

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: ALL
REPORT TITLE An update on Camden’s implementation of the new Early Education entitlements and the development of Family Hubs.	
REPORT OF Executive Director Children and Learning	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee	DATE 18 January 2023
SUMMARY OF REPORT <p>This report provides an update on the development of Family Hubs in Camden and the preparedness of Camden early education and childcare providers to deliver the new early education entitlements announced by the government in its budget in March 2024.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Debbie Adams, Head of Integrated Early Years and Family Hubs 4th Floor, 5 Pancras Square, London N1C 4AG 020 7974 6706 / debbie.adams@camden.gov.uk</p>	
RECOMMENDATION <p>The Committee is asked to note the progress outlined in the development of Camden’s Family Hub programme and the forthcoming changes to the nationally funded free early education entitlements.</p>	



Signed by:

Rashida Baig, Director of Children's Prevention, Family Help and Safeguarding

Date: 5 January 2024

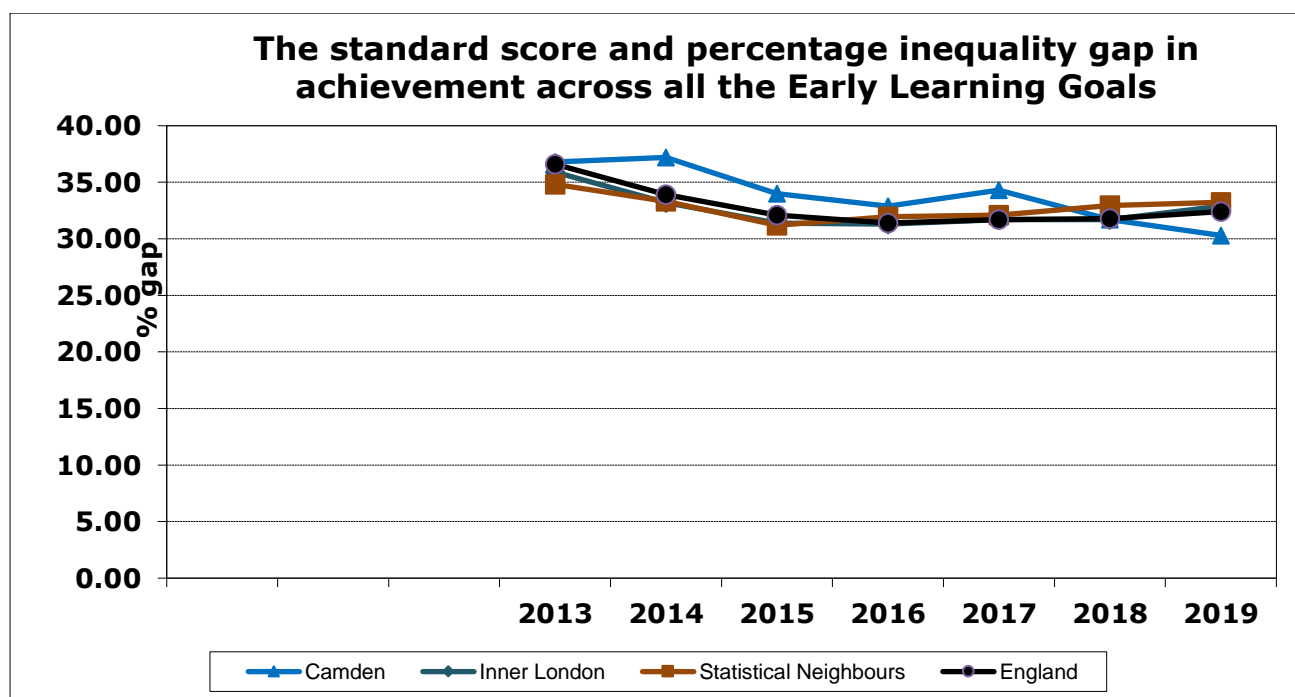
1. Purpose of Report

This report provides an update for Scrutiny Committee on the key new policy area of Family Hubs and Camden's progress in implementing the programme across the borough and, secondly, provides information about the additional early education entitlements announced in the budget in March 2023 and Camden's providers readiness to meet demand.

2. Camden's Integrated Early Years and Family Hub service

Camden's Integrated Early Years Service continues to strive to give all Camden children the best start in life. In response to the growing body of research the service has continued to evolve and adjust its focus to ensure we support children to achieve the best possible outcomes. In its report 'Getting it Right for Families' the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) stated "*Service coordination or integration is likely to improve families' experiences, enable those needing support to be identified more quickly and increase the likelihood of families receiving the help they might need*". We have developed an integrated service with children's health, in which practitioners employed by the Council and the National Health Service are co-located, work together on shared priorities and have access to both NHS and Council record keeping systems so that they can see the whole child record. In 2020 Council agreed to respond to the evidence about the unique opportunities the first 2 years afford to improve outcomes and adjust the focus of the Integrated Early Years Service by closing 3 nurseries and investing in a new 1001 days pathway of services to support families from conception until the child is 2. Also, following the introduction by the government of additional Early Education entitlements for the 3 and 4 year old children of working parents, introduced its own local scheme to fund additional hours for disadvantaged 3 and 4 year olds. While difficult to prove attribution the few years prior to the pandemic, when comparable data was available, saw a small but notable decrease in the inequality gap at age 5.

Figure 1



- 2.2 During the pandemic Camden was asked to contribute to a national review of Early Years services led by The Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP. Mrs Leadsom met with senior offices, staff and parents at 4 separate meetings, the findings from which helped to inform the recommendations published in 'The Early Years Healthy Development Review (2021)'. The review recommended 6 action areas, one of which was to develop Family Hubs as a place for families to access Start for Life services. Following the Early Years review, in August 2022 the government published a programme guide for Family Hubs and invited 75 Local Authorities to 'sign up' to deliver the programme. Albeit the vision for Family Hubs is for a service that supports families with children of all ages, all Family Hub funding is targeted at 'Start for Life' services. Many of the minimum expectations for funded services set out in the Family Hub guidance are already met in Camden and the funding is allowing us to go further, and more quickly, than our locally developed and funded 1001 days pathway had planned.

The first section of this report will describe how the Family Hub programme is developing in the borough and the second section will go on to summarise the recent changes in the free early education entitlements that were announced in the budget in March 2023 and begin to come 'on stream' in April 2024.

3. Family Hubs

- 3.1 The Family Hub programme guide describes Family Hubs as *"... a system-wide model of providing high-quality, joined-up, whole-family support services from conception, through a child's early years until they reach the age of 19 or 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Family Hubs aim to make a positive difference to parents, carers and their children by providing a mix of physical and virtual spaces, as well as outreach, where families can easily access non-judgmental support for the challenges they may be facing. Family hubs provide a universal 'front door' to families, offering a 'one-stop shop' of family support services across their social care, education, mental health and physical health needs, with a comprehensive Start for Life offer for parents and babies at its core"*. Camden was successfully 'signed up' as a Family Hub delivery authority in December 2022 and the delivery plan approved in February 2023. The borough received a funding allocation of £3.4 million over 3 years with year 1 being 2022/23. This meant that most of the year 1 funding was carried forward to year 2 resulting in just a 2 year funding period. The short funding window is challenging as many of the programmes that are funded with Family Hub grant are coming on stream now and may not be sustainable. Despite ongoing representation on this point from Camden and other authorities, the government has yet to announce whether funding for the programme will be extended.

Flexibility on the use of Family Hub funding is limited. The funding is allocated to specific funded strands, and albeit the vision is for a programme of services for families with children from 0-19 (25 with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) the funding is all focused on the development of 'Start for Life' services. (See figure 2).

Figure 2

Camden's funding allocation							
Strand		%					
1. Family Hubs programme spend		20%					
2. Family Hubs Capital Spend		5%					
3. Parenting Support		15%					
4. Home Learning Environment		8%					
5. Parent-Infant relationships and Perinatal Mental Health		31%					
6. Infant Feeding Support		17%					
7. Publishing Start for Life offer and Parent Carer Panels		4%					

Strand	2022-2023	2023 - 2024		2024-2025		Total	
	Total	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range
	£802,000	£1,360,000	£1,428,000	£1,137,000	£1,190,000	£3,299,000	£3,421,000
1.	£160,400	£272,000	£285,600	£227,400	£238,000	£659,800	£684,200
2.	£40,100	£68,000	£71,400	£56,850	£59,500	£164,950	£171,050
3.	£120,300	£204,000	£214,200	£170,550	£178,500	£494,850	£513,150
4.	£64,160	£108,800	£114,240	£90,960	£95,200	£263,920	£273,680
5.	£248,620	£421,600	£442,680	£352,470	£368,900	£1,022,690	£1,060,510
6.	£136,340	£231,200	£242,760	£193,290	£202,300	£560,830	£581,570
7.	£32,080	£54,400	£57,120	£45,480	£47,600	£131,960	£136,840

3.2 Funded delivery strands

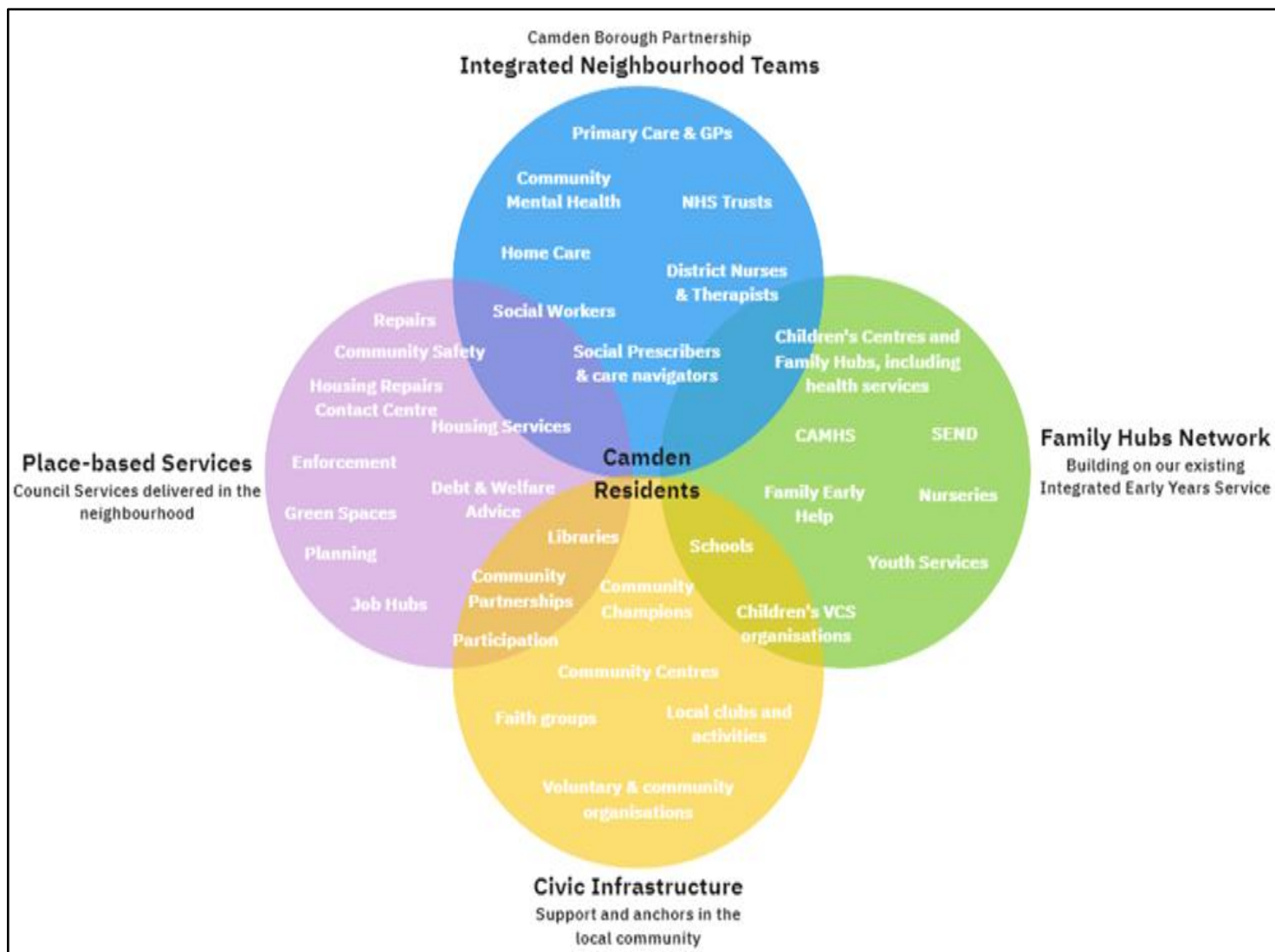
3.2.1 Family Hub transformation

Camden's strong commitment to Early Years, and to services for children and families more generally, has meant that we were in a strong position to develop Family Hubs. The Children's Centres formally transitioned to become Hubs in June 2023 and are meeting many of the minimum expectations as set out in the programme guide. To achieve a 'developed' model we need the Hubs to offer face to face services for families with school age children as well as under 5's and we need to develop a Family Hub network including voluntary sector partners, schools, and youth services, a network where families can access services which ever 'front door' they choose to walk through. The two workshops that have been held with voluntary and community sector partners have demonstrated a willingness to collaborate and a sense of shared purpose. Partners told us that they want to meet together locally and boroughwide to develop stronger relationships and a more comprehensive understanding of the services that are available to families. The locality partnerships that are already established in the early years will be relaunched as Family Hub Locality Partnerships early in the new year.

The relationship with schools is key to success. 'Building Back Stronger', the Borough's education strategy, introduces the concept of a 'team around the school'. Other areas are looking to develop similar arrangements and may help inform our approach however, discussions are underway with Camden Learning to design a workshop for schools so that we ensure that any model is appropriate for Camden and meets the needs of our local communities. The development of Family Hubs is aligned with the wider 'neighbourhoods' programme that is being developed across the borough, see figure 3, and could be further enhanced by a place-based community approach to the delivery of Family Help, one of the recommendations in 'Stable Homes Built

on Love' the government's implementation strategy for the recommendations from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. Camden has bid to be a pathfinder authority for the implementation of the reforms and has described a model delivering a continuum of support for families from universal to specialist delivered in local neighbourhoods by integrated teams.

Figure 3



3.2.2 Another key area of development is the offer of on-line and virtual services. The Family Hub team have been working closely with Digital and Data Service colleagues to develop the new families@camden.gov.uk microsite. A second iteration of the site went live in November and now includes links to Camden Rise and the Local Offer. There remains significant work to do to further develop this resource and Family Hub grant is being used to fund a website developer to take this work forward.

3.2.3 In addition to funding focused on developing a Family Hub model the balance of the Family Hub grant is allocated to specific funding streams. These are all focused on 'Start for Life' services and summarised below.

a) Parenting Support

“For provision of an offer which will help make the transition to parenthood as smooth as possible and which stresses the importance of sensitive, responsive caregiving. This should include both universal provision and some more targeted programmes available for parents/carers with further needs”.

A parenting co-ordinator post has been created to oversee the parenting support offer across the borough. Staff across the service are being trained in the Solihull approach which will be delivered face to face and virtually. Additional family workers have been recruited to deliver Solihull programmes and Triple P in line with programmes available to families with older children and to extend access to the Bump to Baby programme, a 5 week offer for vulnerable parents who are approaching the birth of their baby. Work is underway to host programmes for families with school age children in the Family Hub buildings.

New drop-in sessions are running, in partnership with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), for parents with children with special educational needs and disabilities.

b) Parent / Infant Relationships & Perinatal mental health

“For parents / carers with mild-moderate mental health needs or who would benefit from universal parent-infant support”.

Building on the pilot developed in the Euston locality a new enhanced Healthy Child Programme, Best Start for Baby, is being rolled out across the borough. The programme is universal and provides contacts to all parents of new babies every 3 months until the mandated 12-month health review. The contacts are face to face in a clinic environment and include a developmental review for the child undertaken by the health visiting service and a check in on wellbeing for parents undertaken by psychologically trained staff from the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. Contacts beyond 12 months will be targeted. The additional commitment from our Health Visiting service, provided by Central and Northwest London NHS Trust, is possible because of the strong relationships developed through our Section 75 partnership agreement and a commitment to working together to ensure all babies get the best possible start in life.

The enhanced universal service provides opportunity for prevention and the early identification of needs which is supported by a comprehensive range of targeted support in the form of case work provided by Family Workers, recently trained in Video Interactive Guidance (VIG), and group-based interventions such as Circle of Security and Together Time. Colleagues from the children’s Disability Service and MOSAIC are working together to create clear pathways of support for families with children with emerging special educational needs.

c) Early language development and Home Learning Environment (HLE)

“Funding for the early language and the HLE service strand should be used to implement targeted, evidence-based interventions that train practitioners to support parents with the HLE. This will support

educational recovery and the school readiness of children who were babies during the pandemic”.

Camden KidsTalk was already in development when the Family Hub programme was launched. The Family Hub grant has enabled the delivery of the key element of the programme, the Wellcomm screening and interventions, to roll out more quickly and to include school nurseries. Nine schools are currently using the tools with an ambition that all Camden nurseries, Council maintained, Primary school and Private Voluntary and Independent settings, will join the programme.

In addition to the roll out of Wellcomm, we will also be offering targeted support to 3 and 4 year olds, who were born during the pandemic, through the Triple P programme starting in January 2024.

d) Infant Feeding Support

“The funding for infant feeding support should be used to promote breastfeeding and support parents to meet their infant feeding goals”.

Camden has a strong infant feeding support service recently receiving Gold Standard accreditation from UNICEF. The Family Hub funding is being used to enhance the service with additional supporters based on maternity wards in the 3 main maternity units used by Camden women.

Additionally, maternity service leads are working with Family Hub teams to better understand and address poorer outcomes at birth for black women.

e) Publishing Start for Life offer and Parent and Carer Panel

“Publish your offer digitally – bringing together all Start for Life services and support in a single online space. Which is accessible with a single-click from the main webpage.

All parents-to-be to receive a hard-copy of the local ‘Start for Life’ offer prior to birth”.

As described above, Camden’s ‘Start for Life’ offer was published ahead of the April 2023 deadline and a second iteration was launched in November. Families@camden.gov.uk is still in development and a dedicated web designer is now leading the project.

A hard copy of the ‘Start for Life’ offer is given to all parents by the Health Visitor at the New Birth Visit.

“Members of the panel should be diverse and include pregnant women (or the partner of a pregnant woman) as well as parents and carers of children under the age of two. Parents with children who have *recently* used ‘Start for Life’ services but are over the age of two can also be considered as members. Membership should be refreshed annually”.

Camden’s Parent and Carer panel was launched in February 2023, ahead of the deadline, and is a vibrant and enthusiastic forum for discussion and debate. The panel has discussed maternity services, infant feeding and services for families who have children with SEND. Feedback is brought to the

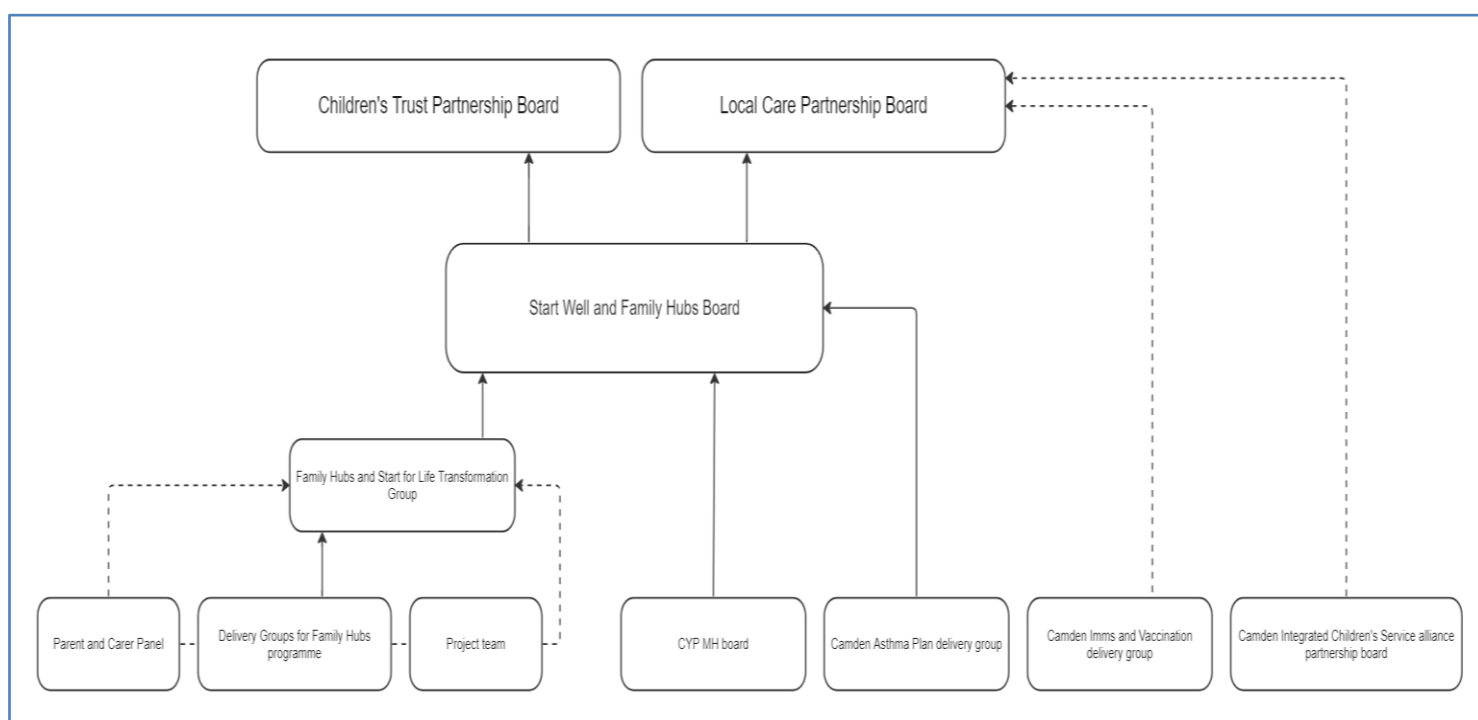
Family Hub Project Team and to the Transformation group and will also feed into the new Start Well and Family Hub Board launching in December.

Family Hub Governance

Initially the development of the Family Hub programme was overseen by an Executive Board led by the Executive Director of Supporting People. The Family Hub programme guide encourages join up across health, education and social care priorities and the engagement of public health colleagues in the development of the Family Hub programme has identified that there is close alignment between our Family Hub implementation priorities and the Start Well programme of work being led by the Integrated Care Board. Creating a single Start Well and Family Hub Board provides an opportunity to bring together key partners responsible for improving outcomes for children, young people, and their families to plan, deliver and oversee collaborative programmes of work between the Council, NHS and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) partners.

Terms of references have been developed and the new Start Well and Family Hub Board had its first meeting in December 2023.

Figure 4



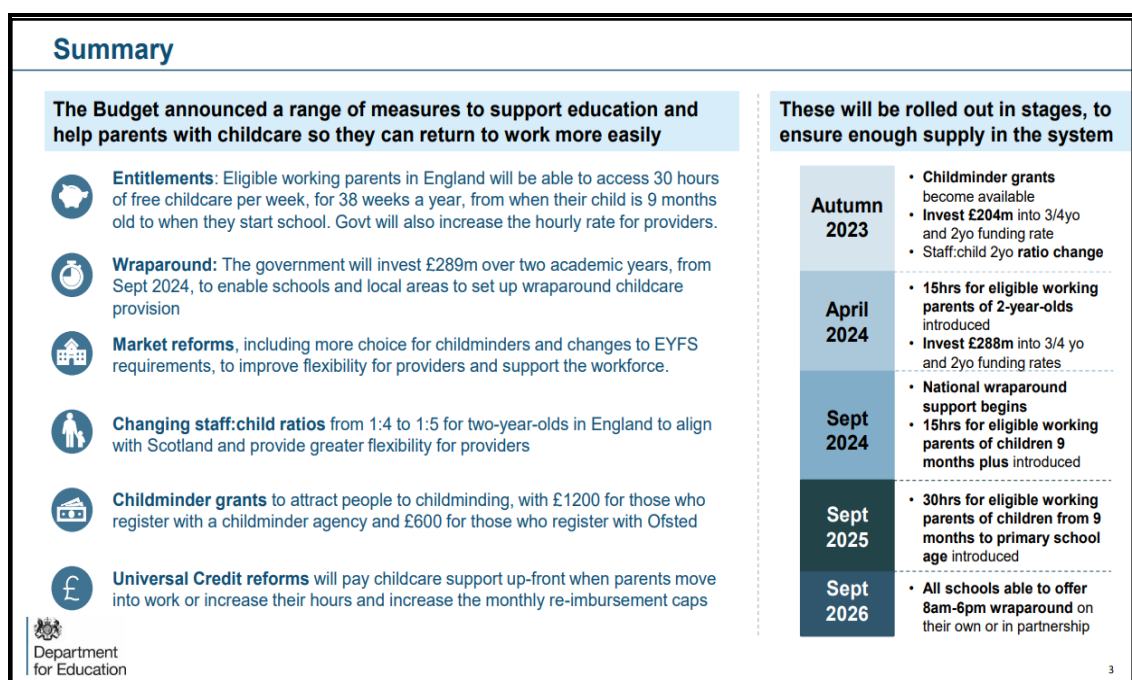
4. Early Education and Childcare

- 4.1 Camden continues to benefit from a relatively strong network of childcare providers. Unlike many Local Authorities we have seen few settings close and have welcomed some new ones to the borough. The position is a little less positive for childminders where numbers of registered childminders have fallen significantly. We have developed a recruitment strategy to attract more childminders to register and are using a combination of local and national resources to support this.

The quality of provision is good with all but 2 settings currently judged to be good or outstanding. We offer comprehensive support to settings through our Quality Support and Training service with all settings having a named adviser. The funding of the free entitlements is administered by the Free Entitlement team who process payments termly based on headcount returns from providers. The team ensure that places are free at the point of access for families, as stipulated in the statutory guidance, and will challenge providers when they are made aware that the guidance is not being followed correctly.

4.2 In March 2023, the government announced additional funding for early education and the introduction of additional entitlements for the children of working parents.

Figure 5



Although additional funding for early education is welcome the new entitlements raised questions for Camden.

- What is the likely impact on the financial sustainability of the sector if the hourly rates were insufficient to cover costs?
- Would there be demand for the new places and, if so, would there be sufficient supply?
- What would be the potential impact on the inequality gap of funding just the children of working parents?

The Integrated Early Years Service commissioned an independent research organisation, the ISOS Partnership, to explore these three questions. Early findings indicate that there is likely to be demand for the new entitlements however, providers are not willing to commit to extending their provision to deliver the new entitlements until the hourly funding rates are confirmed. Interestingly, the concept of children coming to nursery with different levels of funding due to their age does suggest that those who are not entitled to funded provision until aged 3 may find it difficult to find places if nurseries had filled their capacity with higher paying one and two year olds.

The full report will be available soon and Camden's Women's Forum have suggested a public launch of the research findings and some work to better support those women who would like to return to work but need to retrain.

4.3 Camden Local Inclusion Fund

In addition to the place funding the Free Entitlements Team also administer Camden's Local Inclusion Fund (CLIF) which supports providers to meet the needs of children with SEND. Providers complete an application for additional funds, usually to support additional staffing to meet a particular child's needs. The applications are determined by a CLIF panel. The system is working well to support children with emerging SEND to attend nursery however, we will be bringing forward proposals for a new approach based on bandings of support more consistent with the Exceptional Needs Grant and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process. It is hoped that a new approach will also help limit the significant growth in spend that has happened in the last few years. The proposals will be considered by school's forum at their February meeting.

4.4 Maintained nurseries.

Camden's 6 maintained nurseries continue to perform well. They meet the needs of a significant proportion of children identified with SEND and are responsive and flexible in supporting families where necessary.

5. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

The Director of Finance has reviewed the report and his views have been incorporated throughout.

6. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

Under section 10 Children Act 2004, the local authority have a duty to promote integrated working to improve the welfare of children in their area. In addition the Council and local agencies should have the means to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs for children and families.

7. Environmental Implications

The Family Hub programme and the delivery of early education have no environmental impacts.

REPORT ENDS