

# Corporate Issues & Reform Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**Subject:** School Readiness Update

**Report of:** Jon Rouse, Chief Executive Portfolio Lead for Children, Young People and Cohesion

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## PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an update on the Greater Manchester School Readiness programme in light of the recent approval of £2.1m investment from the Health and Social Care Partnership to accelerate progress.
- Provide an overview of school readiness performance data for academic year 2018/19 at a GM and local authority area level.
- Present the new Greater Manchester School Readiness dashboard tools.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Issues and Reform Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and endorse the contents of the report.

## CONTACT OFFICERS

- Jane Forrest, Assistant Director, Public Service reform, GMCA

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following is a list of the background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100D (1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents, which would disclose exempt or confidential information as identified by that Act.

- School Readiness Update, 19th June 2018 – report presented to Corporate Issues and Reform O&S Committee
- School Readiness Programme, 26th July 2019 – report presented to Greater Manchester Combined Authority

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Considerable work has been undertaken within GM over the last two years to shape our approach to school readiness and address some of the key challenges to improving early years outcomes. A report was presented to the Corporate Issues and Reform Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2018, this provided an update on the school readiness work programme to date and the baseline performance for each local authority (academic year 16/17).
- 1.2. Subsequently, additional investment of £2.1m for a 24-month programme of transformational work to accelerate improvements in early years services and school readiness was approved by the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership (H&SCP) with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) identified as the lead delivery partner. This is a joint programme of work that seeks to build on activity already initiated, providing capacity to accelerate priority pieces of work and engage the early years system.
- 1.3. The aim and objectives of the proposed work programme align with a series of related GM Early Years policies, including the GM Start Well: Early Years Strategy, GM Population Health Plan, GM Children's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Priority 1 of the Greater Manchester Strategy and the GM Children's Plan.
- 1.4. Further work to explore the school readiness agenda was undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny School Readiness Task and Finish group. This considered the challenges to improving school readiness outcomes at a locality and GM level and these considerations were used to inform the GM programme of work, these included:
  - **Workforce** – need to develop clear career pathways, promote a shared culture within the early years workforce and explore use of apprenticeships to strengthen the workforce.
  - **System leadership** – use of existing expertise within maintained nurseries to support this.
  - **Data availability** – should be strengthened, with more robust data reporting to scrutiny to allow for monitoring of progress.
  - **Digital record** – rollout should be extended across GM.
  - **Investment** – shared investment plan in 0-4 within localities.
  - **Early years providers** – identification of support required from GM and localities to strengthen practice.
  - **Shared standards** – should be developed to apply across all early years settings.
- 1.5. A review of progress to date has taken place and refreshed school readiness delivery plans produced, these reflect progress to date and current priorities identified through recent evaluation at a locality and GM level, the findings of the overview and scrutiny school readiness task and finish group and stakeholder engagement outputs from the 2019 GM School Readiness Summit.
- 1.6. This report presents updated performance data for school readiness at a GM and local authority area level for the academic year 2018/19, updated programme delivery plans and an overview of programme progress to date.

## 2. School readiness performance

2.1. The government's current measure of school readiness for children aged 5 is the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile, which is completed for all children at the end of the reception year. Children are defined as having reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) if they achieve at least the expected level in the following three early learning areas:

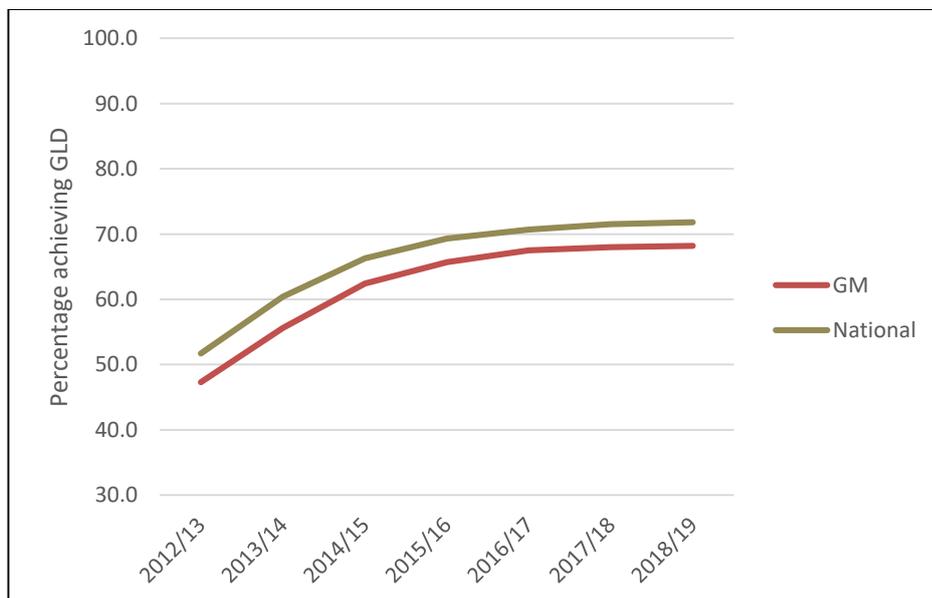
- Personal, social and emotional
- Physical development
- Communication and language

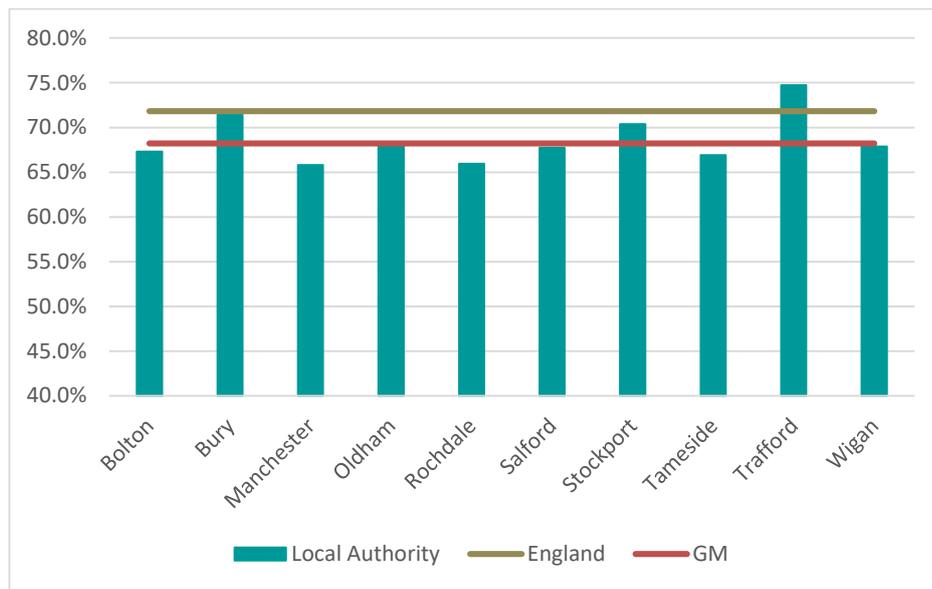
2.2. In 2012 GM developed a model for integrated Early Years services. The GM Early Years Delivery Model (EYDM) is built upon the principles of proportionate universalism. It recognises the 1001 critical days starting at conception and harnesses the universal reach of maternity services and Health Visiting for the crucial early identification of vulnerability in both parents and infants. When the EYDM is implemented across GM to a consistently high standard, families will be in receipt of a proportionate, multi-agency tailored response relevant to their level of needs and children will benefit.

2.3. Since the development of the EYDM, there has been significant increase in GLD performance across GM, as demonstrated in chart 1. However, Greater Manchester remains an outlier in school readiness outcomes compared to the national average, with the latest data showing that 68.2% of all eligible children achieving a good level of development (GLD) at the end of the EYFS in academic year 2018/19, compared with the England national average of 71.8%.

2.4. Although the gap between GM and national performance has narrowed slightly in recent years, the trend towards a plateau in performance is a feature of the national trend data as well as the GM data. There is an ambitious objective for GM to reach the national level for GLD within 2 years.

**Chart 1: Greater Manchester EYFS Results 2013 - 2019**



**Chart 2: Greater Manchester EYFS Results Academic Year 2018/19**

2.5. Chart 2 shows EYFS results by local authority area within GM for the latest academic year (2018/19). It should be noted that results in Tameside and Oldham have improved by 1% and 4% respectively. Over the last 3 years the proportion of 5 years olds reaching GLD in Oldham has increased by over 7 percentage points. This makes Oldham the most improved local authority in the North West and one of the most improved in the country. Oldham has benefited from additional investment as a Department of Education (DfE) funded Opportunity Area; early years initiatives funded as part of this programme can inform further improvement work across GM.

2.6. Rates of child poverty are important to bear in mind when contextualising GM's GLD results; the proportion of children living in income-deprived households is higher in GM than the national average. Despite this, we are seeing positive improvements in outcomes for disadvantaged children and outcomes for pupils eligible for Free School Meals have improved by 4 percentage points since 2015. Provisional data shows that we have now closed the gap between the GM and England GLD average for pupils eligible for free school meals. This is significant as we know that the development gaps between disadvantaged children and their peers has a profound impact later in life and on long-term social mobility.

2.7. The GM Strategy also includes a target for all early years' settings to be Ofsted rated 'good' or 'outstanding'. The quality of GM early years settings has continued to improve, with only 5.8% not achieving a 'good' or 'outstanding' rating in the March 2019 data.

2.8. The school readiness programme includes further work to help identify strategies that are effecting positive change within GM. This includes the development of a new data dashboard showing ward level GLD data mapped against levels of deprivation to help identify areas of good practice and support shared learning. This will allow local authorities to clearly identify 'peer' wards who face similar contexts, but who are seeing different results.

2.9. Additional work is also underway to identify wider measures that contribute to a more holistic picture of school readiness levels. A Data and Evaluation Community of Practice, comprising a range of professionals from across the early years system is developing a new framework of measures that will promote a broader understanding of a child's readiness to learn and support system accountability through assessing progress at a locality and GM level. A draft framework of measures will be in place for further consultation from January 2020.

### 3. Programme Delivery Plan 2019/20 – 2020/21

3.1. A recent evaluation (quarter 2, 2018/19) of the implementation of the EYDM across the 10 localities has highlighted where the model is contributing to an improvement in early years outcomes, and identified the following collective challenges to implementation across the early years system. There is a notable synergy between the outputs from the stocktake and the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny School Readiness Task and Finish group.

- **Workforce** – there are varying degrees of maturity in developing an integrated workforce model and workforce development planning across the EY systems and a need for a core development offer aligned to evidence based pathways and place-based, integrated working.
- **Data capture and sharing** – a lack of digital enabled assessment processes influencing performance monitoring, coverage and impact of school readiness plans. A recognised need to link multiple data sources and share across providers.
- **Implementation of best practice pathways** – identified need for further GM pathway development embedding early intervention and prevention principles across early years.

3.2. The GM model for improving school readiness is included at Appendix A, this is structured around three priority themes: **delivering an evidence based model; embedding best practice pathways and developing our enablers**. The programme of work focusses on addressing the challenges identified above, to enable full implementation of the EYDM at scale across localities. Appendix B shows the deliverables for the next two years of the programme.

3.3. The additional investment now secured is accelerating programme delivery and supporting the mobilisation of new work. A school readiness programme team is in place within GMCA to lead programme delivery, coordinate effective governance processes and ensure comprehensive stakeholder engagement across the early years system. Funding is also being used to put in place fixed term Health Visiting and Midwifery roles to support work.

3.4. Robust programme governance has been established through the School Readiness Board with representatives from all 10 localities to drive implementation and deliver system change. The Board meets quarterly and is chaired by Jon Rouse, Chief Officer, H&SCP. Chris McLoughlin, Director for Children's Services Stockport, is the lead DCS for School Readiness and attends board meetings in this capacity. The Board reports on progress to the GM Reform Board, GM Children's Health and Wellbeing Board and the newly established GM Children's Board.

### 4. Progress to date

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4.1. Key progress across the three programme priorities is outlined below.

#### 4.2. **Delivering an evidence based model**

4.2..1. The Q2 locality stocktake identified several areas of progress in relation to implementation of an evidence based model for improving early years outcomes, these include:

- Robust governance in place to provide accountability and oversight of school readiness improvement across all localities.
- Some strong examples of integrated, place based working across the early years system with a recognition of the need for strong system leadership.
- Ongoing work to pilot and, in some areas implement at scale, the stage 4b assessment identified in the EYDM. This universal assessment at 18 month of age supports earlier identification of need rather than waiting for the government-mandated check at 2 years of age.

#### 4.3. **Embedding best practice pathways**

4.3..1. The GM EYDM includes several evidence-based pathways focussed on universal and targeted provision that supports early intervention. The current programme of work will focus on developing new pathways where gaps have been identified, including a standard universal and targeted antenatal offer for expectant parents; physical development pathway and an early years complex needs pathway.

4.3..2. Work is also taking place to further embed existing pathways, notably speech, language and communication. Work in this area has benefited from additional investment of £1.5 million from the DfE Early Outcomes Fund, part of the Government's social mobility programme. Funding is supporting work to evaluate pathway implementation to date and support localities to further strengthen multi-agency working and workforce capabilities. Since the implementation of the GM pathway, we have seen GLD outcomes for speech, language and communication improve with the gap between GM and England narrowing since 2015.

4.3..3. Work in this area is also benefiting from our ongoing partnership with the BBC to develop resources for parents and professionals that aim to close the word gap in the early years. The BBC have recently soft launched the Tiny, Happy, People website across GM; the website provides resources that can be used by parents and front line professionals to help improve a child's speech, language and communication. GMCA has worked closely with the BBC to develop resources and provided marketing materials, which will be given out by Midwives and Health Visitors to raise awareness with parents.

4.3..4. The development of a GM pathway for antenatal parenting support is moving forward, aligned to the wider work taking place to implement the perinatal and infant mental health (PIMH) strategy across GM. We are working with PIMH clinical leads and midwifery colleagues to identify best practice antenatal parenting programmes at a universal and targeted level to ensure that the pathway is embedded in the core principles of early

attachment and parent and baby bonding. Recruitment of a fixed term midwifery post to support the programme will accelerate development of this pathway.

#### 4.4. **Developing our enablers**

4.4..1. Activity within this priority focusses on providing a GM approach to developing the enablers that have been identified by localities as critical to realising our ambition for early years and school readiness. This includes creating GM data tools that allow us to identify best practice and share learning; the digitisation of the ages and stages assessment undertaken by Health Visitors and initiatives aimed at strengthening workforce capacity and skills across the early years system.

4.4..2. **Workforce** - The early years sector and employers within Greater Manchester have highlighted workforce as a key area of development required to improve outcomes. To realise this we are developing the GM Early Years Workforce Academy. The Academy will aim to take a regional approach to enhance the practice, knowledge and skills of the diverse range of professionals working in early years services and the wider professionals within place-based teams. It represents a new, ambitious approach to workforce development across the early years system, working collectively to invest in staff across public, private and community and voluntary organisations. An academy prospectus has been produced, outlining the vision and priorities and a roundtable event with potential investors and delivery partners will take place in November. Scoping of further workforce initiatives is also underway; this includes identifying opportunities to use the apprenticeship levy to strengthen recruitment and retention across the early years workforce.

4.4..3. **Digital** – the aim of the Early Years digital record is to improve services by breaking down information sharing barriers by allowing data that is currently collected in siloed systems to be shared digitally and in real time (where possible) with other professionals. Phase one will provide Health Visitors and parents with the digital platform to complete the Ages and Stages assessments in stages 2 to 5 of the EYDM and speech and language assessments using the Wellcomm tool. Work to develop the digital ‘apps’ used by parents and workers is now underway and the digital record will be piloted in Bury from February 2020. Pilots are also planned for Tameside and Salford and engagement is underway with the other seven localities to plan for further rollout.

4.4..4. **Schools as system leaders** – we are working with the GM Learning Partnership, the umbrella body for teaching and research schools in GM, to develop a model for schools to act as system leaders through providing exemplar early years foundation stage training and support. This builds on work led by the GM maintained nursery group to identify best practice projects and training that can be rolled out to private and independent providers of early years provision. This will support our ambition for all children in GM to benefit from outstanding early education provision.

## 5. **Conclusion**

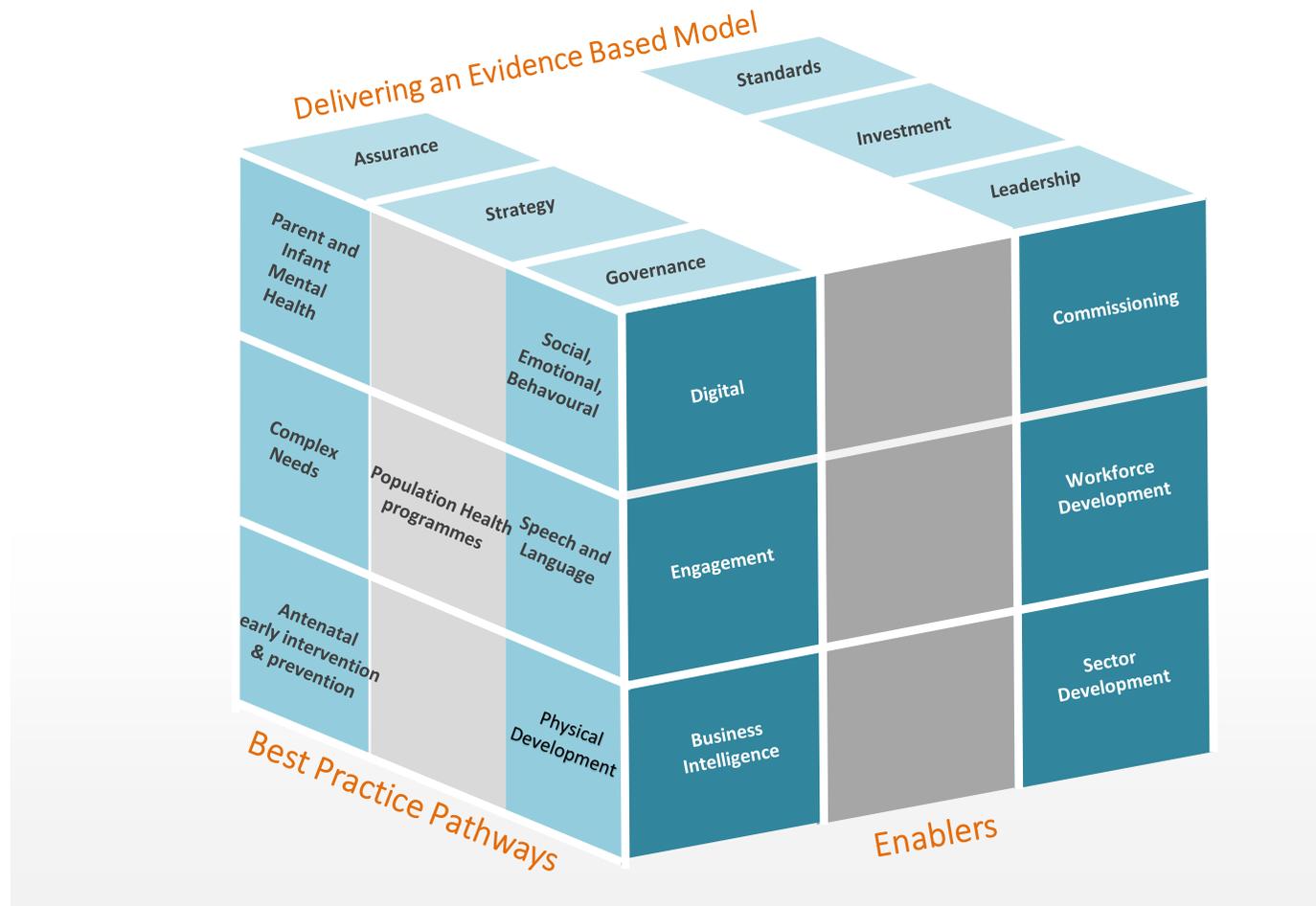
5.1. Significant progress has already been made across GM to improve school readiness levels; the latest performance data highlights the positive impact of work to narrow the attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers. Additional performance

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data and GM level data tools are supporting the development of evidence informed strategies and the identification of best practice to scale and spread across GM.

- 5.2. The recent mobilisation of the new phase of work for the GM School Readiness Programme, and the additional transformation funding from the H&SCP, will seek to address remaining gaps and challenges that have been identified by localities as barriers to improving early years outcomes. A structured 24 month GM programme of work at is now progressing at pace.

## Appendix A – GM School Readiness Model



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## Appendix B – 19/20 – 20/21 Summary Delivery Plan

### Priority 1 – Delivering an evidence based model

Priorities	Intent	19/20 Deliverables
<p><b>Strategy</b> – a GM School Readiness strategy that reflects place-based integrated working approaches and locality implementation of Early Years plans.</p>	<p>Understanding of GM level activity to address shared challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refreshed GM School Readiness Strategy and delivery plan for 2019/20 – 2020/21</li> <li>• Review of implementation of stages 4b onwards within EYDM – 2020/21</li> <li>• Review of implementation of stages 4b onwards within EYDM</li> </ul>
<p><b>Governance</b>– effective structures, processes and capacity in place to deliver intended programme of work and realise outcomes.</p>	<p>Shared accountability and governance of school readiness programme at locality and GM level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance structure reviewed and refreshed</li> <li>• Work streams and SROs identified, reporting into school readiness board</li> <li>• Programme Management team within GMCA</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leadership</b> – Developing new and existing partnerships and what works alliances to support overall programme of work. Building on existing good practice across GM.</p>	<p>Programme informed by evidence based approaches, supporting innovation and maximising use of resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership working arrangements in place with HEIs, HEE, Children's Commissioner, BBC and Early Intervention Foundation</li> <li>• System leadership embedded in relevant workforce academy training programmes</li> <li>• Establish model for working with research and teaching schools to improve school readiness</li> </ul>
<p><b>Standards</b> – consistent implementation of best practice and Early Years delivery model.</p>	<p>Improve early years outcomes across GM and support consistent understanding of school readiness across system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broader specification of school readiness drafted with associated metrics agreed</li> <li>• Mapping of existing strengths across localities and consideration of scale and spread.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Investment</b> - supporting GM wide bids, working with private and philanthropic partners.</p>	<p>Maximising resource across GM to deliver early years outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment plans aligned with standards, GM outcomes framework, best practice pathways, commissioning framework and single investment plan.</li> <li>• SR governance supporting joint funding bids.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assurance</b></p>	<p>Assurance of implementation of EYDM and best practice pathways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of EY data dashboard with data displayed at GM, locality and place-based level.</li> <li>• Peer reviews shared and used to identify best practice approaches.</li> <li>• Local stocktakes using EOF audit tool.</li> </ul>

**Priority 2 – Embedding best practice pathways**

<p><b>Priorities</b></p>	<p><b>Intent</b></p>	<p><b>19/20 Deliverables</b></p>
<p><b>Physical Development pathway</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent, evidence base assessment and intervention models used across GM.</li> <li>• Inequality gap reduced for most disadvantaged children in GM.</li> <li>• High quality of intervention for children with most complex needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pathways developed with consistent implementation across GM to support Early Years Delivery Model.</li> <li>• Pathways embedded in local commissioning plans.</li> <li>• Identify development needs of workforce to implement pathway.</li> <li>• Workforce academy programme developed to meet identified needs.</li> <li>• 20/21 plans to include pathway evaluation and further development where required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Complex Needs pathway</b></p>		
<p><b>Antenatal pathway</b></p>		
<p><b>Speech and language pathway</b></p>		
<p><b>Parent Infant Mental Health Pathway</b></p>		
<p><b>Social, emotional and behavioural</b></p>		

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### Priority 3 – Developing our enablers

Priorities	Intent	19/20 Deliverables
<b>Digital</b>	Improved data sharing across early years system. New, digital models of support for parents and professionals to improve speech and language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of integrated early years record</li> <li>• Legacy paper digitisation</li> <li>• BBC pilot rolled out across GM</li> <li>• Web-based parenting and professional portal (Essential parenting)</li> </ul>
<b>Communication and engagement</b>	Effective communication and engagement with stakeholders across early years system in GM to support and inform programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications and engagement strategy and plans</li> <li>• VCSE task and finish group integrated across work streams</li> </ul>
<b>Commissioning</b> - identifying GM commissioning standards and approaches.	Consistent standards for measuring outcomes from early years commissioned services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment plans aligned with GM outcomes framework, GM standards, commissioning framework and single investment plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Workforce</b>	Increased early years workforce capacity. Improved skills and competencies to ensure consistent delivery of early years support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years workforce academy model developed</li> <li>• Delivery of a single consistent and high quality programme to roll out to place-based teams and early years settings through workforce academy</li> </ul>
<b>Sector development</b> – supporting schools as system leaders	Improved quality of EY provision Clear role for schools in place based, integrated working model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education sector support model with schools as system leaders agreed and work taken forward to implement.</li> <li>• Early years support model with maintained nurseries as system leaders agreed and implemented.</li> </ul>
<b>Business Intelligence</b>	Improve assessment and targeting. Increase understanding of workforce and children over time. Develop broader understanding of school readiness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward level data added to EY dashboard</li> <li>• Risk stratification tool piloted in 3 areas</li> <li>• Partnership developed with MMU and UoM</li> </ul>

