

Summary Sheet

Council Report

Improving Lives – 1st February 2017

Title

Early Help and Family Engagement

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Thomas

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

All

Summary

This report explains the journey of Rotherham's Early Help and Family Engagement Service since culminating with its launch on the 18th January 2016.

It also includes information about Service Priorities, current performance and progress against the budget savings proposals for 2016/2017.

Recommendations

That the Improving Lives Committee;

- Note the report and appendices and consider its content

List of Appendices Included

Early Help Performance Report – December 2017

Storyboard Early Help Overarching – January 2017

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Early Help Review Board

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Title

Rotherham's Early Help and Family Engagement service: Progress report

1. Recommendations

1.1 That the Improving Lives Committee:

- Note the report and appendices and consider its content.

2. Background

2.1 Working Together 2015 defines early help as;

.. providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Effective early help relies upon local agencies working together to;

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help;
- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.

Through our Early Help Strategy 2016-2019 we aim to reduce the demands upon high cost specialist and higher tier services.

2.2 Early Help Offer

On the 18th January 2016, the new Early Help (EH) offer was officially launched in Rotherham. This included the EH Pathway, the new Request for Support form, the new EH Assessment (EHA) and the refreshed Early Help Offer website.

Prior to the launch of the new early help offer in January 2016 there were in excess of 30 different referral routes into Early Help, with information recorded across numerous different databases and systems.

2.3 Step Down / Step Up Panel

On February 9th February 2016 we began our weekly Step-Down & Step Up Panel. The panel is co-chaired from senior managers in Early Help, Safeguarding and Health. It was introduced to ensure there is a consistent and robust process in place to manage, monitor and clearly record outcomes for all cases stepping down from Duty and Assessment teams and/or those coming off a CIN plan.

In total since the panel began we have stepped down 335 families* and 802 children. 41 families and 76 children were recommended to partners. *Accurate at January 2017

2.4 Performance Management

In September 2016 a monthly Performance Scorecard was introduced. This includes key performance indicators that span across all components of Early Help and helps to measure impact and outcomes on the success of the service. Performance is monitored closely and action is taken where necessary to ensure that targets are met. On a quarterly basis

additional measures are included in the performance report which helps measure the impact of Early Help.

Performance is a regular item on the weekly Early Help SLT agenda as well as being reported and scrutinised by the Cabinet Member for CYPS and Commissioners (along with other Senior Leaders) at the Children and Young Peoples Service Performance Board, Improvement Board, Children and Young People's Partnership, the member led Early Help Review Board and the Early Help Steering Group.

2.5 Early Help Quality Assurance Framework

Alongside the new Early Help offer and performance reporting regime, a Quality Assurance (QA) framework was implemented. In Early Help, quality assurance is not an additional activity, but an integral part of everyday practice within the Service. Quality assurance work contributes to improving outcomes for the children, young people and families we work with by identifying gaps and problems so they can be recognised and addressed. It also helps us identify what interventions work for children and families and highlights our good practice.

The role of all team managers/lead workers and practitioners is to make sure that the service provided to children, young people and their families is consistently high quality and results in good outcomes and builds resilience in children and their families to thrive.

Each member of staff in early help has a duty to contribute to their own continued professional development by a variety of means; regular supervision, team meetings and the regular evaluation of the quality and impact of their practice. In 2016/17 early help completed 100% PDRs.

A critical aspect of the QA framework includes the completion of monthly team manager audits and senior manager re-audits. The aim of a case file audit is to examine records in paper files and case files stored electronically to assure the quality of practice and to ensure compliance with HM Working Together 2015 (WT15) and the Early Help and Family Engagement service standards. Audits will also identify whether there are positive outcomes and experiences for children and young people in receipt of an Early Help and Family Engagement Service.

At December 2016; 162 team manager audits have been undertaken. Of these 36% (59) were graded 'Good', 53% (85) were graded 'Requires Improvement' and 9% (15) were graded 'Inadequate'. In addition 1% (1) was graded 'Outstanding' and a further 1% (2) were incomplete. Any actions deemed necessary to improve outcomes for families are monitored and tracked to completion and the learning is used to improve practice through workforce development opportunities, supervision and team meetings.

2.6 Impact of Early Help

One of the ways that the impact of early help can be evidenced is by asking families to complete exit surveys when the intervention has finished and the agreed outcomes achieved. Exit surveys are critical to our improvement journey because they capture the direct feedback from our Service users; since its launch in May 2016 to the end of December 2016:-

171 surveys have been completed to date with the Quarter Three data showing that 94% of respondents said that the Early Help Service had had a positive impact on their life and their Children with 97% rated their overall experience of help and support they received as good or excellent. For a service that is barely twelve months old this is a real achievement and great credit must go to the front line staff and managers who are driving through the changes at pace.

Direct quotes from families include;

"I am not isolated now, I feel free and I am able to manage myself."

"Felt my voice was heard and was not afraid to say how I felt and what my issues were. "

"The service provided was above and beyond what was expected."

"I didn't ask for support and didn't think I needed it. I spoke with someone at the hospital when I took J and they thought I needed some support with his behaviour. The referral was made by the neighbours who had reported me for J crying in the middle of the night. When the worker came she helped us with a lot of things we wouldn't have thought about."

"I was in crisis and was self-harming and I had lots of support from early help during this period"

Case studies are another way that we gain insight into how early help has impacted on families and the service are starting to build a bank of these to be able to learn from and improve. In addition, a regular 'deep-dive' case study is undertaken which involves discussions with family members (where appropriate and possible), 'journey mapping', (this includes looking at each point in a customer experience in order to identify good practice and areas for improvement) and multi-agency learning meetings. Actions are agreed in collaboration with partners and these are then monitored and shared to raise the standards and quality of what we do.

2.7 Early Help Governance Arrangements

Governance arrangements in Early Help are robust with the Senior Leadership Team meeting every week and the Assistant Director being a member of the CYPS Directorate Leadership Team (DLT) as well as the Improvement Board, Performance Board, Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, Early Help Review Board, Early Help Steering Group, Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP), Chair of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) Board and quarterly meetings with the Chief Executive.

The Early Help Steering Group inaugural meeting took place in August 2016. The Group is multi-agency and is chaired and attended by elected Members as well as a number of Partner agencies.

2.8 Evaluation and Review

As part of the evaluation of the success of Early Help the Local Safeguarding Childrens Board (LSCB) conducted a survey during March/April asking front line practitioners across partner and voluntary organisations including schools to provide views on their experiences whilst working with Early Help practioner's and also contacting the service via the new pathways. Further surveys will be conducted in the future and results analysed and compared to evidence improvements and/or areas for development.

In April 2016 Ofsted reviewed Rotherham's early help offer as part of their Improvement visits. See Appendices for summary.

Lincolnshire County Council is Children's Services Practice Improvement Partner. A comprehensive schedule of peer reviews and staff exchanges are underway, with a particular focus in early help on the three year savings targets and the development of edge of care services

In January 2017 The Youth Justice Board (YJB) undertook a review of the council's leadership and governance arrangements in relation to the Youth Offending Team (YOT) Board, Chaired by the Assistant Director for Early Help. A formal report is expected late February.

Since November 2015 the Early Help Review Board has been in place, Chaired by Cllr Albiston. The purpose of the group is to; *'to understand the impact of the Early Help savings proposals and to oversee the development of Rotherham's Early Help Offer and Strategy in light of these proposals.'*

We convened the new Youth Offending Team (YOT) Board on the 10th May 2016 and working with the YJB to facilitate a peer review in January 2017.

In June 2016 we launched the multi-agency Early Help Steering Group, which is the mechanism for ensuring partners contribute fully to Rotherham's Early Help offer through completion of Early Help Assessments, undertaking the lead professional role and engaging in Team around the Family Meetings. The Steering Group reports to the Children and Families Strategic Partnership and meets bi-monthly.

3. Key Issues

3.1 The key issues in relation to the development of Rotherham's early help offer are;

- Achieving the 17/18 and 18/19 savings targets without encumbering the progress, impact and quality of the offer.
- Retaining high quality staff during the phase two whole service restructure.
- Increasing partner engagement in Rotherham's early help offer, (completion of early help assessments and co-location in locality bases).
- Ensuring high quality services and value for money from the 0-19 Public health child contract

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 That the Improving Lives Committee:

- Note the report and appendices and consider its content.

5. Consultation

5.1 Throughout October and November 2016 we undertook a significant engagement piece with our staff, young people and partners on the Draft Early Help Strategy. The draft strategy was shared with; the Voluntary and Community Sector, the CYP Strategic Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, Local Safeguarding Board, Early Help Steering Group, Early Help Review Board, All Council Staff, DCLG (Troubled Families Unit), Sheffield City Council, DfE, our Practice Improvement Partner (Lincolnshire County Council) and all Rotherham Ward and Parish Councillors.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 Early Help have adhered to the directorate wide moratorium on non-essential spend. This, alongside tight vacancy control by the service has eradicated an inherited budget pressure of £250k.

7.2 In 2016/17 Early Help has achieved its budget savings target of £501k. In addition, robust vacancy management is forecast, as at January 2017, to deliver one-off in-year savings of £500k which will contribute to other directorate budget pressures outside of Early Help.

7.3 Future years' saving targets include: £421k in 2017/18 and a proposed £500k in 2018/19 (with £100k to be brought forward into 2017/18 through early adoption if possible). In December 2016 the Early Help SLT completed a HR and Finance validation exercise of the overall budget which will form the baseline for a whole service review to deliver savings committed to in 2018/19.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 There are no Human Resource implications associated with this report.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 The success of our Early Help offer will be measured in part by a reduction in the numbers of Children In Need as families are offered support at an earlier point before concerns escalate.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 There are no Equalities and Human Rights implications associated with this report.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 See 3.1.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Risks and associated mitigations in relation to early help are captured in the Early help risk register which is updated monthly.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

David McWilliams – Assistant Director for Early Help and Family Engagement.

Approvals Obtained from:-

Finance: Mark Chambers.

Director of Legal Services: - N/A

Head of Procurement: N/A

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-

<http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

Appendices:

Ofsted Improvement Visit: Early Help 19th – 20th April 2016

On the 19th and 20th April Early Help was subject to an Ofsted Improvement visit. Two inspectors were on site and met with a range of staff, partners and service users. Very little of what Ofsted fed back was news to the Early Help Senior Leadership Team (SLT) which is positive and reinforces the previous Ofsted findings during monitoring visits that **'leadership and governance arrangements are now strong.'**

The overall judgement was that **"The Council know themselves well and that the pace of improvement in relation to development of the Early Help programme over the past six months has been positive and rapid."**

The following highlights are taken directly from the lead Inspectors written note to the Strategic Director of Children's Services and will be followed up with a formal letter.

- **Significant work has been undertaken to improve operational buy in from partners and this has improved significantly with schools and learning communities.**
- **The vision and priorities of the council are clearly set out in the new early help and Family Engagement service plan.** These are appropriately aligned with wider strategic planning to increase preventative and early help services through a variety of established, recent and planned services.

- **Refreshed governance arrangements are in evidence.** There is a clear commitment from senior managers and elected members to improve the quality of services and to improve outcomes for children and young people through a robust focus on early intervention and prevention. The Commissioner made early help a top service priority. A member led Early Help Review Board and early help sub group of the children and young people's strategic partnership is in place to oversee the development.
- **The council and its partners share an ambition** regarding the increased offer of early help to prevent the escalation of family difficulties through integrated and locality working.
- **There is strategic buy in from all major stakeholders.** This has the potential to provide valuable services and resources which are aligned to the views and needs of local communities.
- **Partnerships with the Police and YOS are particularly strong and well aligned with the troubled families' programme.**
- Work is underway to ensure police officers are fully briefed on the value of use of early help pathways. There is however still some way to go to secure full engagement and operational challenges remain to engage health visiting, school nurses and CAMHS. More work needs to be done to increase and improve education and health partners confidence not only in the early help offer but in their capacity to deliver early help assessments and support.
- **Threshold descriptors are clear and align with early help pathways to services** which outline a virtual pathway to and signpost professionals, practitioners and families to early help services. We have seen evidence while on site of the application of these descriptors to inform decision making. (Early help triage, step up and schools).
- **Re-referral rates to Children's Social Care are very slowly decreasing.**
- **All professionals in and out of RMBC are positive about the Early Help Triage process and find it helpful.**
- **There is evidence of robust management oversight of the team and decisions, appropriate and educative advice and challenge back to referrers, including the MASH and locality teams.**
- **New and robust quality assurance and performance monitoring arrangements in place for early help** and will go live from 1st April 2016. Routine DFE performance reporting systems are in place, enhanced with bespoke success measures which intend to capture for example; contact timeliness.
- **All staff spoken to, while feeling the pain of change, are incredibly committed, enthusiastic and excited about the changes. All have seen the integration of teams and the Ofsted process as a learning experience and opportunity to improve the lives of children in Rotherham, which was heart-warming.**

- **The Step-Down Panel provides quality assurance re the appropriateness of the recommendations to step down.** Currently there is an analysis of themes and areas for improvement for example, category of need, hot spot localities and gaps in service provision.
- **The Families for change programme is well embedded in the early help programme** with the Families for Change coordinator sitting on the Early Help Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- **There is evidence of real synergy between the programme, police and Youth Offending Team. Rotherham has exceeded its target by 2% in identifying its cohort of 371 for the next phase.**
- **There is evidence staff have been and continue to be consulted on the transformation programme and while anxious about their jobs and what it means for them, remain on the whole positive.**