

Pathways to the Community – Seamless Transitions for Families.

Guidance for Practitioners within Universal Services and Integrated Neighbourhood Teams.

1. Introduction

1.1 What is *Pathways to the Community*?

Pathways to the Community replaces the previous London Borough of Newham Step-Down guidance issued in 2015, following consultation and redesign with multi-agency partners. It should be read in conjunction with the following documents¹:

- LB Newham Early Help Strategy 2016-18
- LB Newham Early Help Directory
- LB Newham Pathways to Help and Support

All professionals working with children, young people and families through the *Pathways to the Community* process must, in particular, be familiar with the continuum of need (see appendix 1 below) described in more detail in the Pathways to Help and Support Guidance.

Pathways to the Community is appropriate for families whose needs and levels of risk are considered to be within level 2 of the continuum of need. It sets out the transition pathways in Newham for supporting families to transition from a statutory service (Intervention, Assessment or 0-25 SEND) to a targeted early help service (Families First), or from Families First to early help delivered by a Universal Service.

1.2 Why is *Pathways to the Community* needed?

Consultation with multi-agency partners subsequent to the 2015 Step-Down guidance indicated that transitions for families in Newham were not always planned, consistent, or clearly communicated to families or practitioners. *Pathways to the Community* aims to address this by setting out clear transition pathways and guidance for best practice, to improve the consistency of the transition process for all families and practitioners in the borough.

Planned and consistent transition pathways are important:

¹ These documents are available to view and download on the Early Help Partnership page of Newham Connect (www.newhamconnect.uk)

- **For the family** – to be clear about which professionals will continue to support them on their journey. To be a part of the transition plan so they are well informed of their part to play in continuing to make progress and sustaining the necessary changes.
- **For the Social Worker** - to ensure a smooth transition to colleagues within targeted or Universal Services, when a family is making progress but there are some outstanding needs at level 2 remaining. A planned transition will maximise the opportunity for continued support to the family in order that the necessary changes can be sustained and re-referrals prevented.
- **For the community Early Help Practitioner and Families First** – in order that there is a consistent approach to sharing information with social care. This will enable a partnership approach to identifying the outstanding needs and the plan moving forward, which will maximise the chances of success in improving children’s development and learning. A well informed, consented forward plan will support ongoing family engagement.
- **For Integrated Neighbourhood Working** - to promote a seamless transition through our integrated services system and to identify the right support, at the right time, from the right people. A planned, consented transition promotes joined up working, information sharing, and ultimately decreases the chances of re-referrals.

2. Embedding *Pathways to the Community* into Practice

2.1 When will *Pathways to the Community* be used?

This guidance covers three transition pathways for families:

Transition Pathway 1 – from Intervention and 0-25 SEND Teams to Families First or Universal Services:

Following statutory intervention by the Intervention or 0-25 SEND teams, which could be following a Child in Need Plan or Child Protection Plan, it is agreed that the family’s needs and levels of risk are at level 2 and do not require ongoing statutory intervention.

Transition Pathway 2- from Assessment and 0-25 SEND Teams to Families First or Universal Services:

Following assessment by the Assessment or 0-25 SEND teams, it is agreed that a family’s needs and levels of risk are at level 2 and do not require ongoing statutory intervention

Transition Pathway 3 –from Families First to Universal Services:

Following assessment or intervention by Families First using the Early Help Record, it is agreed that the family’s needs and levels of risk can be best met through ongoing early help delivered by Universal Services.

Not all families who close to the Assessment, Intervention, 0-25 SEND or Families First teams will participate in the *Pathways to the Community* process:

- **Families who do not consent to receive ongoing early help support** – where families do not consent to transition, the social worker or Families First coach may wish to review their recommendations and outcome as this may affect their decision to close the case. Practitioners in Universal Services will continue to offer universal interventions to these families following case closure, however the formal early help planning and review process of the *Pathways to the Community* will not be followed.
- **Families where there are no further concerns** -there may also be cases whereby the assessment concluded that the initial concerns were unsubstantiated and the family does not require ongoing intervention at either statutory or early help level. For these families, practitioners in Universal Services will continue to offer universal interventions, however the formal early help planning and review process of the *Pathways to the Community* will not be required.

For these families, please see appendix 4 for the template to be used to notify universal services that the case has closed to Families First/Social Care involvement.

2.2. How will *Pathways to the Community* be used?

The following best practice applies to all of the three transition pathways outlined in section 2.1:

1. **Inform Universal Services that the case has been opened.** When cases are opened to Assessment, Intervention, Families First and 0-25 SEND teams, the social worker or Families First coach will inform Universal Services and will be in regular contact with these multi-agency practitioners throughout the progress of their work.
2. **Discuss transition with the family and obtain consent for transition.** When the child or family is doing well and no longer requires the current level of support, however there are ongoing needs that can be addressed through early help at level 2, the social worker or Families First coach (where open to Families First) will discuss the outstanding needs with the family to obtain consent for transition prior to case closure.
3. **Discuss transition with the other practitioners involved.** The social worker or Families First coach (where open to Families First) will contact the relevant partner agencies, initially by telephone, to discuss the ongoing help and support that may be required. These may include, for example, the Health Visitor, Designated Safeguarding Lead in schools or Children's Centre Manager for children under 5. Key universal services or Families First (where transitioning to Families First) will be advised that the case is potentially ready to transition and a discussion will be held about the family plan moving forward. In most cases, Universal and targeted services will already have been involved in making the decision about the family's needs moving forward, for example as part of a Core Group meeting, final CIN meeting or Team Around the Family meeting. Further guidance for this conversation can be found in appendix 3.

4. **Agree the ongoing plan.** At a transition meeting with the family and with other practitioners involved, the plan for ongoing work at level 2 will be discussed and agreed. Plans will be SMART and will include contingency planning should risk escalate or the family not engage with the transition process.
5. **Identify a named Early Help Lead Practitioner to lead the ongoing plan.** In discussion with the family and with other practitioners involved, a named Early Help Lead Practitioner from Universal Services or Families First (where transitioning to Families First) will be identified who will be responsible for proactively reviewing the ongoing Early Help Record family plan with the future Team Around the Family. Important factors in selecting the Early Help Lead Practitioner will include the family's relationship with the practitioner and the expertise required to lead the ongoing plan.
6. **Communicate the transition formally in writing.** There will always be a formal communication in writing to the family and the Early Help Lead Practitioner (see appendix 2), which will as a minimum:
 - a) Provide a full copy of the assessment completed, a summary of work carried out to date and the rationale for the decision to transition to level 2.
 - b) Provide an explicit identification of potential risks and the impact of non engagement in order to prevent re-referrals to Triage, as well as a contingency plan should risk escalate or sustained change not occur.
 - c) Include a formal case closure letter (Appendix 2) that will provide a summary of the above together with recommendations and SMART family plan for ongoing work at level 2, as agreed with the family and Early Help Lead Practitioner prior to case closure.
 - d) Provide a copy of (a)-(c) to the Early Help Partnership Team via the Neighbourhood NAM inbox – centralNAM@newham.gov.uk, southNAM@newham.gov.uk, eastNAM@newham.gov.uk, westNAM@newham.gov.uk
7. **Record the transition on Care First** – there will be one agreed system across all Neighbourhoods and teams for recording transitions on Care First, to ensure consistency of practice and our ability to report effectively on families' transitions. Please see 2.3 below.
8. **Continue the Early Help Family Plan.** The Early Help Lead Practitioner and Team Around the Family will undertake early help to address the outstanding needs in line with Newham's Early Help Framework. The Early Help Family Plan (TAF review) will be used to review whether families are maintaining any changes and are accessing appropriate support in order to prevent re-escalation to social care through Children's Triage. The first review after transition will happen within 6 weeks after the transition, and thereafter as required. The Early Help Record plan (TAF review) should be sent into the EarlyHelpPartnershipTeam@newham.gov.uk following each TAF meeting.

More detailed information on the specific steps of each transition pathway are given in 2.3 below.

2.3 – Pathways to the Community – Detailed steps for each Transition Pathway

Transition Pathway 1: From Intervention Team and 0-25 SEND to Universal Services or Families First

Case agreed within CSC as suitable for transition to Early Help

Social worker:

- *Transition discussed with family and consent obtained
- *Community Early Help Lead Practitioner identified and agreed
- *Transition meeting (final CIN meeting) held with Community Early Help Lead Practitioner, other practitioners involved & family
- *Ongoing SMART Early Help plan agreed at the meeting, including clear recommendations for non-engagement
- *Case Closure letter completed (appendix 2) and uploaded to EDMS
- *Copy of assessment and case closure letter sent to family and lead early help agency
- *Email letter, copy of the assessment to NAM inbox**

Manager:

- *Check undertaken for case closure letter uploaded to EDMS, including: evidence of consent, quality of forward plan and clearly identified Early Help Lead Practitioner
- *Outcome selected: De-escalate to non-statutory services
- *Observation added to file stating that case has been transitioned to early help and identifying Community Early Help Lead Practitioner and agency.
- *Case allocated to Neighbourhood Early Help Partnership Co-ordinator on CF

Discussion at internal transfer meeting if transition is to Families First

Community Early Help Lead Practitioner leads reviewing of the Early Help Plan using the Early Help Record at regular TAFs. First TAF to be held within 6 weeks of transition.

Acute risk of significant harm – Lead agency to refer to Triage

Chronic risk– discuss with EHP Team who will guide.

Case numbers recorded by EH Partnership Team and updated at fortnightly NAM meeting. QA process undertaken.

Transition Pathway 2: From Assessment Team and 0-25 SEND to Universal Services or Families First following assessment only

Statutory Single Assessment undertaken - recommended outcome suitable for transition to Early Help

Social worker:

- *Transition discussed with family and consent obtained
- *Community Early Help Lead Practitioner identified and agreed
- *Ongoing SMART Early Help plan agreed with family, Community Early Help Lead Practitioner and other practitioners involved, including clear recommendations for non-engagement.
- *Evidence of consent, ongoing plan and named Community Early Help Lead Practitioner detailed in the Recommendations section.
- *Case Closure letter completed (appendix 2) and uploaded to EDMS
- *Copy of assessment and case closure letter sent to family and lead agency
- *Email letter, copy of the assessment to NAM inbox**

Manager:

- *Check undertaken for case closure letter uploaded to EDMS, including: evidence of consent, quality of forward plan and clearly identified Community Early Help Lead Practitioner
- *Outcome selected: De-escalate to non-statutory services
- *Observation added to file stating that case has been transitioned to early help and identifying Early Help Lead Practitioner and agency.
- *Case allocated to Neighbourhood Early Help Partnership Co-ordinator on CF

Discussion at internal transfer meeting if transition is to Families First

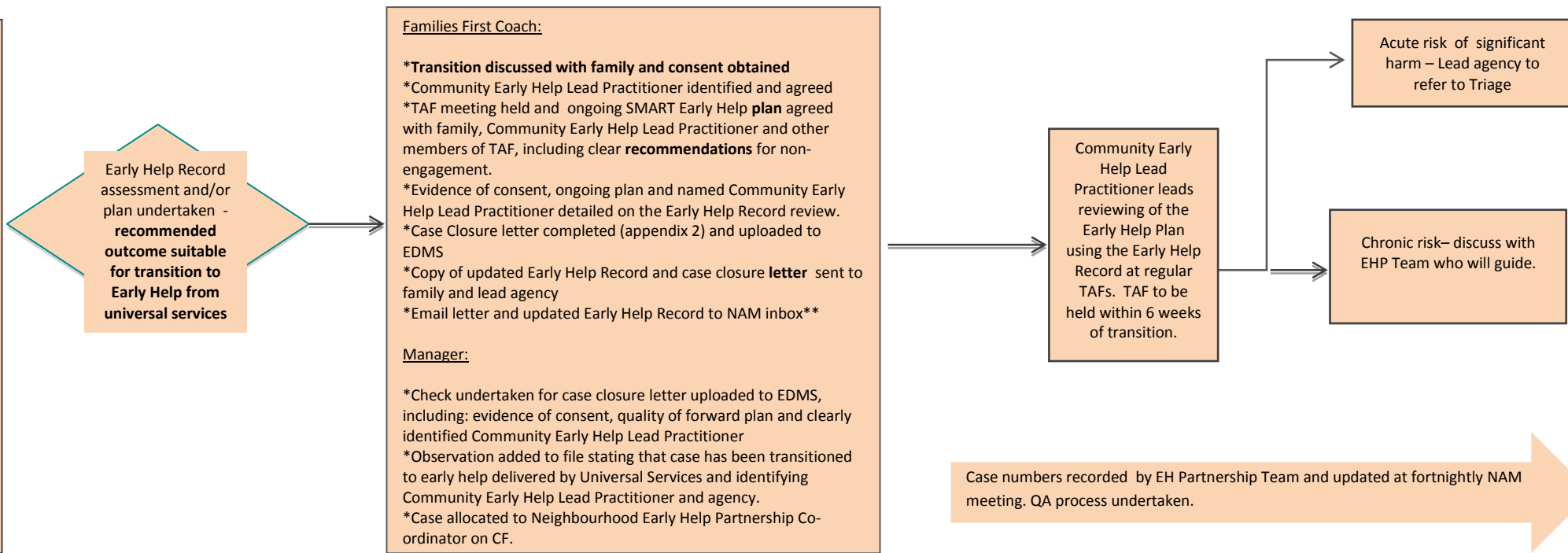
Community Early Help Lead Practitioner leads reviewing of the Early Help Plan using the Early Help Record at regular TAFs. First TAF to be held within 6 weeks of transition.

Acute risk of significant harm – Lead agency to refer to Triage

Chronic risk– discuss with EHP Team who will guide.

Case numbers recorded by EH Partnership Team and updated at fortnightly NAM meeting. QA process undertaken.

Transition Pathway 3: from Families First to Universal Services



**[neighbourhood]NAM@newham.gov.uk

**Single assessment must have been written/updated within 6mths. If not, updated assessment required before transition.

***If within the 3 months of transitioning out of L3, C/YP needs move back into Level 3, case transitions back to the previously allocated SW following discussion with SW and Team Manager.

3. What advice and support is there to help practitioners with Pathways to the Community?

The Early Help Partnership team will equip schools and other Universal Services practitioners with the tools, training and support to deliver early help with children and families using the Newham Early Help Framework. This includes the Early Help Partnership Networks in each of the neighbourhood areas which are co-ordinated by the Early Help Partnership Team.

Where a family is proposed for transition to early help delivered by Universal Services and the Lead Early Help Practitioner requires further advice and guidance regarding how to meet the outstanding needs, their Early Help Partnership Coordinator and Practitioner will support through one-to-one guidance and via Team Around the School meetings (see appendix 4).

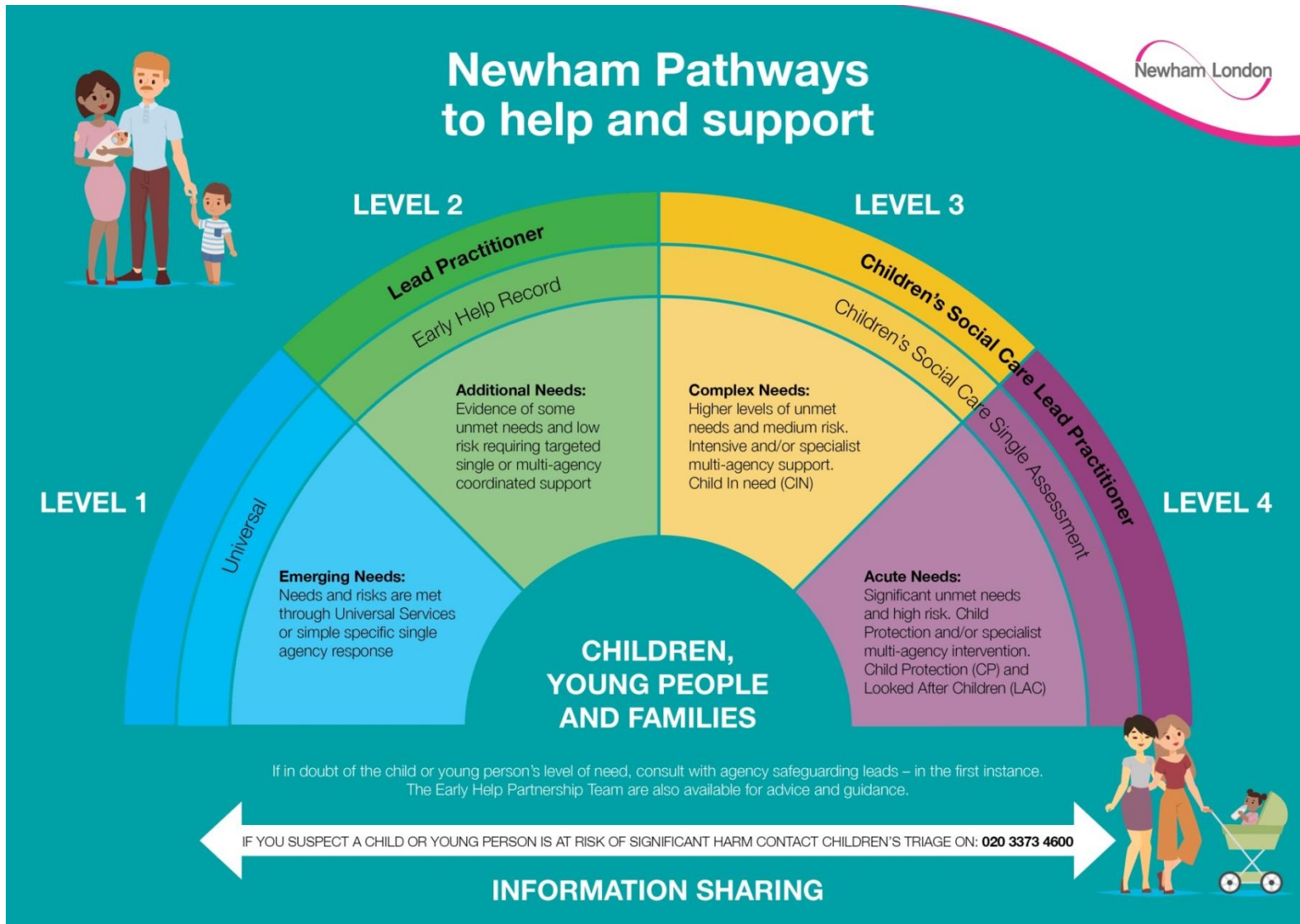
Where social workers and Families First coaches require further advice and guidance regarding transitions, they should seek support from their Practice Manager or Team Manager in the first instance. The Early Help Partnership Team will also be able to assist.

4. How will the process be reviewed?

The Early Help Partnership Team are currently developing a framework for monitoring and evaluation of early help within Universal Services. This will include a QA process for families who have been transitioned to early help from other Services, to allow strengths and areas for development to be identified and for learning to be disseminated among partners. Cases will also be monitored through the Neighbourhood Action Meeting process where notifications of cases stepping down will be noted and reviewed.

The transition pathways outlined in this document will be formally reviewed with multi-agency partners at 3, 6 and 12 months after implementation.

Appendix 1: Newham Pathways to Help and Support



Appendix 2 - Case closure letter for families receiving ongoing early help

Formal case closure letter to be sent to family, cc'ing in Community Early Help Lead Practitioner and other professionals. A copy will be sent to the relevant Neighbourhood NAM inbox.

Dear (family)

Transition to Early Help: X Family, child DOB, child DOB, child DOB

I am writing to confirm that we have discussed transition to early help support for you and your family and you have consented to receiving early help. This means that social care/Families First (delete as appropriate) involvement with you will now come to an end.

Recommendations for Early Help support

I have attached to this letter a copy of your assessment and our agreed plan for early help support.

If you have any queries or concerns regarding our agreed plan, please discuss these with me as soon as possible.

Next Steps

Your identified Early Help Lead Practitioner is **Name/Title/Contact Details – as appropriate.**

Your Early Help Lead Practitioner is responsible for contacting you to arrange a time to meet to begin your early help support, and will be in touch shortly.

The professionals who will be involved in your early help support –your Team Around the Family – are: **Name/Title/Contact Details, Name/Title/Contact Details – as appropriate.**

These professionals are now responsible for actively participating in early help for your family.

You are now responsible for working together with these professionals and your early help plan to support the continued progress of your family.

With best wishes for the future

Name/Job Title

Appendix 3

Guidance for Social Workers and Families First Coaches regarding transition discussions with Community Early Help Practitioners:

If you are happy that the current needs of the family sit at level 2, please contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead in schools, or the Children's Centre Manager for under 5s, to identify the Community Early Help Practitioner best placed to support the further work needed. (The Early Help Partnership Team can provide an updated contact list for Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools and Children's Centre managers.)

Your discussions should consider the following:

- 1) The conclusion of your assessment for the family.
- 2) An explanation of why you are considering closing the case to Social Care or Families First and confirmation that the family has consented to receive ongoing support from the Early Help practitioner in the Universal setting.
- 3) An outline of what work has already been completed by Social Care or Families First and the outcome of this, and what work might now be completed by the lead agency.
- 4) Explain that a Team Around the Family meeting will be called in which a family plan will be agreed in the form of clear SMART action points, for example *School to continue 1:1 mentoring support for X child until the end of the summer term*. The action points should support the Community Early Help practitioner to achieve the desired outcomes for the family.
- 5) Clear contingency guidelines for the lead agency to follow if the situation deteriorates– for example, are there any circumstances which you feel would warrant an immediate re-referral to social care? Please let the school know that they can contact the Early Help Partnership Team if they have concerns about the family's progress or require any guidance when working with them at Early Help level.

The identified community Early Help Practitioner will need the above information in writing in the form of the closure letter (Appendix 2), a copy of the assessment, and the agreed onward Family Plan.

Appendix 4 - Notification to Universal Services of case closure for families who do not require ongoing early help

Dear Colleague

Notification of Case Closure: X Family, child DOB, child DOB, child DOB

I am writing to notify you of case closure for the above family to Children's Social Care/Families First (delete as appropriate).

It is not considered at this time that the family requires early help to meet their needs. However, if universal services become aware of emerging need in the future they should work together to re-assess the family's situation and deliver early help in line with the Early Help Framework.

Should universal services become aware in the future of a risk of significant harm at level 3 of Newham's continuum of need, they should refer directly to LBN Triage.

If you have any questions regarding the family's involvement with Children's Social Care/Families First (delete as appropriate), please feel free to contact me.

Best Wishes

Name/Job Title

Appendix 5

Early Help Partnership Team – Contact Details

Integrated Neighbourhood Service Manager – Early Help

Claire Bridge – Claire.bridge@newham.gov.uk; 0203 373 2960

Early Help Partnership Coordinators

Kathy Dee (EAST) – Kathy.dee@newham.gov.uk ; 0203 373 0673

Rehema Essop (CENTRAL) – Rehema.essop@newham.gov.uk ; 0203 373 4672

Vicki Kitts (WEST) – Vicki.kitts@newham.gov.uk ; 0203 373 34122

Dawn Henry (SOUTH) – Dawn.henry@newham.gov.uk; 0203 373 7031

Early Help Partnership Practitioners

Amber Robinson (EAST/SOUTH) – Amber.robinson@newham.gov.uk ; 0203 373 1225

Musarat Rashid (CENTRAL) – Musarat.Rashid@newham.gov.uk ; 0203 373 1037

Jasmin Choudhury (WEST/SOUTH) – Jasmin.choudhury@newham.gov.uk ; 0203 373 4651

Early Help Partnership Programme Officer

Remi Desouza – Remi.desouza@newham.gov.uk ; 0203 373 2934

