



Building My Future (BMF)

Embedding co-production practice and culture

BMF Practice Bulletin #1



contact For families with disabled children

Ealing
parent & carer
Forum

Innovation
Unit
New solutions for thriving societies


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for Education


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Contents

Foreword: The Building My Future Learning Series	P.03
Introduction to Building My Future (BMF) Programme	P.04
What do we mean by Co-Production?	P.05
Context: Statutory Duties of Local Authorities	P.06
Principles of Co-Production	P.07
How can we define Co-Production?	P.08
Key messages	P.09
Ladder of Participation towards the goal of Co-Production	P.10
Reflection: Where is your project on the ladder?	P.11
BMF Co-production with parents/carers and young people	P.12
Introduction to Ealing Parent Carer Forum and their contribution to BMF	P.15
Factors assisting co-production of goals with families	P.18
Factors assisting co-production of goals with Young People	P.19
BMF Co-production within a network of agencies	P.20
BMF as a catalyst for change	P.22
Acknowledgements and Contact details	P.23



Foreword

The Building My Future (BMF) Learning Series

This bulletin is part of our ongoing commitment to learning and sharing good practice. The full BMF Learning Series is as follows:

- **The BMF Practice Handbook**

This handbook is intended for professionals working with children and young people with additional needs. It is written as a practical guide for those who are curious about the approach or interested in integrating elements from the BMF approach into existing systems.
- **BMF Practice Bulletins**
 1. The importance of co-production with parents/carers and young people, in the development of the BMF model
 2. The Use of **Goals** in BMF Practice
 3. Professional reflection and recommendations on the BMF model and implications for future practice
 4. The BMF Team 'Journey' in our commitment to continue to learn about and implement strategies to dismantle racism.
- **BMF Videos**
 - A. Introduction to Building My Future (BMF)
 - B. Hidden Disability. A video devised and produced by young people and the BMF Youth workers.

**Ealing
Building
My Future
Programme**



- **BMF Podcasts**
 - A. to explore the experiences of parents/carers within the system, relationships and different ways to collaborate, with the child at the centre of the process.
 - B. exploring the intersection of SEND and Racism, it's impact and exploring ways we can address these issues, both strategically and operationally.
 - C. BMF team reflection on journey and recommendations regarding anti-racism
- **External Evaluation of BMF**



BMF Library can be accessed here:

<https://www.egfl.org.uk/services-children/building-my-future-bmf-programme>

Watch the Introduction to BMF video here:

https://youtu.be/3JThz_ybehA

Introduction

Building My Future (BMF) Programme

Targeted support for children and young people with complex needs

Between 2018-21, with support from the DfE's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme, Ealing Council developed and piloted a new programme, co-produced with parents/carers and young people, designed to address a growing need around supporting young people with additional needs who are at risk of school and social exclusion.

What is it?

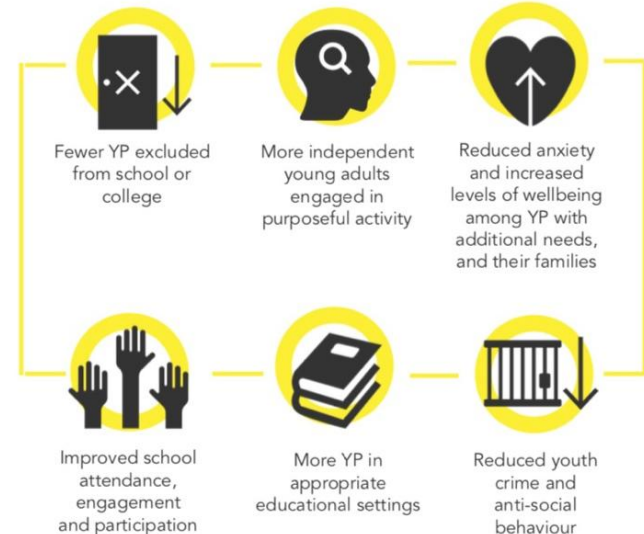
Building My Future (BMF) is a responsive, multi-agency, multi-professional service, designed to support children and young people, parents/carers and schools/colleges where there may be difficulties accessing the curriculum or in attendance, due to complex additional needs.

We support children and young people who are at risk of exclusion or withdrawal from society to stay in or return to participation and meaningful activity.

The BMF anti-racism statement

'The BMF Team is resolved to explicitly and publicly affirm our identity as an anti-racist service and team. Our anti-racism commitment is reflected in the life and culture of the team, through our programmes and practices as we continue to learn about and implement strategies to dismantle racism.'

Outcomes we seek:





What do we mean by Co-Production?

Context

Statutory Duties on Local Authorities

Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 makes clear that local authorities, in carrying out their functions under the Act, must have regard (among other things) to the importance of children and young people, and their parents and carers, **participating as fully as possible in decisions about their individual care.**

Local authorities must also ensure that children, young people, parents and carers are **involved in decisions about local provision.**

They need to ensure that children, young people, parents and carers are **provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation** in those decisions.

Engagement and Participation

Decisions shaped by parents/carers and young people

The SEND code of practice (January 2015) states the following in connection with engagement and decision making of parents, children and young people:

*'At a strategic level, partners **must engage** children and young people with SEN and disabilities and children's parents **in commissioning decisions**, to give useful insights into how to improve services and outcomes. Local authorities, CCGs and NHS England **must develop effective ways of harnessing the views of their local communities so that commissioning decisions** on services for those with SEN and disabilities **are shaped by users' experiences, ambitions and expectations.***

To do this, local authorities and CCGs should engage with local Healthwatch organisations, patient representative groups, Parent Carer Forums, groups representing young people with SEN and disabilities and other local voluntary organisations and community groups.(Section 3.18)'

Principles of Co-Production

It may be useful to approach co-production as a set of values. The following principles of equality, diversity, accessibility and reciprocity are critical values for putting co-production into action.



Equality – everyone has assets

Co-production starts from the idea that no one group or person is more important than anyone else and everyone has skills, abilities and time to contribute.



Diversity

Co-production should be as inclusive and diverse as possible. Particular efforts may be needed to ensure that seldom heard groups are included.



Accessibility

Making everything accessible is the way to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate fully in an activity in the way that suits them best e.g. timing or location meetings.



Reciprocity

Reciprocity means people get something back for putting something in. There are formal ways of doing this, like using time banks as a way of rewarding people, but sometimes the reciprocity comes from the more equal relationships that develop between people and organisations.

In BMF we agreed that parents/carers and young people should be compensated for the time and effort they invested in BMF. We invested resources into the core costs of the parent/carer forum to strengthen capacity and compensated parents for travel to meetings. We used vouchers to acknowledge the contributions of our young people. If this is not possible certificates and/or CPD options could be considered.

Costs and benefits of co-production

Co-production is linked with better outcomes for people who use services and carers. It can help to build stronger communities and to develop active citizenship. There may be up-front costs when organisations start to co-produce, as investment may be needed for training, access requirements and other expenses. However, it should lead to savings in the longer-term, as more people get services that they really need.

Social Care Institute of Excellence: Co-production in social care: what it is and how to do it – At a glance
SCIE At a glance 64: Published: October 2015.
<https://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide51/at-a-glance/>

How can we define co-production?

Co-production varies across contexts; the key features are threaded across the following definitions.



“Co-production” is when an individual influences the support and services received, or when groups of people get together to influence the way that services are designed, commissioned and delivered.’

The Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance

‘Co-production is a relationship where professionals and citizens share power to plan and deliver support together, recognising that both have vital contributions to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities.’

The National Co-production Critical Friends Group

‘Co-production is not just a word, it’s not just a concept, it is a meeting of minds coming together to find a shared solution. In practice, it involves people who use services being consulted, included and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them’

Think Local Act Personal (2011) Making it real: Marking progress towards personalised, community based support, London: TLAP

‘A way of working whereby citizens and decision makers, or people who use services, family carers and service providers work together to create a decision or service which works for them all. The approach is value driven and built on the principle that those who use a service are best placed to help design it.’

National Occupational Standards (SFHMH63: Work with people and significant others to develop services to improve mental health





“There needs to be more opportunities to put people with SEND at the front of change. Whether in training, focus groups, surveys or more, the only way to get people to understand is to see, hear and learn from people with disabilities.”

Ealing young person attending an autism board focus group



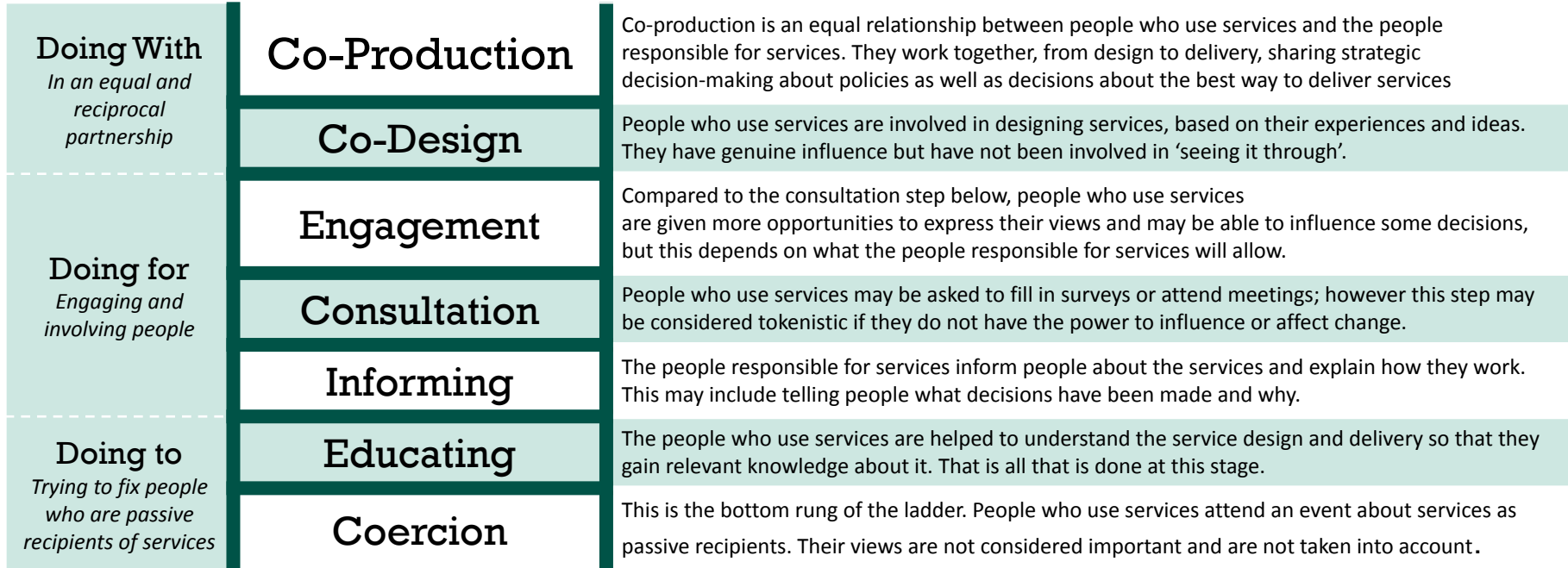
“Being listened to and participating in your child’s support system at school or the development of a support package strengthens a parent and provides a positive mind set in terms of working together.”

Ealing parent

Key Messages

- Co-production is about developing more equal partnerships between people who use services, carers and professionals.
- It is important to have an agreed definition between everyone taking part in any co-production activity.
- There are key principles for co-production around equality, diversity, access and reciprocity.
- Co-production can help make the best use of resources, deliver better outcomes for people who use services and carers, build stronger communities and develop citizenship.
- To do co-production, organisations need to make changes to their structure, practice and culture, paying careful attention to ensuring good communication is established.
- Regularly review your progress.

Ladder of Participation towards the goal of Co-Production



The ladder of co-production describes a series of steps towards full co-production in health and social care. It supports greater understanding of the various pre-steps such as 'access', 'inclusion' and 'consultation'.

National Co-Production Advisory Group (NCAG)

Reflection: Where is your organisation/project on the Ladder ?

		Where are you currently on the Ladder?	Whose responsibility is to work in co-production with service users / parents and carers?	What actions are you going to take towards co-production?
Doing With <i>In an equal and reciprocal partnership</i>	Co-Production		<i>Commitment to co-production needs to come from all levels of the organisation, senior management and front line professionals alike.</i>	
	Co-Design			
Doing for <i>Engaging and involving people</i>	Engagement			
	Consultation			
	Informing			
Doing to <i>Trying to fix people who are passive recipients of services</i>	Educating			
	Coercion			



BMF Co-Production with Parents/Carers and Young people

BMF Co-production with Parents and Young people

Co-production has been integrated across all stages of BMF, from bid writing, through the development of the programme and at all levels of governance, decision making & scrutiny of progress.

Parents and young people played a critical role in shaping BMF, designing the programme with professionals, assisting in recruitment of staff and through ongoing influence and advice on the BMF model and implementation.

*“There is effective co-production [...] across education, health and care. One example is the recently implemented ‘Building My Future’ project... This project includes opportunities for children and young people to learn about a range of topics including healthy food, relationships and keeping safe. It includes accredited courses such as the Duke of Edinburgh’s Bronze Award. **All stakeholders speak highly of the project.**”*

Joint Local Area SEND Inspection in Ealing, Jan 2019

Governance and Decision Making

- Engagement with parents/carers and young people began when the bid to DfE was being discussed and constructed. This provided an opportunity to surface difficult questions and frustrations with previous experiences and aspirations for meaningful co-production. Consequently, a joint vision of co-production was embedded in the bid and BMF model of practice.
- Parents/carers representation and input, particularly from the Ealing Parent Carer Forum, was present at all levels of BMF governance, monthly project management meetings and quarterly steering group meetings. Parents and carers were also involved within specific projects, such as; the Ofsted inspection interview; senior social worker review, external evaluation, video design and sign off; BMF learning events; Young People achievement events.

Co-production with young people

Young people articulated their views and opinions primarily through the BMF Life skills group. They played a key role in planning events and activities and through their campaigning work on topics such as knife crime and awareness raising “hidden disability” project about autism

They also made significant contributions and articulated their views to wider audiences, such as through interviews during Ofsted inspections, and addressing audiences at the annual Children’s Services event, and the European Congress on Clinical Psychology and Psychological Treatment in Dresden, Germany in November 2019.



Our partnership

Ealing Parent Carer Forum (EPCF)

EPCF provides the strategic voice for parents of children and young people with SEND in Ealing

EPCF's involvement with BMF

EPCF ensures that there is parent representation on relevant boards and meetings with services in Ealing. They offer a source of support for parents, organising information sessions, training and social events

EPCF have played an integral part in the development and delivery of BMF, offering support and challenge to ensure it is a service that best meets the needs of young people and their families and their voices are heard.

Parents drew on their own personal experience, recognising the opportunity to shape and develop a new and unique support service from inception to delivery.



Ealing Parent Carer Forum (EPCF)

EPCF provides the strategic voice for parents of children and young people with SEND in Ealing



How did EPCF help shape the initial bid?

- Started with larger parent group to gather ideas and views from diverse group of parents
- Involved from the beginning in formulating an ideal service, with the kind of help and support families actually need
- Suggested which specialists / professionals would be needed
- Outlined current support service gaps and drawbacks and suggested how these could be avoided
- Made sure that parents did not have to re-tell their story
- Ensured trust in parents as experts regarding their own children

How did EPCF contribute to the project?

- Parents/Carers and young people were actively involved in the recruitment process for the BMF team members
- They shared their own 'parent journeys' with the BMF team to ensure the parent's perspective is kept at the heart of team vision
- There is parent representation at every level of project governance and decision making; e.g. Steering Group meetings; Project Board meetings; team recruitment interviews
- Supporting promotion of the project, including planning meetings, activities at the events
- Representation during Inspections and fact-finding visits from DfE and other agencies
- Directly supporting the team e.g. BMF team training day 'Parents' perspective'

Parent/carer testimonials

“

“ Working with BMF has been a unique experience. It has been my first, and best, experience of co-production as a parent.

Some other services are now trying to include parents and carers in some decision making, and that is very encouraging, but they could all still learn some valuable lessons from BMF.

They have been successful and the model is now available for other services to adapt”.

”



Factors assisting co-production of goals with families

Barriers

- Negative past experiences with services may have eroded families' trust and lowered their expectation of the possibility of valuable engagement
- Linguistic and cultural backgrounds need to be respected and considered; e.g. provide interpreters for parent/carers to ensure full participation in referral meetings with the team
- Access to digital communications is variable and online engagement needs to be tailored to families preferences

Enablers

- Ensuring the team is **accessible, approachable, available** and **responsive**. These are key factors in relationship-building and developing trust with parents and young people
- Ensure the team is **trusted** by families as partners, including advocating for them and their child e.g. at school meetings, acknowledging this may require a 'leap of faith' on their part; a trusted partnership leads to better adoption of recommendations for the child, and ultimately to more positive impacts and improved outcomes
- Involve young people and parents in **seeking outcomes and setting goals together** with team members.
- The team use their expertise to **"craft" the goals** generated through joint discussion, often shaping a positive "narrative" for parents/schools/colleges about the young person

Factors assisting co-production of goals with Young People

- Recognising their strengths using a strength-based approach and supporting them towards their goals
- When appropriate, not being afraid to nudge them outside their comfort zone on the road to achieving their goals
- Making sure the Young person's voice is not "drowned out" by other voices in discussions and decision making; team ensures young person's voice is amplified and listened to
- Changing the referral process and developing materials that explains who the members of the team are and what they do

Checklist for ensuring young people are active participants in the process

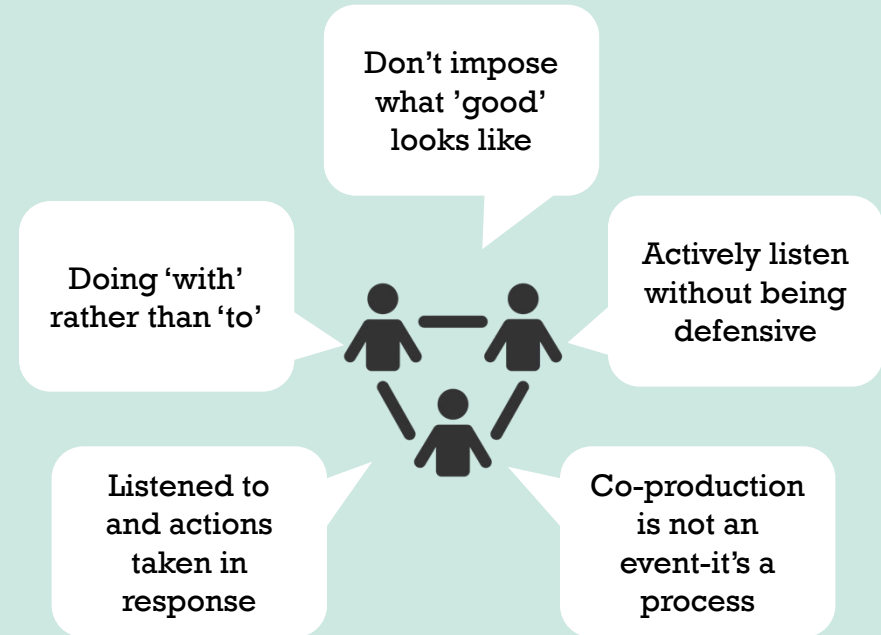
- Does everyone feels valued and experience having an equal voice and input?
- Do team members feel passionate about always including the voice of the young person?
- Are we allowing for different forms of engagement and communication - one size does not fit all?
- When working with young people, are we giving them the opportunity to lead?
- Are we asking them, "What do you want to do?" as active participants in the process of goal setting, as well as how to get there?

Co-production within a network of agencies

BMF uses a network approach, mediating, working alongside and facilitating communication within a network that includes the child, parent, school, sencos, and other professionals - using the skills and resources of the network.

- BMF supports schools / sencos when faced with more complex cases, providing hands on advice, support and ideas to enable them to see how they can support the young person and feel less isolated.
- We bring freshness, curiosity and enquiry, which helps when changing the narrative of the young people and those around them.
- We convene the network in thinking together how to “un-stick” the case.
- The team is persistent and patient. We recognise other schools/colleges and other organisations’ pressures and are ready and available to work with the them when the time is right.

BMF co-production principles



BMF Co-production

A catalyst for change in Ealing

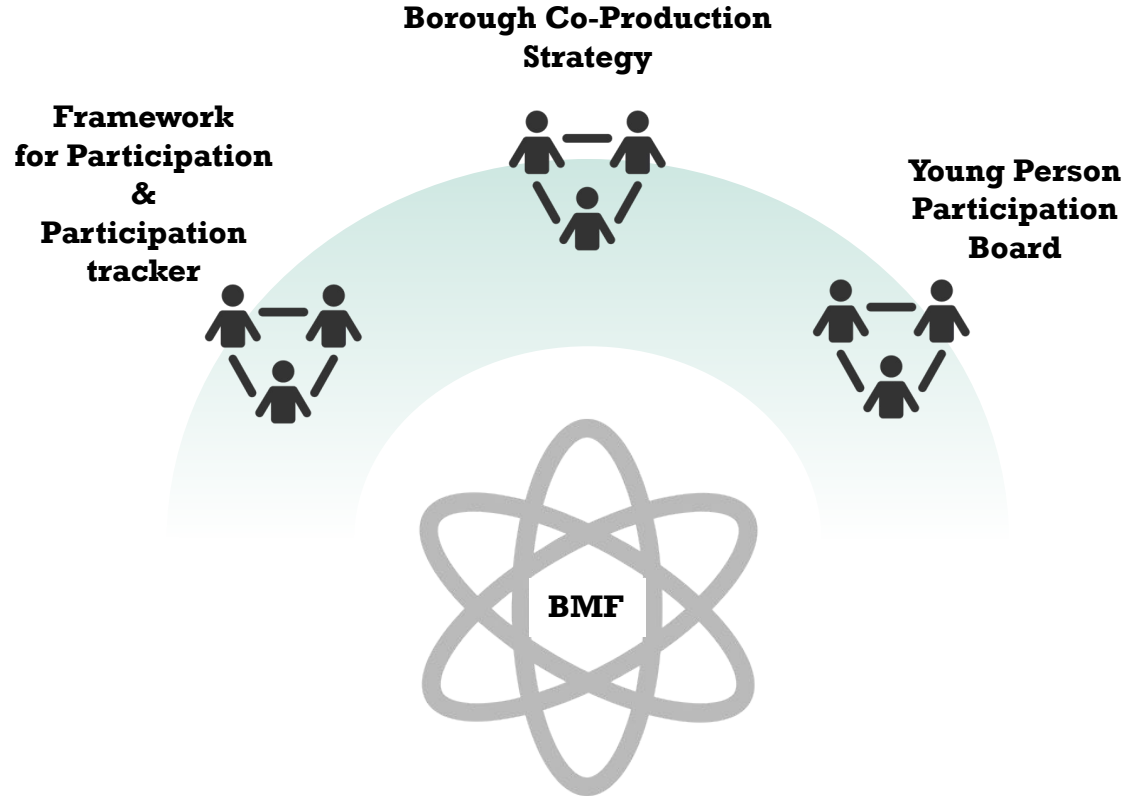


BMF - a catalyst for change

BMF is one of the positive examples of co-production in Ealing.

From concept, through design, delivery and evaluation, co-production was at the heart of BMF.

The effectiveness of BMF co-production was recognised as a strength at Joint Local Area SEND Inspection in Ealing in January 2019 and has acted as a catalyst for change, resulting in a wide range of activity, actions and key strategic commitments now being embedded across the system.



Acknowledgements

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We would also like to thank past members of the team, Senior Managers, BMF Steering and Management Group members, Service Partners, Schools/Colleges, Ealing Parent Carer Forum, Parents/Carers and the young people for their support, advice and encouragement in developing the BMF Model.



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