

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 17 March 2025

Report Title

Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham Year 1 Update

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

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Nicola Curley, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

Kelly White, Acting Assistant Director Early Help & Family Engagement

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029, approved by Cabinet in March 2024, was developed in response to revised government guidance, including the Department for Education (DfE) new edition 'Working Together to Safeguard Children December 2023'.

Following the launch of the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029 in November 2024, the government published 'Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive'. This policy statement set out the Government's ambitious approach to rebalancing the children's social care system toward earlier intervention through Family Help.

This report provides an update on the progress made in year 1 of the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Notes the progress made in year one of the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024 – 2029 Delivery Plan.
2. Notes the minimum expectations detailed in The Families First Partnership Programme: Initial guidance document issued in December 2024.

3. Are provided with a further update, and refreshed action plan in autumn 2025, once future government guidance is received.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms
Appendix 2: Family Help Road Map
Appendix 3: Part A - Initial Equality screening Assessment form
Appendix 4: Early Help Strategy Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

[Cabinet report - Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024 – 2029. 18th March 2024](#)

[Early Help Strategy – Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029](#)

[Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Children Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[Graded Care Profile 2 \(GCP2\) | NSPCC Learning](#)

[Guide for children and young people: Stable Homes, Built on Love - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Children's social care: national framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-hubs-and-start-for-life-programme%20](#)

[Place Partnership – Healthy Rotherham \(yourhealthrotherham.co.uk\)](#)

[Health Wellbeing Strategy 2018 New branding.pdf \(rotherham.gov.uk\)](#)

[https://www.rscp.org.uk/downloads/file/158/child-exploitation-priorities-2023-to-2028-council-plan-2022-25 \(rotherham.gov.uk\)](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

N/A

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham Year 1 Update

1. Background

- 1.1 The Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029, approved by Cabinet in March 2024, articulates Rotherham's vision for family help:

All agencies working together to ensure that children, young people, and families have their needs identified early so that they can receive swift access to targeted help and support. (co-produced and agreed by partners, stakeholders, children, young people, and families.)

- 1.2 The Strategy describes three phases of support for children and families and concludes with how children, families and other key stakeholders will co-produce delivery of the vision over the next five years.

- 1.3 The Strategy was developed in response to legislative change. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (Working Together) gives every practitioner working in a multi-agency system clarity about what is required of them individually and how they need to work in multi-agency partnerships to deliver effective services, support and help to children and their families.

- 1.4 The Strategy describes three areas of support for children and families. These are Universal and Community Family Help; Focused Family Help; and Specialist Family Help. In line with the new government direction, the Council have adopted the use of the term 'Family Help' as reflected in our Strategy. Going forward, unless referring to documents named under the previous naming configuration, Family Help will be the used term.

1.5 Universal and Community Family Help

Universal and Community services are available to all children, young people, and families in Rotherham. These services are provided by lots of different agencies such as nurseries, schools, and colleges; GPs, midwives, and health visitors; children centres and family hubs, libraries, youth services, and community organisations. They are the starting point for any family in Rotherham requiring information, advice and support. Most families will not require support beyond this offer.

1.6 Focused Family Help

This will provide help where families are not managing to effect positive change and they require enhanced, more focused and/or specialist support. This will include children and their families who need additional support to meet their full potential or whose needs are sufficiently complex. Examples include mental health support in schools, targeted prevention work from Youth Justice teams or early help casework in Children and Young People's Services.

1.7 **Specialist Family Help**

Specialist services to children and their families are provided where children and young people need a higher level of support; may be experiencing or likely to suffer significant harm; in circumstances where improvements have not been achieved through universal and community family help, or focused family help. This can include services for disabled children, special school arrangements or specialist physical or mental health provision. It may also include child protection services, working with those experiencing harm outside the home, care arrangements or youth justice services, including custody. Specialist Family Help is provided to families where the concerns are high, and support has been exhausted or not appropriate due to the level of concern.

1.8 A five-year Delivery Plan accompanied the Strategy as a roadmap to achieving the three areas of support for children, young people and families. They detail:

Phase 1 (2024/24) Design

Phase 2 (2025/26) Implement and Deliver

Phases 3 & 4 (2026-2028) Maintain and Operate

Phase 5 (2029) Evaluate

1.9 Phase 1 (2024/25) Design objectives included:

- Consult with children, young people and families on new ways of working.
- Identify and consult with stakeholders (wider Local Authority, Police, Health etc.)
- Consider the new 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' Framework 2023 and incorporate any required changes for Rotherham (P2.)
- Develop a roadmap - child's journey across the Family Help system
- Review and update Early Help Systems Guide (July 2024.)
- Budget and HR integration for relevant agencies.

1.10 Additional to this, the Children's Social Care National Framework (National Framework) sets out the purpose, principles and enablers of good practice and the outcomes that should be achieved.

1.11 As well as the National Framework, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (Working Together) gives every practitioner working in a multi-agency system clarity about what is required of them individually and how they need to work in multi-agency partnerships to deliver effective services, support and help to children and their families. The guidance describes what everyone working with families should do and helps everyone come together with a clear vision for how to transform the support that families receive.

1.12 In November 2024 the Government published 'Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive'. This policy statement set out the Government's ambitious approach to rebalancing the children's social care system toward earlier intervention through Family Help and strengthened multi-agency child

protection - alongside other efforts to support children to live with kinship carers or in fostering families and fix the broken care market.

1.13 The Families First Partnership Programme: Initial guidance document (to be followed by published guidance in spring 2025) is the first step in confirming the expectations for the national reforms. The guidance is intended to support Local Authorities and their partners to start developing plans for April 2025 and beyond. The expectation for the next year is that Local Authorities and partners will focus primarily on transformation. Local Authorities and their partners are encouraged to consider:

- How the end-to-end system of preventative services function in their area in preparation for review and redesign of the system.
- Engaging early with local partners and agencies and protecting time to consider how services can be co-designed and developed in partnership.
- Who in their areas will be leading on local transformation, e.g., a lead Assistant Director.
- Taking steps to assess their local authority's readiness for reform.

The pending guidance is key to undertaking this work.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Rotherham Together Partnership wants Rotherham to be a great place to grow up, where children and young people have the best chance to reach their full potential. This will mean that children grow up happily, safe, in good health and develop the skills and qualifications they need to be successful. The Strategy articulates Rotherham's vision for children, young people and families:

Best Start - Children get the best start in life.

Safe - Children and young people are safe from harm.

Achieve - Young people feel empowered to succeed and achieve their aspirations.

Have fun - Children and young people have fun things to do and safe places to go.

2.2 Significant progress has been achieved against phase 1 in year one of the five-year Delivery Plan and progress updates against each of the design objectives is included below.

2.3 Consult with children, young people and families on new ways of working

2.3.1 Feedback from 1326 families who have received help and support from Early Help between January and October 2024 highlights that 94% of families feel that things had improved and 95% of families felt that the positive changes made can be maintained long term. Re-referral rates have steadily reduced and remain consistently low during 2024/2025 (YTD). This provides us with

evidence that families are receiving the right support and are then able to continue to sustain positive changes themselves.

2.3.2 Focused consultation has been undertaken with families to gain feedback about how the Council can further help children and families get the right help at the right time in an easy way. A survey was completed by 92 families.

2.3.3 An analysis of feedback highlighted clear themes. When families have needed help and support from services in the past, being able to contact them when they needed to (timeliness), signposting to services (help and support) and being helped to access services (easy access) was what they considered made the most difference.

2.3.4 Families have told us that they would like to be able to easily access services at a time that is convenient to them and through digital methods (24/7 and out of office working hours). Families would like clear, helpful, and up to date information. This includes information about who to approach at the first point of contact (to get the right help) and that they only have to tell their story once.

2.3.5 Timely services are important to families including no waiting lists and quicker processes for accessing the right help and support. Families would like to know what to expect in terms of the timeliness of services such as how long support is likely to last, being informed and updated of any changes, particularly any likely delays.

2.3.6 New parents fed back that they would like timely interventions, with earlier signposting to services and pre-pregnancy support. Parents have a real appetite for increased baby, toddler and parent groups, classes and programmes to support them with caring for their child. They would also like to be able to access informal/peer support groups to increase their network of support and friends.

2.3.7 An analysis of the annual Rotherham School Student's Survey 2024 completed by 4,641 young people highlights that Year 7 and Year 10 students would like to see more safe spaces to chat with other young people, increased online support and resources on accessing support which is important for improving mental wellbeing.

2.4 **Identify and consult with stakeholders (wider Local Authority, Police, Health etc)**

2.4.1 In order to set out the vision and raise awareness of the Strategy, between June and August 2024, 39 consultation events (face-to-face and virtual meetings) were held with 217 stakeholders (internal and external partners and practitioners) across the partnership. As part of the consultation 355 responses were received to an interactive consultation tool. In addition, an update on progress with detail about how the Strategy will be implemented was provided to the Improving Lives Select Commission in January 2025 and their comments taken on board.

- 2.4.2 Overwhelmingly, stakeholders like the term 'Family Help' and felt it was a term both families and practitioners would be able to relate to. In terms of the strengths in current practice that stakeholders want to retain as part of the family help transformation, there were three clear themes; partnership working; the quality of direct work with children and families/capturing the voice of the child and a skilled workforce/supporting workforce development.
- 2.4.3 Stakeholders highlighted varied areas of focus that the Council needed to address to ensure the Council could deliver the vision of effective family help. Examples of feedback included clear and consistent thresholds, a strengthened youth offer, caseload management and increased training for practitioners.
- 2.4.4 Consultation was also carried out via additional meetings and briefings such as the Safeguarding Committee (Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust), Local Authority briefing to school leaders, Special and PRU Headteachers Consultation and Secondary Heads meeting.
- 2.4.5 A CYPS staff engagement event provided feedback around the challenges the Council need to address as part of the family help transformation programme. Varied responses included CAMHS waiting times, partners (working together/information sharing) and support groups/drop-ins.
- 2.4.6 Stakeholders' areas of focus that the Council needed to address to ensure the Council could deliver the vision of effective family help include the timelines of access to mental health services, clear and consistent thresholds, a strengthened youth offer, caseload management and increased training for practitioners.
- 2.5 **Consider the new 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' Framework 2023 and incorporate any required changes for Rotherham**
- 2.5.1 A maturity matrix self-assessment was carried out in May 2024 to understand the extent to which updated and new statutory guidance and requirements are already embedded in practice, and identify areas where action is required.
- 2.5.2 Progress against actions is reported to the Change Management Board on a regular basis for oversight. Change Management Board is a function of the CYPS Directorate Leadership Team (DLT). Its purpose is to provide overall direction to projects identified within the programme of work. The Change Management Board has overall responsibility for ensuring project objectives are realised and sustained. Change Management Board is chaired by the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services and meets bimonthly. Progress in relation to key transformation projects are reported to Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Cabinet as required.
- 2.5.3 Chapter 3 'Providing Help, Support and Protection' has a renewed focus on how organisations and agencies provide help, safeguarding and protection for children and their families.

2.6 **Develop a roadmap - child's journey across the Family Help system**

- 2.6.1 Whilst Working Together 2023 defines Early Help, it also talks about 'Family Help'. This term is inclusive of all ages and incorporates a number of services across the partnership. Family Help in Rotherham is not a single service, but a collaborative, whole system approach, that works across the partnership. This means children, young people and their families receive support at the earliest opportunity from a range of different services, dependent on their needs.
- 2.6.2 Family Help is made up of public, voluntary and community sector organisations working together to meet the needs of children and their families so that they receive the right support at the right time. These organisations include public health nursing, midwifery, mental health services, the Police, schools, nurseries, substance misuse providers, educational psychologists, domestic abuse services, housing providers, and other services working with children, young people, and families.
- 2.6.3 The Council know that prevention is better than late intervention to improve outcomes for children and their families. For this reason, the Council focus on meeting needs early, as problems arise to help prevent them from getting worse.
- Identify needs early
 - Right Support at the right time to stop things getting worse
 - Best possible start through early education
 - Whole family approach
- 2.6.4 *"Early Help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. It is not an individual service, but a system of support delivered by local authorities and their partners working together and taking collective responsibility to provide the right provision in their area" (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023).*
- 2.6.5 Work has been undertaken to review current arrangements and to design an effective delivery model taking into consideration feedback and changes to government guidance and legislation. This includes a working group, led by the Assistant Director for Early Help, and included representatives from across Early Help and Children's Social Care.
- 2.6.6 A road map has been designed (See Appendix 2) as a visual aid for families and professionals to support their understanding of the different support and help available across Family Help services, as well as encouraging and promoting the benefits of positive engagement in Universal and Community Help to prevent escalation and reliance on other services.
- 2.6.7 The table below takes each stage of support as referenced in the strategy and demonstrates the changes that the new Family Help pathway (column on the right) will bring, consolidating all relevant services. This is particularly useful in highlighting the Family Help offer that sits beyond Council services and highlights the strength of the multi-agency partnership.

Current arrangements	Family Help Pathway
<p data-bbox="325 197 817 264">Universal and Community Family Help</p> <ul data-bbox="376 309 817 568" style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Hubs • Children’s Centres • Universal Youth Work • Healthy Holidays • Street-based work with young people • Operation Keepsafe 	<p data-bbox="845 197 1391 264">Universal and Community Family Help</p> <ul data-bbox="890 309 1391 990" style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Hubs • Children’s Centres • Universal Youth Work • Healthy Holidays • Street-based work with young people • Operation Keepsafe • Nurseries • Schools and colleges • GPs • Midwives • 0 to 19 public health nursing services • Libraries • Voluntary and community organisations • With Me in Mind (Mental Health in Schools)
<p data-bbox="325 999 657 1034">Focused Family Help</p> <ul data-bbox="376 1079 817 1594" style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner led Early Help Assessments • Early Help Family Support • Evidence Based Hub • School Attendance Matters Pathway (SAMP) • Targeted work with young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and Not Known • Universal and Targeted Groups for children and families 	<p data-bbox="845 999 1168 1034">Focused Family Help</p> <ul data-bbox="890 1079 1391 2002" style="list-style-type: none"> • Front Door • Family Help Practitioners will complete a Family Assessment of Need (FAN) • Family Help Practitioners will support. • Evidence Based Hub • School Attendance Matters Pathway (SAMP) • Targeted work with young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and Not Known • Targeted work with children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities • Universal and Targeted Groups for children and families • Early Help Service co-working with Children’s Social Care • Teenage pathway • Domestic Abuse services • Drug and Alcohol services

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop Smoking services • Obesity Services • Oral Health Services • CAMHs Getting Advice/ Getting Help/ Neuro-developmental
<p>Social Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Help Service Co-working with Children's Social Care • Children's social care Section 17/ Section 47 Children's Act 	<p>Specialist Family Help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-Agency Child Protection Practitioners will protect children from harm • Children's social care Section 47 Children's Act • Harm outside the home (Contextualised Safeguarding) • CAMHs Crisis

2.7 Review and update Early Help Systems Guide (July 2024)

2.7.1 The Early Help Systems Guide, linked to the Supporting Families programme, outlines a national vision and descriptors for a mature Early Help System. It is completed annually and shared with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and DfE. It provides a toolkit to assist local strategic partnerships responsible for their Early Help System. This was reviewed collectively with partners in the Early Help Partnership Group and was updated and submitted to the Supporting Families Programme team before 1 July 2024 deadline. Feedback from the regional Supporting Families team concluded positively that the assessment provided an accurate overview of Rotherham's context. Due to the changes in Government guidance and the national development of a family help offer, it is not clear whether there will be a requirement to review and update the systems guide during 2025 or whether this will be replaced with alternative monitoring expectations. The Council expect further information to follow in relation to this.

2.8 Budget and HR integration for relevant agencies

2.8.1 Following the announcement of the new policy statement and minimum expectations set out in the guidance, the work to consider budget and HR integration for relevant areas has paused to ensure thorough consideration of any proposed changes reflected in the expected guidance anticipated to be published in the spring.

2.8.2 Recent Government legislative and policy change including the Children's Social Care National Framework (National Framework); Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (Working Together); 'Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive' and The Families First Partnership Programme:

Initial guidance is intended to support local partnerships with planning for system transformation.

2.8.3 The minimum expectations set out for local areas in the Families First Partnership Programme: Initial guidance is that the following is prioritised:

- Responding to the voices of children, young people, families and communities in design and delivery.
- Multi-agency working is prioritised and effective.
- Leaders drive conditions for effective practice.
- The workforce is equipped and effective.
- Bring together targeted family help and Section 17 (CIN) into a seamless offer of family help, with an emphasis on whole family working and intervening at the earliest opportunity to prevent escalation.
- Establish the Family Help Lead Practitioner role.
- Establish community based, multidisciplinary Family Help team(s).
- Establish a welcoming, integrated 'front door' to services – to function as a central triage point for all referrals made to the local authority from parents and practitioners seeking help, support or protection for a child.
- Establish a single-Family Help assessment and plan – which can stay with the family as needs change and be accessed and jointly overseen by all agencies working with the family.
- Establish and test multiagency child protection team(s) (MACPT.)
- Establish and test parental representation in child protection.
- Embed family group decision making (FGDM) throughout children's social care services, including at family help and child protection stages.
- Offer of a family group decision making meeting at the pre-proceedings stage.
- Identify Lead Safeguarding Partners.
- Identify Delegated Safeguarding Partners.
- Identify partnership chair.

- Ensure a clear system of independent scrutiny.
- Create a stronger role for education at strategic level.

2.8.4 Multi-agency practice in Rotherham already reflects many of the expectations above. The Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024 – 2029 Delivery Plan set clear objectives to achieve system reform over the next 4 years.

2.8.5 In summary, significant progress has been achieved against phase 1 in year one of the five-year Delivery Plan, as highlighted above. All actions have been achieved in a timely way and practice changes have started to take place as a result. Whilst government guidance remains outstanding, we have continued to drive progress and considered the minimum expectations set out for local areas in the Families First Partnership Programme.

2.8.6 We have a strong proven record for responding to the voices of children, young people, families and communities in design and delivery. This work is continuing in relation to the Family Help strategy and delivery.

2.8.7 Multi-agency working is prioritised and can be evidenced in our approach to Family Hubs, where services are both colocated and co deliver services for children and their families. This is also further highlighted in the table at 2.6.8.

2.8.8 Our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a well-established integrated 'front door' to services, and function as a central triage point for all referrals made to the local authority from parents and practitioners seeking help, support or protection for a child.

2.8.9 We have established a single assessment tool, called a Family Assessment of Need (FAN) to be used across a child's journey. It can be built on as the needs of the family change and be accessed and jointly overseen by all agencies working with the family.

2.8.10 **Phase 2 (2025/26) Implement and Deliver**

- Clear governance arrangements.
- Operational Group(s).
- Implement key outcome measures.
- Implement the re- designed system.
- HR support.
- Budget monitoring.
- Continued engagement with children, young people, families, staff and stakeholders.

2.8.11 **Phases 3 and 4 (2026/28) Maintain and Operate**

- Ongoing delivery of services.
- Implement Government changes/legislation.
- Monitor service quality and adjust.
- Measure success/outcomes.

- Responding to learning - continuous improvement.
- Budget pressures.

2.8.12 **Phase 5 (2028/29) External evaluation**

- Evaluate.
- Seek feedback from children, young people and their families.
- Assess and identify areas of development.
- Review and refresh the Strategy.

2.8.13 It is proposed that the minimum expectations of the Families First Partnership Programme (2.8.3) be considered by the Operational Group(s) during phase 2 of the delivery plan. These will be reflected in the implementation and delivery of clear governance arrangements and re- designed system, the key outcome measures and associated Human Resource and Budget implications. Underpinning all activity will be continued engagement with children, young people, families, staff, and stakeholders.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Cabinet is asked to note the progress made in year one of the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024 – 2029 Delivery Plan.

3.2 Cabinet is asked to note the minimum expectations detailed in The Families First Partnership Programme: Initial guidance document issued in December 2024 and agree to be provided with a further update once further government guidance is received. This will ensure the Council is compliant with the recent legislative and policy change and is able to deliver its commitment in line with best practice to ensure effective services are in place for all children and young people in the Borough.

3.3 The alternative option is not to note the progress and agree to incorporate any required changes for Rotherham into the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024 – 2029 Delivery Plan. This would result in non-compliance with the government’s legislative and policy requirements including the statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children. This would present a significant barrier in achieving the necessary national and cultural shift to continue to reform children’s social care and early help in Rotherham. This option is not recommended.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 Phase 1 of the delivery plan has involved significant consultation with key stakeholders across the wider Council, Health, Police and children and families as detailed above. This has informed co-design and co-production from the start.

4.2 A summary of the consultation with children, young people, and families on new ways of working, is included at section 2.4. This has informed the co-design and co-production of the new arrangements.

- 4.3 A summary of the consultation with stakeholders (wider Local Authority, Police, Health etc) on new ways of working, is included at section 2.5. This has informed the co-design and co-production of the new arrangements.
- 4.4 Local learning indicates the importance of embedding co-production to ensure the voices of those who use, and access services influence the continuous improvement of the Family Help Offer. The new legislative and policy framework sets out new expectations for 'shared responsibility' and introduces a set of multi-agency expectations to ensure that practitioners share the same goals, learn with and from each other, have what they need to help families, acknowledge and appreciate difference and challenge each other. Genuine Partnerships and the Four Cornerstones (also known as the Rotherham Charter) evolved from a unique partnership involving the Rotherham Parent Carers Forum and Rotherham Council. The Rotherham Four Cornerstones (developed from research involving Rotherham children and young people with special educational needs, and their parents and carers) defines how the partnership works together and with children and families, acknowledging that the development of shared goals requires co-production rather than consultation. Consequently, the delivery plan continues to include engagement, consultation and co-production in phase two and beyond.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024 – 2029 Delivery Plan covers the period 2024 to 2029.
- 5.2 Progress against the delivery plan and review of objectives is monitored by the Family Help Partnership Group and the Children and Young People's Service Directorate Leadership Team.
- 5.3 A further update will be brought to Cabinet following the delivery of Phase 2 implementation and delivery.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications from the delivery, in the first year (i.e. 2024/25), of the 'Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024 – 2029 Delivery Plan'. Implemented changes undertaken during the year have been achieved within agreed resource envelope for Children & Young People services.
- 6.2 It should be noted that a new Children's Social Care Prevention Grant has been allocated to local authorities in 2025/26 (£2.5m for Rotherham) aimed at enhancing early intervention and family support services to prevent issues from escalating and to keep children safely within their families. A significant portion of this funding is designated for the national rollout of Family Help. The grant will also support the implementation of Family Group Decision Making, empowering families to collaboratively make decisions about the care and welfare of their children.

6.3 There are no direct procurement implications associated with the recommendations detailed in this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 The progress set out in this report about the implementation of the Family Help Strategy and delivery plan reflects how the Council have responded to the updated Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. This statutory guidance regarding Family Help strengthens the role of education and childcare settings in supporting children, keeping them safe. With the stronger emphasis on working with families and the role of family network meetings to improve family network engagement in decision making and supporting family, this too has been embedded in the Strategy set out above, along with how multi agency professionals can work with families.

7.2 In November 2024, the government set out its plan around how to keep children with families within its paper, “Keeping children safe, helping families thrive” rather than rely on residential care, and looks at strengthening the role of education within multi agency arrangements which the Strategy has also taken into consideration. With the progress noted above, and the recommendation at 3.1 and 3.2 as shown, there are no legal implications with following these recommendations.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 HR will continue to provide the support required.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 The Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024 – 2029 aligns with the key local partnership priorities and plans including Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Plan 2022/25, Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership plan and associated strategies, Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Plan and Rotherham Health and Social Care Place Plan.

9.2 The Strategy describes how partners will work together to ensure that all children and young people receive the right help at the right time so that Rotherham is a great place to grow up, where children and young people have the best chance to reach their full potential. This will mean that children grow up happily, safe, in good health and develop the skills and qualifications they need to be successful.

9.3 The Adult Social Care Strategy for Rotherham 2024–2027 is inclusive of young people preparing for adulthood with a refreshed vision which intends to make a real difference to the lives of local residents: *‘Enable every resident with care and support needs to live their best lives, with the people they value, close to home and with access to the right support at the right time’*. The Strategy sets out priorities over the next three years with an emphasis on strength-based approaches to improve outcomes for people with care and support needs, unpaid carers and local residents.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 Equality and human rights are considered within the Strategy. Part A Equalities Screening is attached as Appendix 3.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 Implications included in the Carbon Impact Assessment (Appendix 4).

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 These are referred to in the Strategy and associated delivery plan.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 These are referred to in the Strategy and associated delivery plan.

14. Accountable Officers

Kelly White – Acting Assistant Director, Early Help & Business Support

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp OBE	03/03/25
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	20/02/25
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	19/02/25

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This report is published on the Council's [website](#).