

Bradford District Prevention and Early Help Strategy 2022-2025

**'Supporting Families at the Right Time, by the Right People, having the
Right Conversations' OR**

'Supporting Families – earlier, easier and nearer'

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Foreword

Prevention and early help is about stopping problems escalating. It relies on accurate early identification of difficulties and early action which is targeted and evaluated. It can involve intensive intervention or lighter touch support and is usually based on a clear support plan, with identified actions, responsibilities and outcomes, which is then reviewed.

Prevention and early help is the support given to a child, young person, or family when a problem first emerges. Many children, young people and their families need preventative and early help services, and support should be defined by the person who needs it. It can be provided at any stage in a child or young person's life, and 'providing timely support is vital as identifying needs early on can reduce risk factors and increase protective factors in a child's life' Early Intervention Foundation (EIF), 2018.

Effective prevention and early help relies upon us all working together, providing local support as soon as a problem arises at any point in a child's life, from early years through to the teenage years and into early adulthood. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. By identifying emerging problems, sharing information with other professionals and targeting assessed need, positive outcomes for children, young people and their families are increased.

Prevention and early help is a form of targeted activity, with a specific action or actions being put in place to address a defined issue or combination of issues. It therefore forms part of a continuum of activity in supporting families.

In speaking with young people, they tell us that prevention and early help means getting help before it is too late, before they give up, or do something they might live to regret, or a crisis turns into a disaster. It's essential that children, young people and their families benefit from the best quality professional help, at the earliest opportunity, as for some families, without early help difficulties escalate, family circumstances deteriorate and children and young people are more at risk of suffering significant harm.

Effective prevention and early help can turn an adverse childhood experience into experiences which bring hope for the future. Professor Eileen Munro highlights this in her review of child protection, 'preventative services can do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services' Munro review of Child Protection May 2011.

We have prevention and early help services we can be proud of in Bradford, once a need is identified, but our greatest challenge remains recognising opportunities to identify concealed need and the effects of harm on children caused by parental drug use and domestic abuse. Whilst this is obvious at times, concealed and hidden need can only be detected by constant awareness and communication.

Prevention and early help services are provided by a great number of organisations including schools, voluntary, community and social enterprises and the local authority. They offer a range of help from universal advice, guidance and support, through to targeted interventions like intensive

family support for families on the edge of care or in crisis. Local services also play a crucial role in prevention and early help as access to friendship groups and the use of social media to help people create a strong sense of membership and belonging.

Great prevention and early help makes all the difference, and we hope the Bradford's prevention and early help approach will make a significant difference through developing a greater understanding of the importance of prevention and early help and of receiving it at the point of need.

David Johnston
Deputy Director Children's Social Care
Chair of the Prevention & Early Help Board

What do we mean by Prevention and Early Help and Family Hubs?

Prevention and Early Help is not a specific service but a collaborative approach across all agencies that work with children, young people and families, who will work together to improve the outcomes for children, young people and families.

The aim is to:

- **Support babies, children, young people and parents early to prevent difficulties from becoming long term problems.**
- **Support families online, in school, in their homes and in their local communities.**
- **Support families to improve their relationships, overall well-being and quality of life.**
- **Offer a trusted, skilled and confident person able to respond at any point when a problem emerges or reemerges.**
- **Give families a single point of access with a clear offer - seamless support for every family and information and advice available for families when they need it.**
- **Have a shared understanding of how adverse childhood experiences and trauma impacts on family members and how we can collectively build resilience and promote healthy relationships.**

Family Hubs bring services together to work with families from conception, through childhood and into adolescence (0 to 19 years and up to age 24 years for some young people with needs arising from SEND), to deliver an integrated local offer.

Family Hubs should be seen as an umbrella term. It is not only the physical buildings, but describes the collection of services working in a locality, including more targeted services deployed alongside other services to support the needs of children and families.

If you think about any service that families may need, then Family Hubs are designed to provide information and access to them. This could include a wide range of services ranging from day care and early learning, to schools and alternative education, from midwifery and health visiting, to mental health and advice on parenting, from family support to adult learning and employment opportunities.

There are four Family Hubs locality areas: West, South; East; and Keighley & Shipley (combined). The Hubs cover the Bradford District with a number of sites in each geographical area where services are delivered. Our main Family Hub sites and linked sites are located in areas of highest need across the Bradford District. These are coordinated to make best use of resources and space. Services should be accessible independently by families but also work together when a child, young

person or parent/carer has an additional need, or through an early help assessment with a Lead Practitioner to support multiple/more complex needs.

In the Bradford District, every person engaging with children and families has a responsibility to support the delivery of effective Prevention and Early Help and to support a family to access appropriate services.

Improving school attendance is also everyone’s business. The barriers to accessing education can be complex, both within and beyond the school gates.

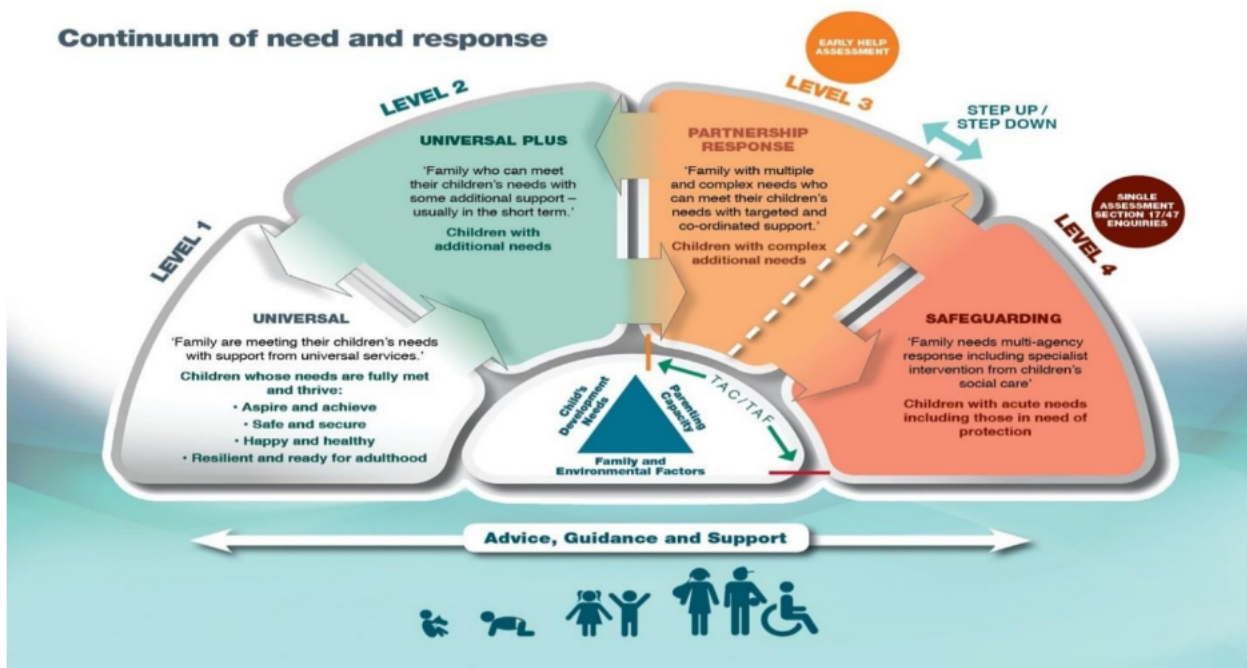
For our District’s most vulnerable children, regular **school attendance is an important protective factor** and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders are persistently absent from school) and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders were persistently absent from school in at least 1 of the 5 years of study).

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place at the right time. It must be a concerted effort across school staff, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners in open and honest relationships with family members.

Family Hubs/prevention and early help key partners:



Our local Children’s Partnership has published **guidance on levels of need** aimed at every agency, statutory, voluntary, private and independent, that works directly or indirectly with children, young people and families. The purpose of this guidance is to help agencies identify a child and their parent’s level of need and respond appropriately to provide “the right help, at the right time”. This covers universal, targeted and specialist support:



Why is prevention and early help important?

Prevention and Early Help is a high priority both nationally and locally. This is reflected in the **Council’s Plan 2021-2025** as well as the **Children and Young People’s Plan 2021-2022** (presently under review).

Locally, we are fully committed to going further via the national **Family Hubs Start for Life** programme.

Bradford District’s approach to Prevention and Early Help reflects the widespread recognition that it is better to identify and address difficulties early. This way, we can positively reduce demand on specialist or social care services.

‘Early identification of children and families who would benefit from a coordinated early help assessment supported by one worker, a named Lead Professional, is pivotal for improving outcomes for children and families as a whole family.’

The **Independent Review of Children’s Social Care** noted the challenges that arise when support is fragmented, with no clear point of access, or when there is a stigma associated with asking for help.

The review finds that this has skewed services towards repeating assessments and crisis interventions more than early help. This is echoed in repeated feedback from families in Bradford.

This strategy supports the six strategic aims **Children and Young People's Plan** set out below:

Good start, great schools

We want to give all our children and young people the best start in life by providing high quality early years education for all, and creating long-term sustainable improvement in outcomes starting from the first 1001 days, school readiness and throughout their school journey.

Safeguarding the most vulnerable and supporting families

Ensuring our most vulnerable children and young people are protected from harm, and that they and their families are provided with the services and support to enable them to secure their rights and maximize their potential.

Safer, sustainable and active

We want to ensure that the District is a place where children and young people feel safe and nurtured, where there is access to decent homes and accessible services are provided. Bradford District is where cultural diversity is celebrated and everyone can play an active role in their community

Better health, better lives

We want all our children and young people to enjoy the prospect of safe, long happy and fruitful lives by improving their health and social economic wellbeing.

Better skills, more good jobs and a growing economy

We want to ensure all our children and young people grow up in families free from the long-term effects that poverty has on life chances, and ensure they can make successful transitions into skilled and valued jobs, or into further/higher education.

Participation and voice

We want to ensure that the voice of the children and young people is heard. We want children and young people actively engaged in the decision-making process, not only relating to their own lives, but also in the policies and strategies. This strategy continues to address the findings of a local review held in 2019, particularly:

- The need to reinforce this is a collaborative approach and that Family Hubs are a collection of services, not an individual service.
- To increase the range of agencies undertaking Early Assessments and plans in light of this collaborative approach.
- The need for a shared and central approach to data and tracking outcomes over time.
- Increasing shared recording systems.

- Increasing capacity for area based networking and partnership working.
- Improving access to universal information, advice and guidance through a range of sources.

Key facts:

Two thirds of children who had their needs met through a coordinated Early Help approach did not go on to present or re-present to Childrens Social Care.

The Early Intervention Foundation report (2016) estimated a £17 billion national cost of late intervention.

The figure estimated to be spent by national and local services in Bradford is £165 million which equates to £311 per person.

The context across the Bradford District 2021

Bradford is not alone in experiencing unprecedented levels of challenge and complexity. This data clearly shows the scale of the challenges for our district, and why we must focus our ambition to provide high quality prevention and early help that enables families to thrive, thereby reducing pressure on expensive crisis services.

Whilst Covid-19 has exacerbated some of the challenges we face, it has also illustrated the many strengths of the partnership and what we can achieve when we work together.

- 6,185 children within the Bradford district are open to Childrens Social Care (as of 31/12/21).
- Rich in social and cultural diversity, ethnic minorities form a third of the population with more than 150 languages spoken within the district.
- We are the youngest district in the UK, with nearly one third of the population under 20.
- 10.7 % growth in overall child population since 2016.
- Bradford was one of the first places in the UK to be formally recognised as a ‘City of Sanctuary’.
- 40.8% of children in year 6 are overweight or obese, this is the highest proportion in the region.
- Fuel poverty affects 18.4% of households and 8% of people experience hunger because they do not have enough to eat.
- We have a strong committed network of voluntary and community organisations with around 130,000 volunteers.

- We are the fifth most income-deprived area in the country. Some 266,000 people live in the poorest areas and nearly one third of our children live in poverty. In 2020, 38% of children under 16 lived in low income families, this equates to 60,000 children.
- Young people who are not in education, employment or training are at greater risk of a range of negative outcomes. Bradford data for those who are not in education, employment or training is 6.1% compared to 5.5% nationally.
- Most recent data for persistent school absence (less than 90% attendance) shows that there has been an increase in absence and persistent absence. During the autumn term of 2021/2022 there were almost 21,000 persistently absent pupils in Bradford out of a school population of 84,000 pupils, equating to 24.5%. This places a large number of Bradford children at risk of complex, harmful and potentially costly issues relating to poor education and social outcomes.

Our local partnership vision for prevention and early help delivered through Family Hub sites and networks

'We want children and young people to have the time and space to enjoy their childhood and adolescent years, and grow up to be responsible citizens who contribute to the District. They should be supported to develop independent skills enabling them to become fulfilled adults.'

This strategy supports the Council's vision to promote economic growth and jobs and protect the most vulnerable. Children and young people are at the heart of all we do. They are essential to the District now and in the future.

All families need support from time to time. Prevention and Early Help, co-ordinated through Family Hubs, will work seamlessly to ensure all babies, children and families receive the information and support they need as easily and early as possible.

We will work together to reduce inequalities and identify every child, young person and family with additional needs. We will ensure they are supported by skilled and confident workers, including peers or volunteers, at the right time, in the right place, by the right people.

Relationships matter to us all whoever we are. We will build on a family's strengths and help families to develop skills and build healthy relationships and social connections.

Our Partnership Principles

1. Achieving positive outcomes for children and young people is a shared priority and at the heart of everything we do. We put children's needs first and work to ensure they are getting the opportunities they deserve and inequalities are reduced.
2. We will focus on the first 1001 days promoting healthy opportunities enabling problems to be avoided before they happen or preventing issues from getting worse. We aim to identify needs early but we believe that it is never too late for early help to make a difference.

3. We will work together to deliver welcoming and accessible Family Hubs and to ensure a network of skilled and confident workers. We are committed to making support available face-to-face, online and through outreach.
4. We will co-produce local services with children, young people and families to recognise and build on their strengths. We will help them develop the skills to solve problems, make social connections and overcome difficulties.
5. We will take a whole family approach and provide seamless support through a team around the family, sharing information openly in a timely way so that families only have to tell their stories once.
6. We will adopt a shared approach to promoting healthy, open and honest relationships within and between families, with workers providing support across our partnerships. How people get along with and support each other is key, especially through times of change and/or difficulty. We recognise that fostering and building positive social connections are essential to everyone's wellbeing.
7. We want to develop our practices as a partnership so we can hear children, young people and families. We need to be able to act as their advocates and ensure that their voices and interests are being heard and understood.

How we will use evaluation and data to monitor success

We want to move from service-level data to data that has a shared focus on the perspective of the child.

Partners from key services across Bradford District have come together to co-produce a 0-19 Children and Young Peoples' shared outcomes framework. This framework measures important outcomes for children and young peoples' safety, health and development. Plans are also shaped by an updated families Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Our shared 0-19 outcomes framework:

- **enables in-depth, locality based, needs assessment highlighting areas of inequality.**
- **supports the tracking of the impact of interventions through improved outcomes over time.**
- **acts as a catalyst to further develop a single shared child record across organisations where important information that is in the best interests of the care of the family can be shared across the services that are supporting them.**

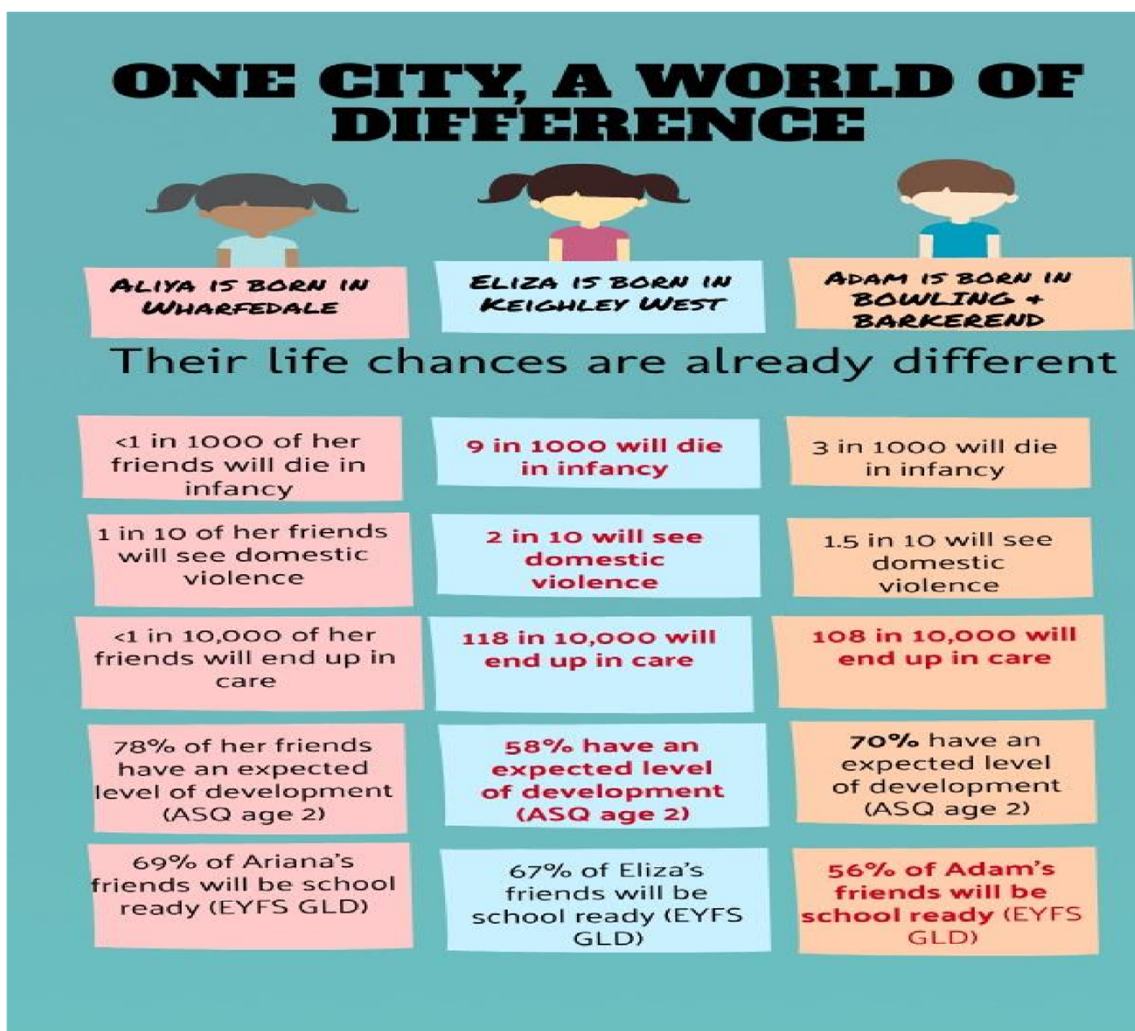
We have used this outcome framework to assess the needs of children aged 0-5 in each ward of the District, to identify inequalities in outcomes and differences in needs for support across the wards.

We are expanding the needs assessment to look at children and young people aged 5-19 across the Bradford District.

The needs assessment also demonstrated significant differences in outcomes for children between affluent and deprived areas, and varied needs based on the cultural and ethnic diversity of areas.

The findings of the needs assessment show that a child's perspective of data identifies stark inequalities and differing patterns of needs that are not always clear when using data from a single service or organisation.

This work is now being used to inform Family Hub Start for Life plans and by local partnerships to highlight the importance of the prevention and health promotion in each locality, enabling the implementation of appropriate support. We will use the outcomes framework to evaluate the impact of the support provided.



What will success look like?

We will implement our local outcome framework so we can track over time:

- Start for life outcomes are improved and inequalities reduce
- Improved take-up of Early Years free childcare
- Improved school attendance and behaviour and contribute to reduce educational inequalities
- Children are kept safe from abuse/neglect and exploitation and criminality
- The impact of domestic abuse on children is understood and supported
- Healthy family relationships with reduce parental conflict
- Increased support addressing mental health and/or substance abuse
- Financial stability is promoted
- Increased secure and good quality housing opportunities are available
- More families are diverted from crime
- Families with children with SEND needs are identified and supported early
- Children, young people and families are proactively involved in shaping and evaluating services
- Family Hubs are accessible, welcoming, well used and help build social connections

Governance

This strategy is owned by the Prevention and Early Help Strategic Partnership (P & EHP). This group leads the governance arrangements for Prevention and Early Help work with children, young people and families and will ensure agencies work together effectively to meet the needs of children and families.

The partnership will have a good understanding of outcomes, the demand for services, the experiences of families, and how to embed prevention and early help through Family Hub sites and local networks.

The specific objectives for the P&EHP board can be found under the following work streams:

- **Prevention and Early Help Ages 0-8**
- **Prevention and Early Help Ages 8 +**
- **Publishing the Start for Life offer/Information for Families**
- **Outcomes, data and evaluation.**

The Board's members and its sub group must ensure close working across other local linked developments, for example, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, looked after children and young people, Safeguarding, promoting children and young people's mental wellbeing and Act as One.

Our priorities for 2022-2025

We are part of the national Family Hubs Start for Life programme. We have identified the following priorities for the next three years. We will develop a detailed delivery plan and review progress regularly:

1. Relaunch our Family Hubs arrangements and ensure they are well known, welcoming and accessible. Access will include face to face, online, local centres and home visiting/outreach. Support must be nearer, earlier and easier for families to access
2. Launch and build area based Family Hubs networks involving family members and third sector and education partners
3. Expand and develop essential Start for Life services, targeted effectively when needed to reduce inequalities. Peri-natal mental health and parent-child relationships will be a priority, alongside promoting school readiness, parenting support and infant feeding.
4. Ensure wider networks and support beyond Start for Life, including links to youth support, SEND Local Offer, substance misuse, housing, debt and welfare advice and pathways into good work.
5. Move from co-location of key teams in Family Hubs to integrated practices which support families earlier and seamlessly, including new area based single point of access.
6. Develop and implement an integrated Family Hubs workforce development plan that focuses on understanding impact of adverse childhood experiences, promoting healthy relationships and resilience, from pre-conception and beyond.
7. Implement robust arrangements for evaluation and co-production and expand working with peer supporters and volunteers, building on supporting the District to be a safe, green and active place to live, work and play.
8. Harness the opportunities from the City of Culture to create an inclusive, creative environment for babies, children and young people, which celebrates the vibrant diversity of our district.

Priority 1: Relaunch our Family Hubs arrangements and ensure they are well known, welcoming and accessible. Access will include face to face, online, local centres and home visiting/outreach. Support must be nearer, earlier and easier for families to access

What is the issue we are trying to address?	What are we going to do as a partnership?	Who needs to be involved?	What would success look like?
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Priority 2: Launch and build area based Family Hubs networks involving family members and third sector and education partners.

What is the issue we are trying to address?	What are we going to do as a partnership?	Who needs to be involved?	What would success look like?
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Priority 3: Expand and develop essential Start for Life services, targeted effectively when needed to reduce inequalities. Peri-natal mental health and parent-child relationships will be a priority, alongside promoting school readiness, parenting support and infant feeding.

What is the issue we are trying to address?	What are we going to do as a partnership?	Who needs to be involved?	What would success look like?
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Priority 4: Ensure wider networks and support beyond Start for Life, including links to youth support, SEND Local Offer, substance misuse, housing, debt and welfare advice and pathways into good work.

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Priority 5: Move from co-location of key teams in Family Hubs to integrated practices which support families earlier and seamlessly, including new area based single point of access.

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Priority 6: Develop and implement an integrated Family Hubs workforce development plan that focuses on understanding impact of adverse childhood experiences, promoting healthy relationships and resilience, from pre-conception and beyond.

What is the issue we are trying to address?	What are we going to do as a partnership?	Who needs to be involved?	What would success look like?
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Priority 7: Implement robust arrangements for evaluation and co-production and expand working with peer supporters and volunteers, building on supporting the District to be a safe, green and active place to live, work and play.

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Priority 8: Harness the opportunities from the City of Culture to create an inclusive, creative environment for babies, children and young people which celebrates the vibrant diversity of our district.

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