

1.	Meeting:	Improving Lives Select Commission
2.	Date:	29 th October 2019
3.	Title:	Rotherham's Early Help Offer
4.	Agency/Directorate/presenting report:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Purpose:
<p>That an update be provided to reflect how the service is capturing the child/young person's voice in the work of the Early Help service.</p> <p>That the Cabinet be requested to revisit the exit survey and number of assessments completed by partners as performance measures.</p>

6. Recommendations:
That the contents of the report are noted.

7. Background:
<p>The statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) sets out the requirements for Early Help Services, stating that;</p> <p>The provision of early help services should form part of a continuum of support to respond to the different levels of need of individual children and families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local areas should have a comprehensive range of effective, evidence-based services in place to address assessed needs early. The early help on offer should draw upon any local assessment of need, including the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) and the latest evidence of the effectiveness of early help programmes. • In addition to high quality support in universal services, specific local early help services will typically include family and parenting programmes, assistance with health issues, including mental health, responses to emerging thematic concerns in extra-familial contexts, and help for emerging problems relating to domestic abuse, drug or alcohol misuse by an adult or a child. • Services may also focus on improving family functioning and building the family's own capability to solve problems. This should be done within a structured, evidence-based framework involving regular review to ensure that real progress is being made. Some of these services may be delivered to parents but should always be evaluated to demonstrate the impact they are having on the outcomes for the child.

The statutory guidance makes it clear that; all local agencies should work together to support children and families.

The Rotherham Early Help Offer was launched in January 2016 accompanied by the Early Help Strategy 2016-2019.

The vision for Early Help in Rotherham was co-produced alongside staff and partners. The vision describes;

“All agencies working together to ensure children, young people and families have their needs identified early so that they can receive swift access to targeted help and support.”

7.1 The development of Rotherham’s Early Help Offer has been intrinsically linked to the Children’s Services improvement journey.

In January 2018 the Ofsted re-inspection of Services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers report noted; *“Services to children in need of help and protection are now good.”* Ofsted also noted that;

- The Early Help offer has undergone considerable transformation since January 2016.
- There is now a shared strategic ownership and ambition with partners
- Inspectors saw some very effective work with children and families
- Families in localities benefit from a broad range of Early Help services which continue to be more integrated with social care. This facilitates an improved and seamless delivery of services to children and their families
- The local authority, with its partners, meets regularly through the Early Help Steering Group. Adopting the Troubled Families Maturity Matrix model, the Steering Group has an Action Plan that is updated quarterly
- Early Help locality teams are co-located with social care and partners across the borough. This is improving communication and the delivery of responsive interventions and services in local communities
- Feedback from families, schools and partners of the local authority is routinely gathered and shared on a monthly basis. The evidence from Early Help Exit Surveys consistently demonstrates that Early Help is making a difference, and that family’s feel supported at this lower level.
- Partner agencies are now undertaking Early Help Assessments supported demonstrating their growing confidence in the arrangements.
- Arrangements for stepping cases up to social care or down to Early Help are robust and well embedded in locality practice.

7.2 Rotherham’s Early Help Strategy 2016-2019 was designed and implemented in three phases. Phases Two and three were latterly combined to ensure that the strategy

and associated budget savings were successfully realised on time.

7.3 Phase One introduced;

New governance through;

- Children and Young People's Partnership and Transformation Board
- The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- The Member-led Early Help Review Board
- The partner-led Early Help Steering Group
- The Early Help Practice Improvement Group

New systems and processes were introduced to ensure swift access to support through the Request for Support, the Early Help Assessment (EHA) and the first phase of integration of previously separate professional disciplines and services into integrated Early Help Locality Teams.

7.4 Phase Two

Phase two incorporated a whole service delivery redesign, developing new job roles and more efficient and effective ways of working to embed a shared responsibility across the partnership for meeting the needs of families earlier. Building on the progress of Phase one the Early Help Offer was refined through further integration and service redesign with partners and stakeholders.

7.5 Phase Three

Was focussed on the final consultation process which commenced on April 9th and was conducted in line with the vision and objectives set out in the Early Help Strategy 2016-2019.

The initial 60 day public consultation was delivered through 17 public and partner events across the borough, including bespoke sessions in the individual centres and buildings in scope and presentations at Strategic Boards throughout the consultation period. All Rotherham schools were informed by email of the events and were offered the opportunity to attend an event or engage in the online consultation.

An Online Survey was made available on the Rotherham Council Website for public and partners, and a separate 'youth' consultation was conducted and led by the Rotherham Youth Cabinet.

A dedicated Twitter account #earlyhelpconsultation2018 and an email account earlyhelpconsultation@rotherham.gov.uk were established for Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for partners and the public.

A 30-day staff consultation commenced on the 8th June and concluded on the 8th July. All Trade Unions were regularly updated through meetings with the Senior Director for Early Help and were invited to attend all staff consultation meetings.

Three informal 'talk back' sessions were held with Early Help staff during the public consultation. Eight formal staff consultation meetings were subsequently held to discuss the implementation proposals in more detail.

In total 277 individuals or agencies participated in the Public and Partner consultation.

7.6 What's working Well? (Achievements)

All phases of the Early Help Strategy were completed on time. All associated savings throughout the three years were also delivered on time. The final structure after the consultation had ended was also completed on time.

A key consideration throughout Phase Three was that an expected dip in performance would occur. In fact, the opposite happened.

100% Staff PDRs were completed.

Satisfaction rates were consistently high. 97.2% overall stating 'Good or Excellent,' this is a 1.2% increase on the previous year.

Total engagement rates were high at 95.2%, which was up 3% on the previous year.

72.6% of families were contacted and engaged within three working days. A significant improvement on the previous year when the annual figure was 59.7%.

Timeliness of Early Help Assessments completed (EHA's) showed a considerable improvement with 62.9% of assessments being completed within the target timeframe (45 days), compared to 47.0% in the previous year.

Partners completed 24.9% of the total number of Early Help Assessments compared to 15.9% in the previous year (and zero when the Early Help Strategy was launched).

The Troubled Families' target of working with 2,674 families was achieved and exceeded with the total number reaching 2679. This brought the total engagement of families to 5,000 (100% of target).

Payment by Results (PBR) experienced a significant improvement in the rate of claims, with actual claims exceeding the recovery plan target of 45% by 1%. Current performance is 68% (July 2019) and places Rotherham as the third best performance in the Yorkshire & Humber region.

Children Centre registration and engagement within Rotherham's most deprived areas was also above target with 95% of children living in the 30% most deprived super output areas (SOA) registered with a Children's Centre and 67% of the children were 'actively engaged' (2% above the target).

The year-to-date attendance rate was good and in-line with national averages. Primary attendance increased to 95.7% compared 95.4% in the previous year and Secondary attendance increased to 94.7% compared to 94.3% in the previous year.

The three national YOT Youth Justice Board Performance indicators showed Rotherham YOT outperforming regional and national trends in relation to; Rates of custody
First time entrants, (FTE experienced a 12.3% reduction on the previous year).

The national indicator for young people not in education, employment and training was validated at 5.8%, achieving the Corporate Plan target of 5.8%.

559 families with 1309 children were stepped down to an Early Help locality team which was an increase on the previous year when 489 families with 873 children were stepped down.

We communicate with all staff on a weekly basis through an email newsletter, Monday Matters. Whilst containing relevant news updates there is a strong emphasis on recognising 'Early Help Stars' or those staff and teams that are recognised for their amazing work, dedication and innovation.

7.7 Examples of how we capture the voice of Children and Young People

Make Your Mark 2018 Consultation. 9000 young people consulted to establish key issues for young people in Rotherham.

Greasbrough consultation: A locality-based consultation to engage young people in decisions around facilities in the area and applying for funding to purchase community-based resources.

UK Youth Parliament Elections: Borough wide elections to select new national representatives for the UK Youth Parliament in Rotherham.

Youth Offending Team: Establishing the youth voice within the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and the YOT Board.

Youth Cabinet: Participation in a range of youth voice activities including interviews for key staff, attendance at strategic meetings e.g. CYPS, Community Reference Group, direct work with Elected Members and Council Scrutiny, annual Takeover Day, development of campaigns and events in response to consultation such as the Community Awareness event in October, Knife Crime and Mental Health.

Monthly auditing process; where managers are commenting on the direct work workers are doing with families.

Exit surveys; recently shortened and anonymised.

Case Closures; where we ask the question "Do you think that you and your family's voices were heard throughout the process?"

Practice Learning Days; through or Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOES) investigate work on individual cases and workers showcasing good practice of the child and young person's voice.

7.8 Number of assessments completed by partners as performance measures

Partner completion of Early Help Assessments (EHAs) is reported in the monthly Early Help Performance Report and scrutinised at the fortnightly Early Help Performance meeting, the CYPS Performance Board and the Early Help Steering Group with partners. The number of EHAs completed by partners dropped slightly in

September 2019. This reduction was expected and is indicative of schools being closed and children being on holidays during the summer period, resulting in less EHA Recommendations to partners are made. Schools have the highest completion rate of EHAs from partners and we anticipate that numbers will increase over the next quarter. The current year to date rate stands at 21.2%.

To support the completion of EHAs by partners we;

- Offer regular training in completing quality EHAs
- Revised the EHA to align with Signs of Safety model and the Rotherham Family Approach
- Produced Lead Professional Guidance to support understanding of the EHA
- Supported tender specifications to ensure that when contracts include work with children and families, that the EHA is the requested tool
- Offered bespoke training to particular services (e.g. health, schools) where uptake of the EHA was previously low
- Designed pathways that embed use of the Early Help Assessment (e.g. the School Attendance Matters Pathway)
- Incorporated the EHA into Troubled Families work
- Use data to support and challenge partners in order to increase uptake
- The Early Help Steering Group has a regular focus on the use of the EHA by partners
- Introduced a team of Integrated Working Leads who support partners in completing Early Help Assessments

This role has proved successful in increasing the adoption of the multi-agency assessment tool and these practitioners work in a variety of ways to ensure that partner uptake of the EHA continues to rise. This includes;

- Hosting regular Multi-Agency Practice Development Group. This forum supports partners to work together to carry out multi agency audit of EHAs; this enhances collaborative approaches and increases the quality of partner EHA's
- Undertaking checks of EHAs as they are submitted by partners to ensure Local Authority oversight of quality, including follow up contact with partners when EHA's require improvement and, to offer praise when EHA's are of high quality
- Meeting with partners individually to support when partners are struggling in completing the EHA or need information and advice
- Supporting Lead Professionals with 'stuck' cases and support with Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings where appropriate

7.9 Exit Surveys:

Satisfaction rates are captured through Early Help Exit Surveys and are reported in the monthly Early Help Performance report. Satisfaction rates remain consistently high with 97.2% of families, Children and young people rating the Early Help intervention as 'Good or Excellent.' This is a 1.2% increase on the previous year.

8. What are we worried about? (Key Issues and Risks)

8.1 Increased demand and Complexity of work:

Since the launch of the Early Help Offer in January 2016, we have seen an incremental increase in demand and a level of complexity of issues facing families that in some instances also carries higher levels of risk.

There are currently over 1,700 families being worked with and over 3,800 children and young people.

We have also experienced a 12% increase in the number of families stepped down from children's Social care.

Whilst we have seen the number of First Time Entrants (FTE) into the criminal justice system decline, this has resulted in a more persistent and challenging cohort with more complex needs. In addition, we are working across the Region with colleagues to address the growing criminalisation of young people through County lines exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, CCE.

8.2 Poverty and Deprivation:

The Indices of Deprivation 2019 were released by the Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government (MHCLG) on 26th September 2019.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shows an increase in deprivation in Rotherham since the 2015 Index, reaching its highest ever ranking as the 44th most deprived district in the country.

The full national data is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

8.3 Education:

The proportion of Rotherham schools judged as good or outstanding was 79.3% as at August 2019, this compares to the national average of 86% as at July 2019. The gap to the national average is 6.7%.

The proportion of pupils attending a good or outstanding Rotherham school was 77.2% as at August 2019; this compares to the national average of 84% as at March 2019. The gap to the national average is 6.8%.

Performance in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) for a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) has decreased by 2.8% to 70.3%.

In Key Stage 1, 62.2% of pupils met the expected standard (EXS+) in reading, writing and mathematics compared to 64.8% in 2018. Rotherham has decreased by 2.6% and is now 2.8% below the national average at 65.0%.

In the greater depth standard (GDS) for reading, writing and mathematics combined at KS1, Rotherham has decreased by 2.7% to 10.0%; which is 1% below the national average at 11.0%.

In Key Stage 2, 59.2% of pupils met the EXS+ in reading, writing and mathematics combined compared to 62.0% in 2018. Rotherham has decreased by 2.8% and is now 5.8% below the national average.

At KS2, in the higher standard (HS) for reading, writing and mathematics combined, Rotherham decreased by 0.8% to 7.5%. This is now 3.0 % below the national average at 10.5%.

The KS1- KS2 average progress score for Rotherham in reading was significantly below the national average. The KS1 prior attainment average points score was 0.3 below the national average.

8.4 Budget:

The Early Help Budget has been significantly reduced during the implementation of the Early Help Strategy, almost £5m since November 2014. This has increased the reliance of external funding streams which account for approximately 40% of the Early Help budget. (See 9. Below)

The September 2019 Spending Round confirmed a one-year continuation for the Troubled Families Programme, and whilst this is to be welcomed, no further details are available. Even with this announcement, the current funding arrangements for Early Help remain vulnerable to cuts as a result on the minimal statutory functions within the service portfolio.

The reduction in budget has also led to a significant reduction in management capacity to protect front line staff. In the three years of the Early Help Strategy implementation, the leadership team has reduced from five Head of Service posts to two and from nine locality managers to eight.

8.5 Rotherham's Universal Offer:

This presents both a challenge as well as a wonderful opportunity. The potential to galvanise partners across the council, the voluntary and community sector, Parish Councils and the business community is significant.

A strong universal offer creates an addition level of prevention and early intervention. Whilst the coordination of a coherent offer is a challenge, there are clearly enormous benefits for families, Children and Young People and agencies across the borough.

The ISOS March 2019 report (Appendix B), which looked at the key enablers of developing an effective partnership-based early help offer noted that;

“There is a very strong logical and principled case for continuing to invest in early

help so that it does become 'everyone's business.' In most cases the development of an Early Help offer requires the commitment of a small number of individuals who are strong advocates for the approach."

9. Resources:

Total FTE: 197.72

Early Help Budget:

- **Net:** £4,817,647
- **Gross:** £9,000,640

Income Sources:

Troubled Families	£1,234,828
YOT	£42,7472
Public Health	£1,444001
HRA	£98,666
PCC	£153,000
CCG (Health)	£70,260
Probation Service (YOT)	£5,000

Fees and Charges*

Crowden Outdoor Education Centre, Children Centre contributions	£294,468
Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)	£37,000

*Excludes Day Care Fees and the ESIF funding.

10. Next Steps

The launch of Rotherham's Early Help Offer and the speed at which the wider partnership has embraced the preventative agenda is aligned with Rotherham's recent improvement journey.

In April 2019 the final Early Help structure, after three years of transformation, was finalised. Staff are still familiarising themselves with their new roles and new teams whilst continuing to improve performance month on month.

There is a planned induction and development programme in place to support staff in their new roles.

10.1 In April 2019, the Directorate Business Support was integrated into the wider Early Help portfolio and management team. This came with an additional challenge of achieving £850k of savings and reducing the workforce by 47FTE. Both of which have been achieved.

10.2 The strengthening and development of Rotherham's 'universal offer' is a key priority and will be a key focus if we are to meet the challenges of increasing demand, greater complexity of cases and continued improvements in quality and outcomes.

The history of the development of Early Help in England is rooted in local discretion. Early Help offers across the country have evolved in different ways. Most local authorities support statutory partners, including schools, health and the police, to act as 'lead professionals' for families requiring early help and most local authorities have an underpinning offer of 'universal' or group-based support offered either by the community or through community-based local authority run hubs such as children's centres, family centres and community centres.

- 10.3 Recent research undertaken by ISOS, March 2019 (Appendix B), involving eight Local Authorities, Barking and Dagenham, Greenwich, Kent, Lincolnshire, Oldham, Southend, West Sussex, Wigan, identified 'four domains' incorporating sixteen 'key enablers' to an effective Early Help Offer.

Setting the direction (Domain One)

1. Leading with passion
2. Securing a long-term commitment
3. Clearly articulating the vision
4. Agreeing a small number of targets

Developing Capacity (Domain Two)

5. A core service, managed by the local authority
6. Empowering and enabling partners
7. Harnessing the power of communities
8. Developing a coherent offer around place

Working with Families (Domain Three)

9. Establishing a safe and effective 'front door'
10. Whole family working
11. Developing a practice model based on evidence
12. Promoting resilience and being responsive

Evaluating impact and quality (Domain Four)

13. Developing and effective management information system
14. Auditing and quality assuring practice
15. Being clear about the desired impact
16. Proportionate and informative reporting

- 10.4 In most of the local areas included in the research, the political commitment to having in place an effective Early Help offer had not been limited by the time frame of electoral cycles. The long-term nature of the commitment to developing effective Early Help had also translated into continued funding. Although all the local authorities involved in the research were experiencing the same budgetary pressures, together with their partners, they had managed to sustain sufficient funding for their Early Help offer.

The research found that those local areas which had developed the most compelling visions were clear that early help was an 'offer' and not a 'service'; were grounded in the principle of providing the right support for families at the right time; and had

effectively communicated that early help is “everyone’s business.”

10.5 Some local areas could explain how a ‘golden thread’ linked the outcomes to which they were committed in early help with the broader local ambitions for community and place, although some areas had found it difficult to ensure that their priorities were influenced by community and staff in a genuinely ‘bottom-up’ driven model.

The second dimension of building an effective early help offer was developing the capacity within the local authority, with partners and in communities and families to provide effective early help. The four key enablers which support this dimension are;

- Creating the core team
- Empowering and enabling partners
- Harnessing the power of communities
- Developing a coherent offer around place

10.6 The role of partner agencies

The research found that partners play a critical role in ensuring an effective Early Help Offer. There were three key strands to empowering and enabling partners identified. Firstly, partners were strategically engaged in shaping the vision, setting the objectives and describing the offer.

Secondly, local areas were deliberate in supporting partners to be effective ‘lead professionals.’ Local areas had invested in training for partners to ensure that they were working to the same assessment, reporting and outcomes framework as other early help practitioners; created better management information systems that supported the safe sharing of information; put in place support mechanisms to ensure partners were confident in managing risk; and provided information on the range and scope of services available to families which they might draw upon. There was also evidence that partner agencies were beginning to internalise the principles of early help and use this as a way of reshaping or refocusing their own services particularly with an emphasis on supporting resilience in families.

10.7 The routes by which families come to the attention of early help

Like Rotherham prior to the launch of the Early Help Strategy, these can be multiple and varied. Most families in the eight local authorities were referred by professionals, but some local authorities were seeing increasing numbers of families seeking support themselves. To manage these different routes into early help, all the local authorities had focused on developing a safe and effective “front door.” This took different forms in different areas but essentially acted as a single point of initial assessment and triage to make sure that the family was directed to the most appropriate pathway and support.

Staff from partner agencies such as health and the police were often formally engaged in supporting these decisions. A number of local areas had focused on aligning the front doors into children’s social care and early help. In some areas there was a single integrated point of contact and referral for both services. In other areas the two front-doors were co-located but still operated separately. Other areas had achieved stronger alignment through joint training, joint development of thresholds and much clearer ‘step up and step-down processes.

10.8 Whole Family Working

Focusing on the needs of the family as a whole, rather than the individual, was fundamental to the eight early help offers that were studied through the research. The second practical implication of working with the whole family was around how presenting needs were assessed. Early help practitioners talked about how the assessments they used, in partnership with the families themselves, supported them to understand and address the underlying needs, rather than the presenting symptoms. Thirdly, local authorities described how the family focus of early help had enabled them to challenge other services which have historically focused more on individuals, to think about supporting families more holistically.

The local areas that took part in the research emphasised the importance of having an offer that was sufficiently flexible to adapt to families' needs as they changed over time. The 'key worker' or 'lead professional' model of support, combined with a range of less intensive support options such as group interventions and community networks, enables the type and degree of support to change as a family's needs change.

ISOS found that the best early help offers maintain strong processes for ending an engagement with a family, including periodic 'checking in' and in some cases re-engagement. Community-based support networks proved a particularly helpful way of maintaining light touch contact with families who had been supported through a more intensive early help offer.

10.9 The final dimension of developing an effective early help offer concerns the work that local areas do to evaluate the impact and quality of the offer and use this information to continually refine the design and delivery. This dimension incorporates four key enablers;

- Developing an effective management information system
- Auditing and quality assuring practice
- Being clear about the desired impact
- Putting in place proportionate and informative reporting

Effective Early Help requires a Management information system that is reliable, minimises the barriers to data sharing across services, and allows multiple partners to engage with the data. However, the research found that in many cases it has proved quite challenging to get information systems used by different teams within the council, and different partners, to 'talk' to each other.

ISOS found that the most effective systems were based on a workflow that was proportionate, simple to understand and simple to complete; were able to track the progress and outcomes for individual families against a single plan and show that journey over time; provided an interface which allowed partners from outside the local authority to view and contribute to the data held about a family; capable of generating meaningful and insightful performance reports.

Auditing and quality assuring practice provides the essential counterpart to having in place a good Management Information System and ensures that the practice model for working with families is being implemented well. All the local areas which took part

in the research had put in place the systems needed to audit the practice of key workers and lead professionals on a regular basis.

10.10 Proportionate and informative reporting

Many of the areas had developed regular quarterly reporting tools which allowed senior leaders to scrutinise the performance, quality and impact of the early help offer and had embedded these in their governance cycles and use it to drive a culture of continuous improvement. Some areas had also developed clear and concise ways of sharing this information to shine a spotlight for managers and practitioners on areas of practice that were working well, and issues that required more focus and attention.

10.11 Big Hearts, Big Changes

There are a number of large-scale strategic change programmes taking place across the Council under the Big Hearts, Big Changes initiative. Within Children's Services there are three high level work programmes;

- Market Management
- Demand Management
- Early Help and Social Care Pathway

Over the next two years, the Early Help and Social Care Pathway will seek to;

Develop better systems and processes that provide the right level of care and support at the right time, in the right setting which leads to better outcomes for children, young people and families and fewer children and young people coming into care.

The Pathway will be developed through Four Phases. Each phase will incorporate characteristics relating to;

- Functions
- Systems and Processes
- People
- Partners

The objectives for the Early Help and Social Care Pathway include:

- A pathway that has an increased focus on prevention and early intervention which supports children, young people and families to stay at home and in their community settings and avoids unnecessary and costly statutory intervention.
- Embed a holistic, whole family approach to ensure long term, sustainable outcomes that are more likely when the whole family / extended family is engaged.
- A pathway that targets evidence-based interventions towards children, young people and families which will deliver the most significant benefits.
- A pathway that allows social workers to spend more time with children and young people and provide a more personalised support to families.

- A pathway that provides an integrated and seamless journey for children, young people and families that requires families to tell their story once.
- A digital offer which will provide children, young people and families with easy and quick access to the right support and information that promotes self-service.
- A pathway that promotes and develops the use and growth of community assets which will reduce demand for lower level need and support.

11. Sources of reference

- Early Help Strategy 2016-2019
- Ofsted re-inspection of Services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers
- The key enablers of developing an effective partnership-based early help offer: Final research report, March 2019, Natalie Parish & Ben Bryant

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