

Waltham Forest

FAMILIES AT THE HEART OF OUR PLACE

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INTRODUCTION FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

Waltham Forest is a diverse and vibrant place, and our people make it what it is. We are committed to working with our residents to ensure that all of our neighbourhoods continue to thrive, and that **Waltham Forest remains** a safe and healthy place to live, study, work and play and to grow up and grow older. We want to focus on what matters to people and ensure that everyone can fully participate in the work we do and have access to information and support when they most need it.

Families at the Heart of Our Place is the strengthened approach to Think Family and is about building on our existing expertise and continuing to deliver an improved and sustainable offer to individuals and families in Waltham Forest. This strategy is of critical importance to the Council and a key delivery arm of the Public Service Strategy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has, and will continue to have, an effect on our residents' lives in different ways and to varying degrees. The ways in which people and organisations have adapted and responded is nothing short of inspiring. Our communities have stepped up to ensure that their neighbours do not go without. Voluntary and statutory organisations and local businesses are working together to keep vital support services going for vulnerable children and adults, ensuring that no one is left behind.

We are only beginning to understand the long-term impact of this pandemic and whilst there is much still to be discovered, we know that taking the same approaches as before is not an option. Financial pressures within the health and care system continue to prevail, coupled with new and increasing demand for services, and the broader impact of the financial recession caused by the pandemic. We know that these factors have a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged of our communities reinforcing the need to think innovatively and make rapid changes to the way we deliver services and how we engage.



Councillor **Grace Williams** Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families



Councillor Ahsan Khan Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Voluntary Sector

It has never been more essential that the Council and system partners come together with communities to build resilience and challenge the structural and systemic issues that affect residents' abilities to reach their potential and live their best quality lives.

By delivering this strategy together we commit to ensuring that every person within the borough can feel supported to live well, be safe, as independent as possible, and connected to their communities. Our collective strength is far greater than the individual parts and we will work to ensure that opportunity and support is open to all.



Councillor Naheed Asghar Cabinet Member for Health Partnerships and Poverty Reduction



Councillor Khevyn Limbajee Cabinet Member for Adult Services

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THE IMPERATIVE FOR CHANGE

This is a pivotal moment in history; a time of significant change and challenge that also presents a rare opportunity to work in new ways to support our residents.

In Waltham Forest we have a growing and demographically diverse population. Demand for our support is likely to rise at the same time as we are facing significant financial pressures. We know that some of our population experience more challenge than others from systemic social, health and economic inequality. The impact of the pandemic has not been felt evenly and has had a disproportionate impact on some residents. This new reality has provided opportunities for some whilst for others it has had a more detrimental effect.



300,000

of people come from ethnic minority backgrounds

From 2019 to 2041 the number of people aged 65 and over will rise by 74%

of young people in Waltham Forest do not feel safe when alone



Only 11% of young people who are not in education. employment or training have access to the internet



24% of ethnic minority young people said the pandemic has had a negative impact on their financial situation compared to **0%** white British or Irish young people

74% indicated negative impact on their lifestyle

61% indicated negative impact on their mental health

50% indicated negative impact on their physical

53% of young people say the pandemic has had a positive impact on their relationships with those they live with

During the pandemic 64% agreed that their local community is working well together and 65% felt they belong to their immediate neighbourhood



44%

young people

indicated

negative

impact on

how lonely

they feel



Families at the Heart of our Place is a strategy that has been created to ensure residents can live independent and fulfilled lives. We are working towards a brighter future, one where we are more resilient and prepared for whatever the future holds and one where everyone in Waltham Forest has an equitable chance at a good life.





OUR STRONG FOUNDATIONS

This vision for the future will build on the success and learning of the Think Family Strategy.

The Think Family Strategy ran from 2015-2020 with the ambition of supporting families to be well, independent, resilient and safe. Support was centred around the needs of the whole family, not just individuals. There was a significant shift in the way people were supported and how we interacted with our residents, and system partners working together using relationships to enable best outcomes.

 We worked holistically and in partnership with individuals and communities. We strengthened the offer of children and families centres, using them to provide a space for parents, the council and the wider community to come together to understand the needs of the whole family and how best to support them.

- We formed brand new partnerships across public services, charities and the community to tackle a marked rise in violent crime, taking a creative and collaborative approach to addressing the challenge.
- We looked for preventative solutions in a proactive way, drawing on Public Health principles such as our Early Help offer for 'troubled families', working with the whole family to understand the challenge and prevent the breakdown of relationships and living environment.
- We tested bold and innovative new approaches to solving some of our trickiest challenges. We asked residents the answers to difficult questions, such as through our Citizens Assembly on hate crime; and pushed our family centred approach to new heights such as our work through our child protection work.
- We recognised the huge potential of people to support themselves, their networks and their communities, introducing initiatives such as 'Ask Me Ambassadors'.

This resulted in:

Fewer requests for protection of children made to the police and a drop in the number of re-referrals of at-risk children

An increase in the number of successful outcomes recorded for troubled families

The number of people that have remained home after being discharged from hospital remains higher than the national average and the number young people supported in Residential or Nursing care remains lower than the national average

60% reduction in incidence and violence for families supported by the Violence Reduction Programme

care support

A significant increase

in the number of annual

reviews completed for

adults requiring social

FAMILIES AT THE HEART OF OUR PLACE

A NEW WAY FORWARD

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an almost unimaginable impact on our communities. We are still experiencing uncertainty but are learning to build on the impressive and collective responses seen across the borough during the first wave.

We have worked in new ways with our community, taking a more personal approach to support and a more adaptive and integrated way of working, using technology to ensure services continue to be delivered effectively.

The response delivered by the Families partnership in Waltham Forest has been characterised by flexibility, collaboration and responsiveness.

In line with the Council's Public Service Strategy, Families at the Heart of our Place recognises the crucial roles our residents and communities play in performing public service, and the importance of collaboration.

When asked about a change that had happened as a result of COVID-19, that they would like to retain, one resident said "A simpler lifestyle, where community spirit and cohesion is stronger, living is more locally based (not commuting to work) and living in a place where there are fewer cars on the road resulting in better air quality".

As a local system we will continue to be decisive, taking responsibility for action in our borough, working within, but not dependent on, government guidance and direction.

KEY REFLECTIONS TO BUILD ON

During lockdown we found new ways of working with our community. Residents, local business and community groups stepped up to support their neighbours in ways that went beyond traditional models of volunteering - from home repairs, to social contact and food delivery. By taking a more personalised approach social care teams were able to rapidly adjust and deliver different approaches tailored to individual needs including socially distant home visits, mobile response units and support delivered in different locations.

We performed in a more adaptive and integrated way and worked closely with The Children and Family Centre Partners to offer a range of remote services. Through the Baby Bank we provided emergency support to families in crisis and those who are self-isolating.

We used technology such as video conferencing to help staff work more efficiently and keep individuals and families connected. By providing devices such as tablets within Care Homes we helped build and strengthen connections with the wider health and care system.

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OUR STRATEGY - PUTTING FAMILIES AT THE HEART OF OUR PLACE

OUR SUPPORT: Focuses on prevention and considers the wider determinants of health and wellbeing

& Universal

We consider people's

leave no one behind

Focuses on critical

life stages and

transitions

Living and working

conditions

Going forward, our focus will be to put individuals and families at the centre of everything we do. We want to nurture resilient individuals and communities across the borough where all residents feel well, safe, connected and independent.

Our support will focus on prevention and consider the wider determinants of health and wellbeing. Instead of focusing on a single condition at a certain point in life we will adopt a Life Course Approach, considering the critical stages, transitions and settings where the largest difference can be made to promote or restore health and wellbeing.

Social and

community networks

Strength-based

& Co-produced

strengths and do 'with'

Our work is underpinned by a set of shared values and ways of working that will enable us to create spaces for collaboration and creativity that are inclusive, reflect the community we serve, and are accessible to all.

We will work together to take a broader, more holistic approach to public service. We will make best use of the resources across our system and communities to support people and make brave and bold decisions to change things for the better.

Our principles and ways of working:

Diversity, Inclusion and Equity

Impactful Collaboration

Innovation

Supported by leadership that:

Make brave timely decisions

Create a shared local vision

Draw on collective resources

Tackle the now while planning for the future

Socio-economic

conditions

Informed by

Evidence & Data

to shape our thinking and

measure our impact

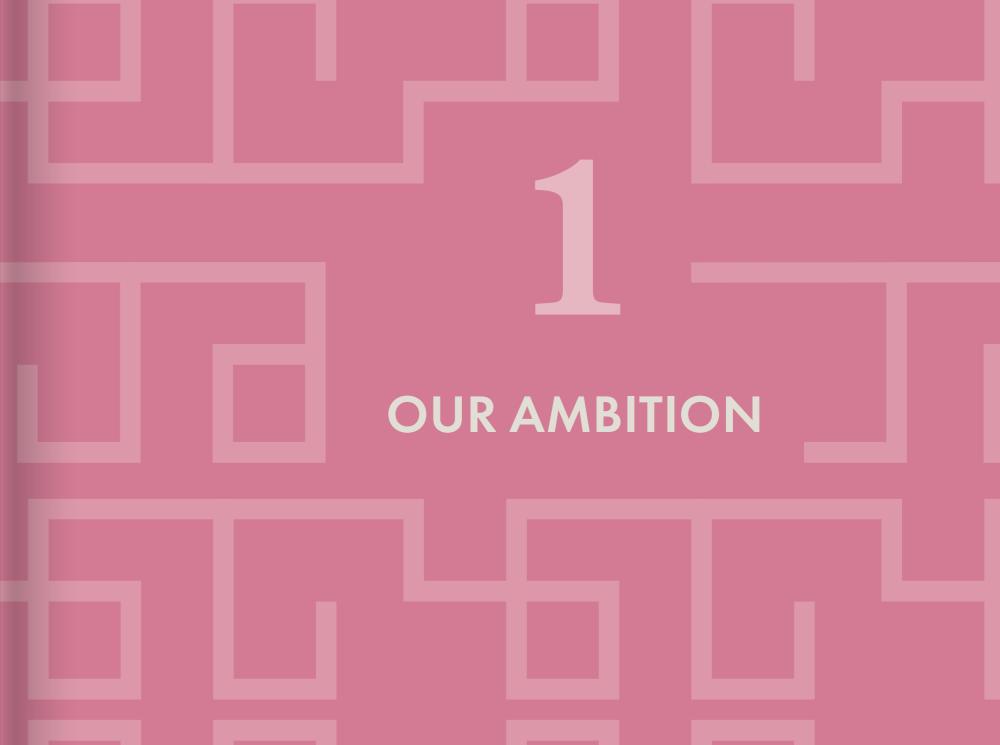
So that everyone has a fair chance at having a good life and feels:

Well

Safe

Connected

Independent



OUR AMBITION

Through this strategy we commit to achieving these outcomes for all.

Resilient

We want our residents and communities to be able to adapt, navigate and recover from whatever challenges may come their way.

Well

We want our community to feel as mentally, emotionally and physically well as they can. We will address risk, build protective factors and take preventative measures through promoting healthy behaviours. When people experience ill health, we want them to be able to access the support they need.

We want Waltham Forest to be a safe place where people can flourish. We want to work with our community to ensure that our place is free from preventable harm – be that abuse, neglect, exploitation, or the harmful effects of crime, violence, substance misuse or extremism.

Connected

We want our community to feel a sense of belonging to, and pride for, the diverse place in which they live. We want everyone to feel valued, to have strong relationships with their neighbours and be able to contribute to their local community in a way that works for them.

Independent

We want our individuals, families and community to be equipped with the networks, skills, knowledge and resources to be able to realise their own ambitions.

WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE FOR OUR RESIDENTS TO BE RESILIENT AND FEEL WELL, SAFE, **CONNECTED AND INDEPENDENT?**

Adopting a Life Course Approach means continuously understanding what our residents need to build their resilience. We will continue to involve our residents to build and expand on these. At each stage of the Life Course needs and outcomes will differ.

Stages of the Life Course Approach











EARLY YEARS ADOLESCENCE



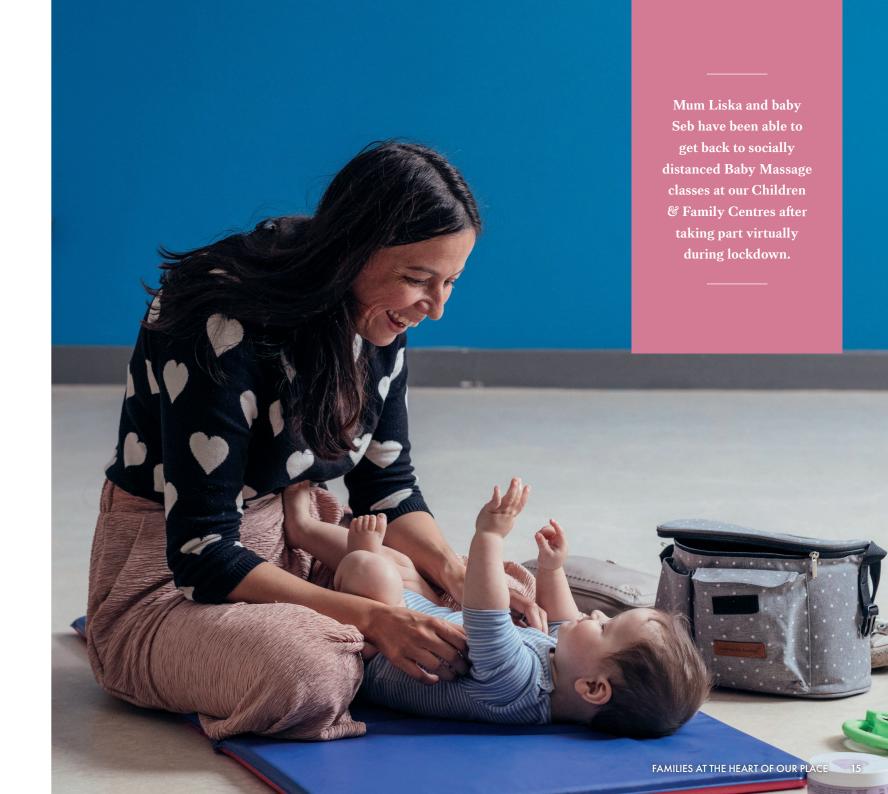
Pre-Birth and Pregnancy

- To feel secure by living in good quality, appropriate housing and being safe from domestic violence.
- To access sufficient, safe, and nutritious food and the nutrition supplements needed during pregnancy.
- To feel connected by building and maintaining supportive relationships with a partner, family member, or with residents going through a similar experience to them.
- To better understand the changes they are experiencing and the options that are available to them.
- To access a range of support more easily and in a timely manner to enable them make lifestyle changes and to choose what is best for them.



Infancy and Early Years

- To be loved and nurtured and develop bonds of love and trust with their parents and/or caregivers.
- To be safe at home and protected from adverse childhood experiences.
- To access age appropriate **nutrition** that is sufficient and safe.
- To access healthcare for routine immunisations and checks and to address worries and concerns about their health and wellbeing when they arise.
- To feel stimulated through playing, exploring and developing relationships with siblings and other children.



Childhood and Adolescence

- To have a positive sense of self by having high levels of confidence and having positive face to face and/or online relationships.
- To feel more able to manage mental wellbeing by being aware of feelings and supported to know how and when to access support.
- To gain practical life skills such as cooking, budgeting, CV writing and to gradually develop independence.
- To navigate and bounce back from challenges by having the skills, knowledge and resources to call out and find support for issues such as bullying, gang violence and abuse (online and offline).
- To start planning a future by understanding what options are available, working out which of them are most suitable and how to access them.
- To feel listened to and be able to shape services, the local area and the future.



Working Age and Adulthood

- To feel secure by living in good quality, appropriate housing and by knowing where to go for support.
- To have a sense of belonging by being connected to and accepted by people on the basis of values, beliefs and interests.
- To access a healthy lifestyle by having the space, resources, knowledge and skills to build and maintain positive health behaviours.
- To have a purpose and be able to influence by feeling useful and valued in formal and informal roles; able to volunteer and shape our place.



Older People

- To have a sense of wellbeing by living as well as possible with health conditions, being physically active and
- To have a purpose by feeling useful and valued in formal or informal roles as an employee, volunteer, mentor, entrepreneur, employer, hobbyist or source of advice.

emotionally resilient.

- To feel at home and connected to others and have personal relationships and a supportive social network, whether living in a care home, shared housing or own home.
- To have choice and be **independent** by having a real say in making key decisions.
- To be digitally connected by having the skills and equipment needed to access the internet.
- To be supported in the last days of life by ensuring that every moment counts, ensuring these moments are as good as possible and that there is a choice on what happens, with the support provided to enable end of life choices.



OUR APPROACH TO SUPPORT

We know people's physical, and mental health and wellbeing are influenced throughout life by the environment they live in and the behaviours or lifestyles which they adopt. These may have either a positive impact on their lives, providing a "protective factor", or a negative impact, providing a "risk factor".

Our work will enhance protective factors such as supportive networks of friends and family; skills for people to support their own health and wellbeing; good educational attainment; stable employment; an environment that enables physical activity.

It will minimise risk factors, such as adverse childhood experiences, experiences of crime or violence, drug and alcohol misuse, smoking, high levels of stress, lack of access to information on healthcare and support.



Strength-based and co-produced: we build on people's strengths and do 'with' not 'to'.

We believe that people and communities are experts in their own lives and the issues they face. Whilst they may need some support along the way, they have a unique ability to support themselves and each other. Our interactions with people are grounded in genuine trust in their expertise and belief in their potential. We invest in supporting people with the resources, networks and skills they need to support themselves and each other.



Personalised and universal: we will consider people's unique circumstances and leave no one behind.

We want our residents and families to have choice and control over the way their support is planned and delivered, based on what matters to them. This will vary from person to person.



Informed by evidence and data: we will be informed by evidence to ensure we are supporting residents in the best way that we know how.

Residents' and families' views and experiences are key, and we will be experts in learning and adapting to take these into account. We will make better use of our existing data and information, making it accurate, timely and accessible to everyone so that we can better understand our impact and continuously work to improve. This will require building the skills and knowledge across our workforce to be able to access and use data more effectively.

THE PRINCIPLES THAT

The following principles underpin the brave new approaches that we will need to achieve our ambitions. These principles will drive the positive behaviours that support the work of this strategy.

THE PRINCIPLES THAT UNDERPIN OUR WORK

A. EQUITY, DIVERSITY and INCLUSION

We believe that different backgrounds and perspectives makes our work more meaningful, robust and holistic. We challenge racism in all its forms and ensure that people can fully access and participate in all aspects of the work we do, leaving no one behind.

We will work with people in a way that better understands and takes into account their unique cultures and circumstances. To do that we must start with ourselves and create safe spaces and channels of communication to raise and have difficult conversations about these issues.

What we need to understand and work on:

- What are the ways in which inequalities affect our community and what is our role in addressing them?
- How can we improve our use of data to shape our thinking and measure our impact?
- How are our own biases exacerbating inequalities?
- How can we better understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures?

Indicators we will use to track progress:

- Who is accessing opportunities and support services?
- How does it feel for people from different cultures to work with us?
- Do people feel safe to raise issues and have difficult conversations about equity, diversity and inclusion?
- How well does our workforce (at all levels) represent the population of Waltham Forest?
- Are we reducing inequalities?

WORK TO LEARN FROM AND BUILD ON: Life Chances

In 2017 the Life Chances Commission was established to focus on the Council priority of improving the life chances of residents.

The first Big Youth Conversation had the biggest ever engagement with young people, with 2,500 of our young residents participating. In response the commission identified 30 recommendations for the Council to improve the life chances of young people in the borough.

There have been over 60 interventions as a result of innovative and collaborative partnerships with schools, organisations, parents and young people focussing on key issues such as mental health, persistent absence, domestic abuse and hate crime.

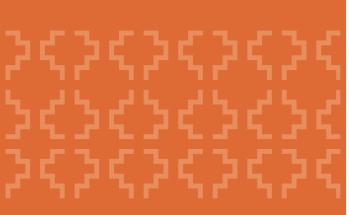
As we move to a life course approach, we will take our learning from working with children and young people through Life Chances and extend this work to ensure all residents have the capacity to thrive.



B. IMPACTFUL **COLLABORATION**

We believe collaboration is at the heart of effective change making. We will continue to develop collaborations that are built on each other's unique strengths, including partnering with statutory and voluntary organisations, community groups and people with lived experience.

Our system leadership will support our teams to work together and remove traditional barriers to collaboration. This means better sharing of data and ensuring that our collective resources are combined to deliver the largest benefit to people both now and in the long term.



What we need to understand and work on:

- What are the shared goals that we are working towards in Waltham Forest?
- Who are we collaborating with and is anyone's voice missing?
- What does our collaboration look like currently and where can we be more ambitious?
- How do we create the right environments for diverse groups to work together effectively?
- Have we included all our citizen and community groups in this collaboration?

Indicators we will use to track progress:

- Have we identified a shared vision that is held across organisations?
- Are we making progress on this, how? Are people acting and making decisions differently?
- Do we have a more holistic understanding of what people need in the borough?
- Are people experiencing support any differently?
- Where do our range of programmes sit on the collaboration spectrum?

WORK TO LEARN FROM AND BUILD ON: The Violence **Reduction Partnership**

Waltham Forest's Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) brings together partners - drawn across the Council, the Metropolitan Police, health and education services and the borough's community groups - to work collaboratively through a public health approach which tackles violence, and its root causes, with the aim of reduction and ensuring residents feel safer.

The violence reduction partnership has four domains, each having a working group made up of key partners. Young people are well represented on each of the domain groups, but to ensure their voice is fully embedded, a separate young people's group identifies emerging actions and offers challenges and-or endorsement.

We have had more joint operations with Police than any London borough with our St James Street work resulting in a 38 per cent reduction in crime. 84 community mentors have been trained to help support those at risk of gangs and violence, and we were the first borough to launch the Safe and Together model supporting domestic abuse survivors.

The strength of the partnership is centred around a high level of respect and trust and the diversity of voices present. There is a high level of commitment to support work at a leadership level with data sharing agreements and effective channels for communication and decision making in place.

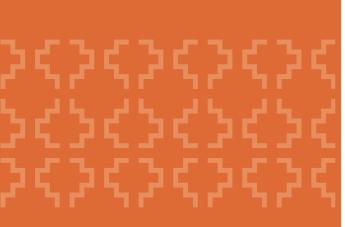
Using learning from this approach we will strengthen our collaborations with partners across the system to enable effective change and improve outcomes.



C. INNOVATION and CREATIVITY

We believe that innovation and creativity is essential in navigating complex challenges. We must create a safe environment for people to pioneer new ways of working and embed mechanisms to support impactful ideas at scale.

We know that the distribution of leadership to tackle challenges is essential to unlock creativity and innovation at all levels of the organisation and across the borough. We will adopt an agile approach, not letting 'perfect' get in the way of progress, but continuously learning and developing.



What we need to understand and work on:

- What are the complex challenges we are facing and what impact are we trying to achieve?
- What mechanisms and methods are we using to surface, and implement innovation and creative approaches?
- How are we understanding and approaching risk in the context of innovation?
- What data and case examples do we need to inform our thinking?
- Who are the practitioners and people with lived experience who can be involved in the generating and testing of ideas?
- Who are the system leaders who support this work and can act as 'enablers' and 'unblockers' of inevitable barriers that will be faced while testing a new idea?

Indicators we will use to track progress:

- How are we capturing ideas for innovation? Where are these ideas coming from? How are they taken forward?
- Are resources being dedicated to generate, nurture and test new ideas?
- Are we embracing 'failure' and measuring 'success' differently?
- Are we generating quantitative and qualitative data to adapt our ideas?
- Are we using the learning that is being generated to reimagine roles and practices and inform policies and regulations?
- Where do our range of programmes sit on the collaboration spectrum?

WORK TO LEARN FROM AND BUILD ON: Home First (Integrated Discharge)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was a priority to ensure that Whipps Cross Hospital had enough capacity to support people with the virus. Following government guidance, colleagues from across health and social care came together to accelerate the process of discharging patients who no longer needed to be in hospital.

The work utilised an agile methodology and forced us to think innovatively in developing an effective and rapid way forward. We focused on cycles of learning and unblocking barriers as soon as they were faced. From the start there was involvement from a wide range of stakeholders with a clear, genuinely shared goal and an agreement on principles and ways of working.

Use of real time data to learn and adapt the work allowed for continuous reflection on, and adaptation of, the approach.

The team worked at pace, discharging 30 patients per day compared to 30 patients per week previously. People received health and social care in a more integrated and coordinated way closer to home.

The learning generated from this experience and this agile way of working is being embedded across the delivery of the Integrated Care Strategy and other programmes of work.





We will need to adopt brave and bold leadership skills to bring this strategy, and our ambitions for individuals and families, to life. We know this change cannot be achieved in isolation, and the Families Leadership Team will focus on supporting and enabling this change across the system.

We know change is required at many levels, from mindsets and culture, through to policy, practice and allocation of resources. We believe leadership can come from anywhere and we will genuinely empower and support our workforce to lead and champion new ways of working.

OUR LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS

Make brave and timely decisions

We will focus our role on enabling decisions and unblocking barriers.

Wherever possible, we will give autonomy and permission for our own staff, partners and communities to innovate and lead change in order to improve the outcomes for individuals and families.

Create a shared local vision

We are committed to working with partners and communities to share and develop our vision for the borough, striving to achieve shared goals we can hold across the partnership.

Draw on our collective resources

Given the financial challenges, traditional approaches to savings or "easy solutions" are no longer an option. We will share our skills, resources and assets in new and bold ways with our partners and communities.

Tackle the now while planning for the future

We want a borough which will allow families to thrive in Waltham Forest for years to come. To achieve this, we will take a long-term view for change, invest in preventative approaches, and consider the implications of our decisions on future generations.

5

OUR ROADMAP

30 OUR LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS FAMILIES AT THE HEART OF OUR PLACE 31

OUR ROADMAP

Protection and support during the pandemic

This stage will tackle the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and the structural inequality and disparity that exists.

Recovering to a new, better way of life

This stage will transition us out of the immediate crisis whilst clearly understanding that we cannot simply return to how things were before. Instead we will look to address the long-term impacts of the pandemic whilst also taking opportunities to innovate and scale up what has worked or is working.

Delivering a brighter future

This stage will consolidate the progress made in the previous two stages, broadening and deepening outcomes and impact, working in partnership with individuals, communities and partners to deliver a complete shift in how we care and support people.

Key changes will be made across the following areas:

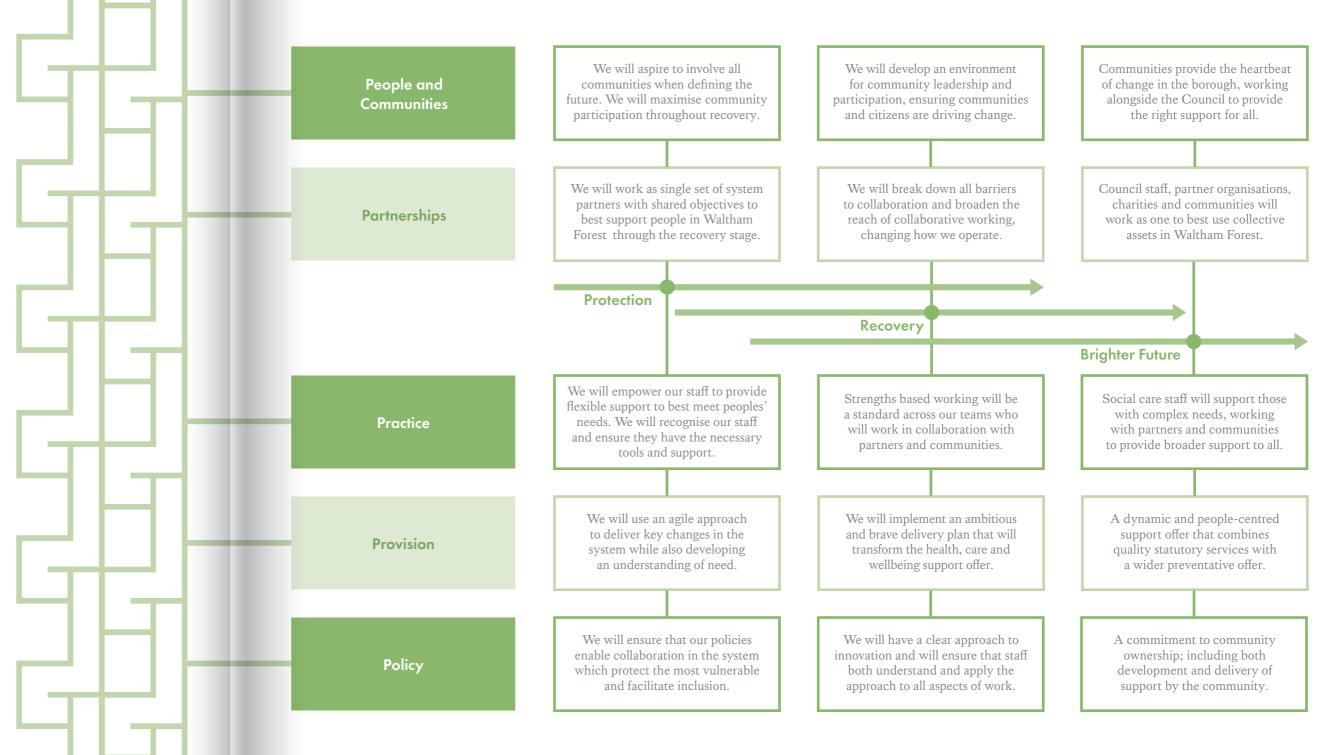
People	how we work with individuals and communities
Partnerships	how we collaborate with others
Practice	how staff work to best support people
Provision	what services and support is available
Policy	how we agree and articulate the way we operate

We will work together with partners to define a set of impact measures that focus on how our principles and behaviours are translating into reality and practice, and the outcomes we are achieving with and for our residents.

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We will ask our staff, individuals, families and community how we are doing, and we will celebrate incremental success.

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THE ACTIONS WE WILL TAKE TO DELIVER THESE CHANGES

Families at the Heart of Our Place will drive change across all our work through key areas of delivery, including:

Committing to placing equity, diversity and inclusion at the centre of everything we do.

If systemic inequality is to be challenged it is essential that equity, diversity and inclusion is a driving factor in all of our decisions and actions. We will reignite an open and honest conversation with our communities on the challenges faced and co-produce solutions. We will also look at our own procedures, training and policies to ensure that we prevent any 'blind-spots' within our organisation and are promoting these values wherever possible.

Providing better, joined-up care through our Integrated Care Strategy.

Together with our NHS partners we have devised a strategy and committed to three key ambitions:

- 1. Promoting wellbeing to prevent the need for longer term health and care support
- 2. Supporting people to remain independent and in their own home wherever possible
- 3. Caring for people closer to home when care is required outside of their home environment.

Tackling Violence, and the risk of it, through our Reduction Partnership.

We have the ambition to tackle the causes of violence, not just the symptoms or negative impact of violence. To do this we will have to think differently and broaden our preventative models to tackle violence. This will include training our staff to work differently (e.g. training in the Safe and Together model), through new preventative models working side by side with the community (e.g. the opening of the Violence Reduction Youth Hub), and working differently with those at risk of violence, with perpetrators of violence and with the wider community (e.g. implementation of a bystander model for violence reduction).

Supporting the most vulnerable in society through our Life Chances Programme.

We are already implementing the principles of this strategy to support those most at risk of COVID-19; this must continue throughout all stages of development. We will continue to actively identify those that are most in need and will re-configure our support and resources to help those people early. We are doing everything we can to enable children to return to school where possible and have developed a new approach to supporting people with Learning Disabilities. For those who cannot receive support at home we are ensuring they have access to the help they need.

Changing our relationship with our communities by supporting and celebrating participation.

Building on the incredible support that our wide network of volunteers have provided during the pandemic, we will expand the ways in which people can participate. This will include new opportunities for formal volunteering as well as providing support for wider, more 'organic' ways for people to support each other. We will also implement new models of change that place ownership of the changes with our communities.



