not consistent.

Topic 2: Early Help Needs In Hackney

What key needs or issues does the Early Help system in Hackney need to address?

- Parental substance misuse
- Housing needs
- Impact of austerity
- Needs of young people in relationships
- Practitioners' own needs - their jobs are getting more and more demanding as the number and complexity of cases increases
- Domestic violence
- Mental health issues for young people *and* parents
- Emotional needs of people facing racism, ableism, heteronormativity, stigma of poverty
- Austerity has massively contributed to that complexity of need
- Gross inequality underlying a lot of cases: socioeconomic, racism.
- Housing need
- **Duplication of services.** A lot of partners/partnerships involved. Sometimes work seems really similar; needs to be clear who is doing what and why they're doing the work.
- **Mental health.** Underlying factor, not recognised quick enough by schools working with young people. Could be picked up.

Which of these are already being addressed well?

- Multi- agency liaison with vulnerable families-Trusted relationships
- Early Help- Drop In's for children and families
- Providing excellent Children's Centre and universal Young Hackney provision
- Prevention and Diversion work
- Delivering a broad range of services
- Delivering specialised services, e.g. for substance abuse
- Diversity and identity work - but still room for improvement
- Having 'no wrong front door'
- Focusing on the building of trusting relationships between practitioners and families and young people
- Taking a creative and flexible approach to supporting families and young people
- Restorative justice
- Nurturing people and encouraging aspiration
- Maintaining strong cross-partnership relationships and encouraging aspiration

Which needs to be addressed better?

Mental Health

- Accessible therapeutic support- particularly for young men- There isn't enough support to deal with their trauma (death of a friend)- their needs to be a better support system for those who need it kids will not use traditional methods of therapy- due to location and stigma, will use an officer to vent and talk about their issues
- Parental Mental health- Parents are not in the best position to take on recommendations- they have their own mental issues to deal with
- Knowing what to do next- service areas don't offer the flexibility to deal with case by case issues

- Contextual support around mental health - where it is viewed it is often viewed in isolation i.e. just the mental health of the child and not that of the family and in different spaces (i.e. home vs. school).

Education

- Disciplinary system in schools - schools do not provide the correct outlets for children- those who don't behave well
- Schools capacity- unable to support children on a one a one basis
- Exclusions and PRU offer - New Regents- permanent exclusions- failure in schools system - no enough support, education is very poor- Young Hackney provides the service to this school - don't want kids to feel forgotten
- Exclusions/ alternative provision
- Opportunities for free adult learning
- SEND offer- Learning needs

Housing

- Appropriate housing for families- six people in a two bed house
- Housing that is affordable for those with less income
- Placing housing advocates in Early Help services

Partnership working

- **Working with wider services to share the workload and knowledge-** able to deal with cases which may have issues with housing, finance- impacts upon the support that they are able to provide as practitioners
- **Partnership with Young Hackney and Schools-** need to receive referrals at an earlier stage- not on the cusp of permanent exclusion- Needs to educate the staff who do will make these referrals in schools
- More working with the voluntary sector to help them secure funding
- **Parents are an obstacle-** in getting their child engaged with more support
- **We need to get our own house in order-** have conversations in-house that practitioners can do self- reflection on representation, racism etc in the workplace- before going into schools and getting them to change their approach

- **Clearer access to Early Help-** contacting the team for general queries (from a schools perspective)
- **Rebranding of Young Hackney-** the offer is broad and has a negative view- give people a better understanding of what they offer- it is more than just a youth club/ support for gang members
- **The workforce should represent people than live in Hackney-** they will have a better understanding of the current climate living in Hackney.
- Give services more autonomy of their own social media accounts
- Developing service information for professionals and guidance for navigating the system
- Working with families or young people over longer timeframes
- Try to develop more peer support for young people - successful school pilots don't seem to have been rolled out
- Return to funding the Re-integration Unit, which now operates as a traded service
- **Finance/ Employment-** access to childcare for those with no recourse to public funds.
- Domestic Violence support

Topic 3: How We Deliver Effective Early Help

Where are we already delivering effective early help in Hackney? What do we need to make sure we keep doing?

- **Speech and Language therapy-** open & easy access- anyone can refer themselves to the service
- **Children's Centre-** Universal access for children to services, Provide family learning.
- **Place to create a support network-** coffee mornings to help create community cohesion

- **Young Hackney**

- prevention and diversion at an early stage, the offer that they provide to low level offending young people.
- Child panel interviews- when hiring new Young Hackney staff, young people are invited to be a part of the interview panel.
- Hackney provides a programme to help the young person compared to other Council's where there is lack of effort- a simple form process
- Positive activities offer varied- youth parliament & youth opportunity fund
- **City of London Academy- Shoreditch Park** - trying to bridge the gap and let agencies come in and provide support where they can, robust team to support parental engagement- communication and parental empowerment
- Multiple professionals involved, things can become less effective, multiple agencies, disengagement from families/change of mind, go on what they have heard from neighbours, family dynamics, immigration status factors too

What is working well in other contexts that we could try in our Early Help services? Are there any new approaches/new ideas we could try?

- **Better awareness of services on offer**- help to secure consent from parents for their child
- **Touch base service for parents**- who have questions but don't want to be fully in the service
- **Give services more autonomy** of their own social media accounts
- More working with the voluntary sector to help them secure funding
- Developing service information for professionals and guidance for navigating the system
- Placing housing advocates in Early Help services
- Working with families or young people over longer timeframes
- Try to develop more peer support for young people - successful school pilots don't seem to have been rolled out
- Return to funding the Re-integration Unit, which now operates as a traded

service

- Use of a central performance team, as is the case in adults' services.
- Externally we do good work, hubs, things families can see; when it comes down to individual casework, challenging beliefs, it's different then.

Topic 4: Barriers To Achieving Our Vision

What is currently preventing us from addressing key needs and achieving our vision as well as we can?

- External factors such as the housing crisis, the gig economy, and the cumulative impact of austerity
- **Funding cuts** -There needs to be sustained funding to provide sustained quality service . **Children's Centre- ESOL-** cutbacks has made the service hard to run well- failing those who really need the serviceExcessive bureaucracy and management structures
- Silo working/ Protectionism within services.
- Use of **different case management systems:** Mosaic and Capita., which impedes information sharing.
- **Lack of cultural understanding or representation in teams - as the staffing of EH services doesn't reflect the diversity of the borough.** Investment of key frontline staff- providing opportunities for staff to be able to look reflectively to truly understand - time, confidence around disproportionality and racism- talking about these topics will help practitioner's confidence in highlighting theses issues and knowing how to deal with them
- Reluctance to engage with grassroots organisations more and in more creative ways
- **Lack of a consistent approach across the partnership** - sometimes actions of schools or the police can undermine what the work of LBH services
- **Lack of understanding & communication-** we are not listening to the child and the parents- have measures planned based around them - we need to understand why a child is behaving badly- they may be other issues beyond them just being 'bad'
- **Need a less formal way of referring people-** via phone call rather than a form- stigma to the person even accessing the service in the first place - early, early

help which can be quick and light touch rather than the bureaucracy and waiting for things to get worse.

- **Communication-** (although Hackney has good partnership working- it can be much better)
- **Engage in challenging conversations-** Self- reflection as individual practitioners- particularly with disproportionality and racism- improves confidence- need time to do this- think, train and respond and build confidence
- **More information sharing in terms of services available-** parents and children have a lack of insight into the purpose and benefits of services
- **Lack of resources** - staff facing incredibly high case loads which makes it hard to devote enough time to those cases and to building vital relationships with partner organisations and agencies. Also makes it hard to get full value from unit meetings: made to deal with 30 cases, not the 90 that you have now.
- **Stigmatising language**, especially in naming of services or initiatives, with people pigeon holed as 'troubled families' or in the 'exclusion unit'.
- FAST perspective is that there is not much communication between services in CFS and MATs.
- Geographical location of MAT in a different building to CFS? Not everyone thinks this is an issue
- Performance and demand monitoring is not owned by a single performance team: work is split between Naeem's team, MISA, business support teams in CFS.
- **Young Hackney**
 - Some of our referrals, not for us, whoever screen referrals, make sure it is a Young Hackney referral.
 - Often YH are required to act as a go-between with families and social services, with consequences for the time available to do core Early Help work.
- **We can't access mosaic database**; difficult to document things in the present moment and can't see which work has been done before
- We need to be able to see each other's work - can see concerns, otherwise duplication.

- More family services required, less statutory, to do more preventative work. Get back to preventative side of work.