

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Early Years, Children and Youth Panel.	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	25 th November 2013	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Update on Early Help Offer;	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: None		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report seeks to update the Panel on the actions of the Local Authority in response to our "Early Help Offer". Both the recently updated version of "Working Together" (2013) and the Review of Child Protection by Professor Eileen Munro place particular emphasis on the importance of each Local Authority developing and sustaining ways of identifying families that would benefit from support at an early/preventative stage. This "offer", must ensure that all partners contribute to the support plans for these families and that outcomes are positive.
- 1.2 Early Help is identified as being not only linked with the identification of help in the early, critical years of a child's life, but also central to providing an effective response as soon as possible when difficulties emerge at any stage of a young person's life.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 There are no specific recommendations attached to this paper, it is tabled for the purposes of up-date and discussion.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 None.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 As highlighted above, the statutory considerations for the "Early Help Offer" are set out in "Working Together" 2013. This document also places a responsibility on the Local

Safeguarding Board to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training for all partners on the importance of a co-ordinated “Early Help” strategy.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 Background; The Early Help offer in Bath and North-East Somerset is delivered across a number of teams and settings. These comprise, the Connecting Families Team, our Children’s Centres across the region, Youth Service and Connexions Team. From 1st November “Targeted” services are now managed alongside “Specialist” services. This change in management structure will assist in strengthening the organisational links between both Divisions and underline the commitment to a fully integrated range of interventions for families. This integrated approach is in line with the “Early Help” model on intervention which we have included in the new LSCB “Threshold” document.
- 5.2 “Connecting Families”; The Connecting Families programme has now been running for over six months. The team are currently working directly with 35 families identified by the government and ourselves as needing intensive intervention. In addition to this the team are also assisting with/supporting work with approximately 100 additional families where partner agencies are also involved in work to improve outcomes.
- 5.3 Recent examples of the way in which the Connecting Families team have managed to make positive impact for families are; a) Provided assistance to a mother which resulted in her return to employment following 16 years of workless-ness. The key worker provided support in writing a CV and with interview preparation. B) In another case, the key worker has worked with a young person (7 years old) whose school attendance was 69%. Following the intervention, her attendance is now at 95%. The remaining 18 months of the project will need to ensure that the remaining 80 families identified as eligible for inclusion in the initiative also begin to receive a service and that we can continue to demonstrate similar positive results.
- 5.4 Nationally, the government have also recently indicated that a period of further funding will be available to Councils who can demonstrate that families have benefitted from involvement with local initiatives. We were recently visited by government representatives who were very positive about the developments we have locally.
- 5.5 Early Help Assessments; These assessment documents (CAF’s) are the format by which partners are able to set out the issues and concerns in order that agencies can jointly begin to develop an early intervention plan. This approach aims to identify, at the earliest opportunity the child’s additional multiple needs which could not be met solely by one agency. The number of CAF’s which are now being completed average over 100 per quarter for the past year. Over 40% of the CAF’s are initiated by Health Visitors, with a Midwives completing a further 15% and schools 11%. We have also now established an audit group to ensure that the quality of the form and crucially, the quality of the plan are of sufficient quality to ensure that families have an appropriate and dynamic plan of intervention that is reviewed regularly.

5.6 11-19yrs Preventative Services; We are currently in the process of bringing the Connexions Service back “in-house”. At the point that the service comes back into the Council we will take the opportunity to reduce the service by 50% as part of our contribution to the Medium Term Service Resource Plan. This will still enable us to maintain a service that is able to track the progress of pupils into further education, training or employment, as well a small/reduced capacity to undertake targeted work with those young people at risk of becoming NEET. These changes will take place on April 1st 2014.

5.7 0-11 Yrs Preventative Services; The Medium Term Service Resource Plan also identifies the likely need for savings in regard to Children’s Centres. The level and nature of these reductions continues to be debated, although a proposed plan for how the new service might look has been shared with members. The plan continues to outline ways in which the Children’s Centre’s will develop a new Service Specification with both internal and external providers in line with recent Ofsted requirements. It is anticipated that the new Service Level agreements will allow us to develop a “Core Offer” of services to local communities from April 1st 2014 which will be outcome focused and increase the amount of collaboration and partnership working.

5.8 The 0-11 Yrs service is also seeking to develop services with Primary Schools in relation to pupils with complex needs. We have proposed a pilot “Nurture Service” which has the potential to identify and provide support pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties within Primary Schools. The development is supported by Head-teachers, following consultation earlier this year.

6 RATIONALE

6.1 Not applicable

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 Not applicable

8 CONSULTATION

In preparing this report I have consulted with each of the managers responsible for each of the respective strands of our early help offer.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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Background papers	<i>Medium Term Service Resource Plan.</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	