

Covid-19 - Impact on children and young people

Children are the  of all we do

Introduction

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on council, health and education services, on communities, on families and on children and young people themselves cannot be understated and adds further challenge to an already complex picture of rising demand and sustained pressure on our public sector finances and resources.

This presentation provides a summary of some of the issues experienced by children and families and how the Children and Young People's Service have responded to support the health and wellbeing of our children, young people and their families in Haringey

We know that the impact of the pandemic and its associated lockdowns and restrictions on the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people has been profound and is not yet fully understood. We have for example seen:

- an impact on residents and staff mental health and wellbeing
- increased anxiety, depression and bereavement with some communities more acutely affected than others
- parental and child anxiety about school closures and reopening fed back through schools, families using the helplines and voluntary sector providers
- an impact on those with the most complex needs presenting in crisis and with increased complexity and acuity

Whilst these experiences will not have been the experiences of all children and young people in the borough, we know that the lack of social contact, the lack of physical activity, the limited access to care and support services for some, the impacts of loss and grief and the wider economic impacts on our communities will have affected significant numbers

Ofsted Focused Visit: 9-10 March 2021

“The impact of the pandemic in Haringey has been exceptionally severe. Leaders have a good understanding of the community they serve, which has experienced significant economic adversity. At one point, Haringey had the fourth highest number of individuals furloughed nationally and the second highest number of individuals furloughed in one area of the borough. There are high rates of income support claimants whose income relies on zero-hours contract jobs in the retail and hospitality sectors. In addition, a large minority of the population are of Black, Asian or minority ethnic heritage, who have experienced a disproportionate impact on mortality from COVID-19. The experience of grief and adversity caused by the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities and Haringey’s children and families have experienced high levels of stress and anxiety”

[Ofsted Focused Visit Report](#)

The Experience of Children in Haringey

Digital Poverty

But not everyone had devices



Food poverty

Families didn't have enough food



Domestic abuse

Keeping mums and children safe



Cramped Housing

home schooling / working from home



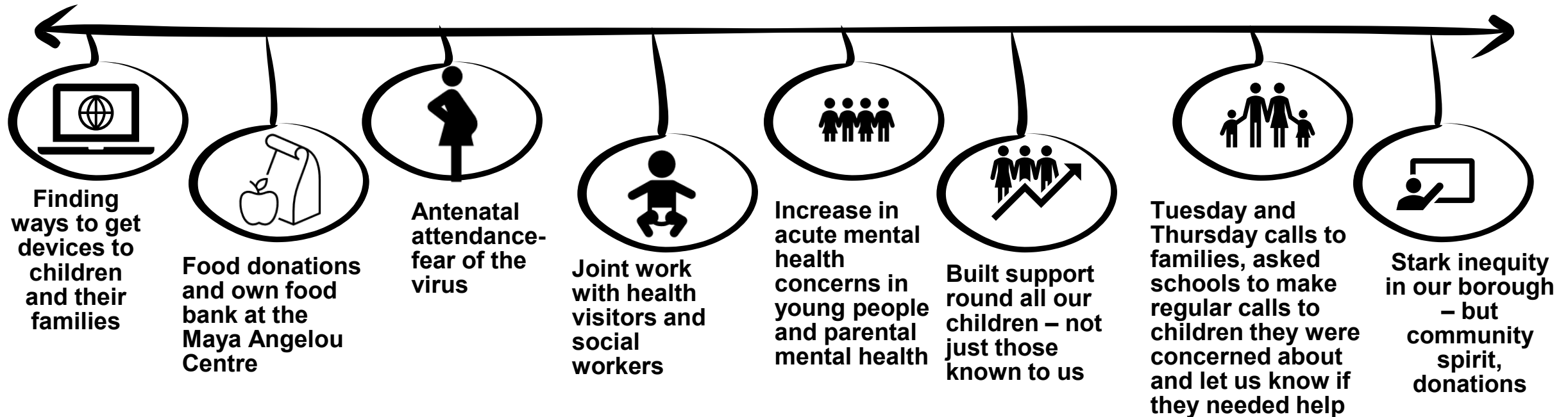
Contact with families

From outset maintained face to face visits with families



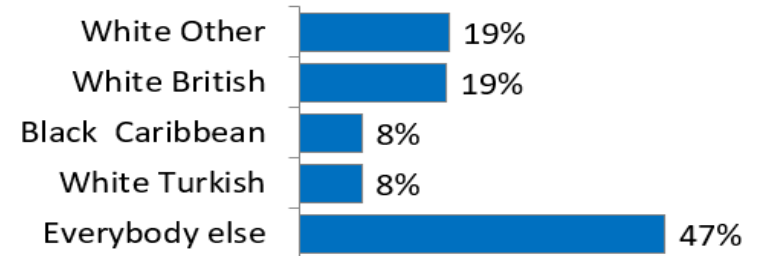
Remote learning

Continued to be a challenge – not all children had access

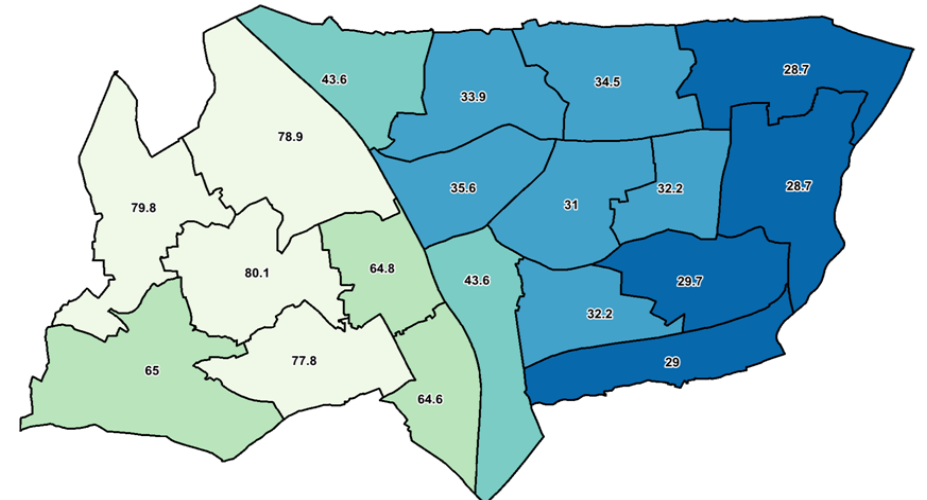


- The Covid-19 impacts are felt on existing inequalities.
- Haringey is an exceptionally diverse, young and fast-changing Borough.
 - There are 56,718 children in Haringey aged 0-17 years, representing 21% of the population.
 - 67.1% of Haringey’s population are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic or Other White Group compared to 60.7% in London.
 - Haringey has the 22nd highest inflow rate for international migration in Britain
 - 186 different dialects were spoken by Haringey pupils and the population has the sixth highest percentage of individuals with a non-English first language in London.
- 21.3% of the local authority’s children under the age of 16 are living in poverty – childhood deprivation is unequally distributed across the borough mostly affecting those in the East
- Provisional DWP data (updated June 2020) on children living in low income families shows an increase of over 20% in families living in relative low income from 10,935 families in 2016/17 to 13,167 in 2018/19.

Pupils by ethnicity



Pupils whose first language is English (%)



Early Education, Childcare and Children's Centres

- Haringey's childcare and early education offer is delivered across nursery schools, children's centres, childminders, and private, voluntary, and independent sector providers.
- Childcare provision was prioritised for opening throughout the pandemic.
- The continuation of the free early education funding was part of the government's strategy for supporting the early years sector.
- All nine children's centres have been open during the different stages of lockdown and the core offer has been reviewed as part of any changing government guidance. Activities delivered face to face have been dependent on staff risk assessments, capacity and vulnerabilities. There has been sustained focus on engagement and maintaining contact with the most vulnerable children and their families.
- The varied sector has had to respond to changes in demand and service delivery:
 - A decrease in demand in paid-for childcare owing to changing working environments/situations.
 - The impacts for childcare businesses as the Government furlough scheme comes to an end – both for their own workforces and for parents who may no longer be in work.
 - Working on lower capacity, smaller bubbles having a financial effect on the childcare business
 - Staff capacity due to the impact of Covid.
 - Extra costs related to cleaning materials and PPE

Impact on children, parents and carers and settings

- The impact on children and staff has varied widely from setting to setting due to the diverse nature of the sector.
- The long-term effects of the impact on the sector remain to be seen. Only time will provide information on the effect that the pandemic has had upon children.
- For parents and carers we have seen:
 - Concerns and fears amongst some parents when risks of transmission and infection was high.
 - Higher proportion of families claiming Universal Credit and able only to take up funded entitlement hours.
 - Changing needs following lockdown - furlough scheme, redundancies and prevalence of working from home.
 - Parents/carers of children with SEND particularly affected by reduction in access to suitable childcare, including out of school and holiday.
 - Increasing need for flexible childcare.
- Some providers have been open fully since June 2020, their recovery is on-going, support will continue, and the needs of the sector will be addressed as they develop.
- We work closely with all providers, and have provided advice, support in the form of access to all officers via email and phone, regular briefings, forums and CPD. Recovery will still be dependent on Early Years funding, parental confidence and future stability of places taken up.

Supporting children and settings

- Continuing to track the changing demographics - the overall estimated decrease in population across London during the course of the pandemic, currently stands at approximately 700,000 households.
- Increasing the take up of the two year old funding
- Increasing the take up of the three and four year old early education funding.
- Working with providers that are most at risk due to falling numbers
- Considering financial support for settings that serve areas of deprivation and policy priorities and where there is clearly a sufficiency need
- Social media marketing strategies to increase participation of childcare and monitor impact
- Ensuring key partners are involved in supporting childcare sufficiency

Schools and Learning



- The Local Authority has worked alongside colleagues in Public Health and Haringey Education Partnership (HEP) to ensure schools have been updated weekly with guidance and support through the COVID pandemic
- **Remote education** was embedded into our schools in March 2020 when the first lockdown began, and the majority of pupils began to be educated from home. Remote education facilities had previously (before Covid) been limited to online homework and other platforms that were accessed by pupils. Haringey schools, in common with schools across the country, had to adapt quickly to deliver education remotely and to ensure that as far as possible there was parity of access and outcome.
- To engage with this agenda, Haringey Council and the Haringey Education Partnership participated in the Lost Learning project alongside Enfield, Camden, Islington, Hackney and Barnet.
- Nationally, NFER* (a research organisation) conducted an indicative study asking teachers to report on progress for students across 2,000 schools and found that the average learning lost was three months but much greater on average for disadvantaged, children from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and boys. More detail on this research can be found [here](#).

*National Foundation for Education Research - <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/about-nfer/>

Impact on children and their learning

In terms of attendance and on-site provision, vulnerable children (predominantly with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and/or a social worker) and children of critical workers typically spent time at school over the summer term 2020, but they did not have a full curriculum because of constraints within school and the need for social distancing. We know that:

- Based on the government advice, attendance was done on rotas and therefore part time attendance only. This helped to provide some degree of educational input but was not a full curriculum.
- Some schools (especially primary) brought more students back where possible before the end of the summer term. Again, this was not for a full curriculum but helped to keep children engaged and to see their teachers.
- Very broadly, our attendance figures for this period in Haringey were low but our attendance throughout has largely been in line with national figures and in accordance with the need to keep those in school limited to the vulnerable, those with an EHCP and Key Worker children.
- All Heads worked hard to ensure that those who needed to access education on site, did so.

Impact on children and their learning



- Laptop devices and associated Wi-Fi to support remote education has been delivered through the Council's own funds, through relationships with the Raspberry Pi Foundation and through the Department for Education (DfE) scheme rolled out in England. A Haringey Giving scheme was also set up through the LA to raise money to help with ongoing access to remote education.
- www.haringeygiving.org.uk/appeal/digital-divide-appeal

Devices Provided to Children via Haringey Schools as at 16/03/2021	Computers	Routers
Summer 2020 DfE Devices to Schools	182	79
Summer 2020 DfE Devices to Social Care (via Schools)	634	148
Winter 2020/21 DfE Devices to Schools	3131	130
Hardship fund laptops	1081	
Raspberry Pi PCs	1068	
Further Donations	7	
TOTAL	6103	357

- Particularly for younger children, the resources were reliant on available and able parents and carers and in some instances, there was not the consistency that allowed for positive access to education during the lockdown months and while schools were partially open.

Free School Meals

- 7874 pupils were provided with a Free School Meal voucher during the Easter holidays.
- A total of £246,045 of funding was claimed for by schools.
- We have been allocated a further tranche of Winter Grant funding - Winter Grant 3.0 (now officially renamed the Covid Local Support Grant) and our allocation for Free School Meals during May half term is £150k.

Holiday Activities and Food Programme

- On 8th November 2020, the government announced that the holiday activities and food programme (HAF) would be expanded across the whole of England in 2021. The programme covers Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays in 2021 and aims to:
 - Provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities
 - Cover more than just breakfast and lunch
 - Provide nutritional education with opportunities for both children and parents to get involved in food preparation.
 - In addition to the Easter HAF programme, every household eligible for FSM received a food voucher.

Holiday Activities and Food Programme Easter Delivery



12 sites delivered face to face HAF projects (minimum of 4hrs a day for 4 days)

6253 free places with lunch were provided for FSM children



412 places for children with Special Education Needs were offered



306.5 hours of activity opportunities – sports, dance, drama, science, arts & craft,



Healthy food education provided at each site



Connected communities Support Workers attended sites to engage with parents



2185 Take and Make packs were distributed to all HAF participants. Providing 8740 meals for children and their families.



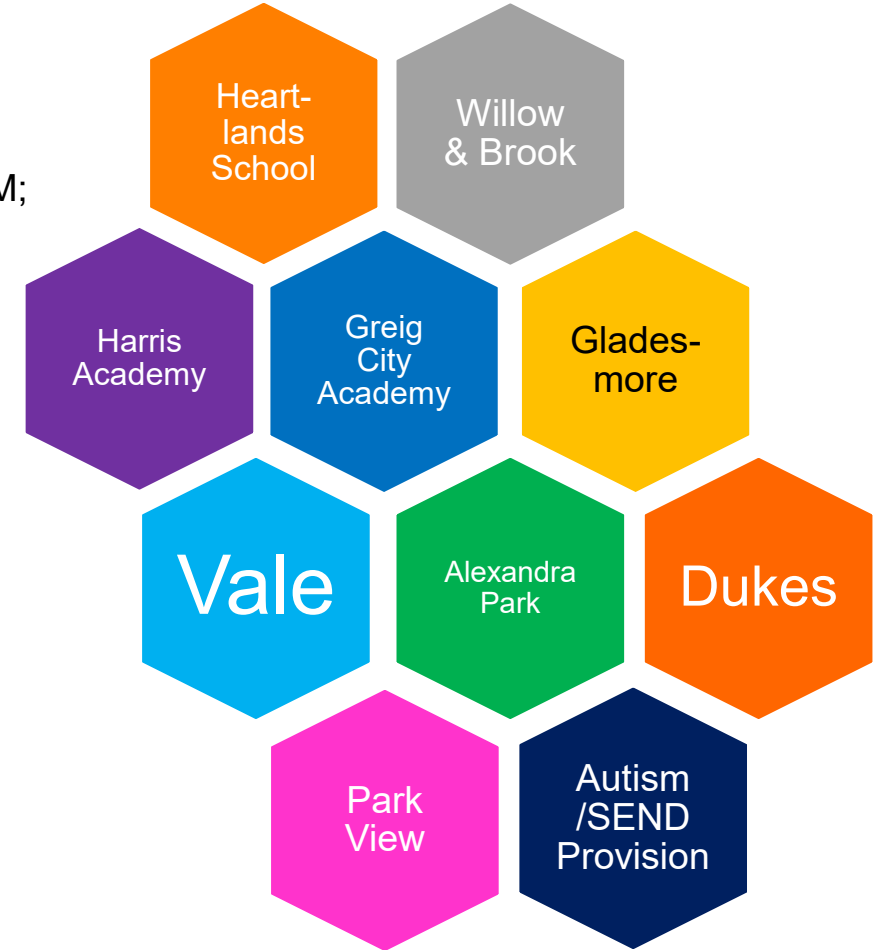
Proposed Summer HAF Programme

Community Settings



- Free programme for children eligible for FSM;
- ✓ Physical activity
 - ✓ Enrichment activities
 - ✓ Healthy food education
 - ✓ Healthy meal
 - ✓ Minimum of 4 hours, 4 days a week for 4 weeks
 - ✓ Initial plans to work in partnership with neighbouring boroughs (Hackney, Islington) – Jewish community project

School Settings



Latest government announcement on education recovery



- On 2 June 2021, Government announced £1.4 billion to support education recovery for children aged 2 to 19 in schools, colleges and early years settings.
- To support those most impacted by the pandemic, particularly disadvantaged students, £1 billion is being provided for tutoring
- Children aged 5 to 16 in receipt of tutoring will receive up to 15 sessions of small group or individual tuition to support them to catch up.
- For students aged 16 to 19, the Government is extending the 16 to 19 tuition fund for a further two years to support 15-hour courses for 16 to 19 year olds
- The next stage will include a review of time spent in school and colleges and the impact this could have on helping children and young people to catch up. The findings of the review will be set out later in the year to inform the spending review.

Social Care and Early Help

- Our daily monitoring of data showed that during the first lockdown there was a significant reduction in referrals from key partners.
- There remained a concern that emerging risks for children not known to Children's Social Care would not be identified as children were not being seen daily in settings by a range of professionals, but in particular teachers. The risks for these children on the edge of social care and early help are often held by teachers in schools and other professionals who offer pastoral support to families.
- We asked partners to help us identify and support the most vulnerable children – we asked for lists of children of concern from all agencies and voluntary organisations to be sent to the MASH
- we built strong and effective collaboration between midwifery, health visiting and social workers to safeguard unborn babies and children under 5 years through joint assessments.
- Given the lack of daily contact between teachers and other professionals in universal settings and children and young people, professionals received guidance regarding the need for a 'different lens', for assessing risk in the Covid 19 climate. Ofsted reported *'A determined and collaborative effort by the multi-agency partnership has identified and supported the most vulnerable children. This has improved oversight of children's safety'*

Impact on children, young people and families

Although referrals declined significantly during the lockdowns, the COVID-19 impact on children and families was evident in referrals to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and these included:

- food insecurity
- parental adolescent challenges
- a greater need for Mental Health support services to be better aligned and known to communities
- substance misuse services tailored to adolescents
- the impact of domestic abuse and
- the need for a programme of parenting outreach for fathers and mothers.

Supporting children, young people and their families

- Social workers moved to remote working on a shift pattern of 1 week in 3 weeks off for most teams and we risk assessed visits taking place with families using PPE.
- We assigned key professionals to contact families, build relationships and get to know and understand changes in families.
- In the MASH all core partners maintained their commitment with minimum disruption
- An Early Help Panel was established and social workers were located in schools. Ofsted noted in the recent Focused Visit: *‘Schools comment very positively on the local authority’s communication ...and the help provided by the location of school-based social workers. An early help panel was established during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has helped school leaders to navigate and access the range of services on offer to support pupils, particularly those at risk of exclusion’.*
- We provided early signposting of families to food and support.
- We reviewed and revisited a number of issues where we knew that fewer community, school and universal services support might increase risks for families – e.g. we revisited recently closed early help cases due to lack of engagement; reviewed child protection cases closed in the preceding 6 months; and reviewed cases where 3 or more contacts had been received in the last 12 months.
- We took an appropriately cautious approach to decision making about ending or stepping down child protection and child in need plans

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Supporting children, young people and their families

- We spoke to families regarding any difficulties they may be experiencing due to spending more time together than usual, and signposting to where they can receive additional support. In some cases, the social workers utilised PPE and delivered direct work with families.
- Practitioners provided prolonged virtual coaching to help parents and adolescents to regulate their stress responses and recognise the emotional impact of COVID 19
- Health Visitors and Social workers jointly assessed and monitored the development needs of babies and children under 2 subject to a Child Protection Plan, utilising the Maya Angelou Family Assessment Centre
- Families received support through the Maya Angelou Family Assessment Centre hub – including food and essential parcels such as nappies and milk formula, befriending and advice to reduce social isolation for young parents.
- Where contact with families had been some time ago in the past, a letter and a parenting booklet was developed which noted the challenging times and set out the range of support on offer if needed and an invitation to contact if additional support required.
- Children and Young People's workers established a routine of **contacting their families twice every week**, unless the risk assessment identified that this would not be appropriate - for example for children looked-after in settled placements.
- Bruce Grove staff and Haringey Gold staff to provide virtual support as needed as part of the COVID 19 MASH response service.
- Families with no recourse to funds were offered food parcels, laptops, free nursery provision and access to the Easter and Summer scheme programmes.



we take **ACTION** based on evidence, using our knowledge and skill. We act with empathy and we do with not to! We have the courage to hold ourselves to account.

Haringey
LONDON

Conclusion: Strengthened partnership working and practice

In the context of the above, the Children and Young People's Service has, alongside partners, seen strengthened joint working and innovation. This has been positive and has overcome some of the traditional organisational boundary issues which at times impede progress.

The following are the key learning points which underpin our current practice and inform our future thinking for services:

- Examples of excellent practice – health visiting connections with social workers and maternity services e.g. provided through Maya Angelou Centre initially and now through Children's Centres.
- Smarter use of technology- greater use of virtual consultations and meetings going forward.
- Developing a flexible response, implementing a virtual groupwork offer alongside face to face sessions from our Children's Centres.
- Greater understanding of our families and their domestic situations.
- Greater information sharing across agencies for safeguarding purposes and assessing risk.
- Improved communications with services - sharing updates and having regular touchpoints.
- More flexible and collaborative practice.
- Sharper understanding of inequalities and poverty in the Borough.