

Chichester District Council

CABINET

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Early Help Implementation

1. Contacts

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2. Executive Summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Education Task and Finish group which have been endorsed by Overview Scrutiny Committee. It also provides the detail of the implementation of the WSCC Early Help Action Plan which had previously been given a commitment of support at its formative stage. Support for the Early Help Action Plan is seen as the means to take forward the recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny and so approval is sought for the proposed arrangements for CDC

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 **That the recommendations of the Education Task and Finish group endorsed by Overview Scrutiny Committee (see paragraphs 4.5.1 and 4.5.2) are supported through the Early Help Action Plan.**
- 3.2 **That the structures and local implementation (see Appendix 2) of WSCC Early Help Action Plan be supported.**
- 3.3 **That the Community Interventions Manager is nominated as the single point of contact for liaison between CDC and the Family Support Network.**

4 Background

- 4.1 In 2013 West Sussex County Council (WSCC) proposed an Early Help Action Plan in response to recommendations made by OFSTED inspections and sought partner support for its principles. The action plan is intended to provide a basis to transform services for families who need early help; to drive the work that we all do; and to inform and guide all services commissioned for families and children to ensure an early help approach is built into them. The aim of the plan is to ensure services work **smarter**, to ensure families receive the help

they need **sooner**, to keep children **safer** and make families **stronger**. At their meeting on 25 February 2014 Cabinet agreed that the aspirations and outcomes set out in the Early Help Action Plan for West Sussex 2014 – 2017 would be supported, and that the expectation and commitment to the plan would be managed within current levels of resourcing and funding.

- 4.2 WSCC has been working with West Sussex Local Safeguarding Children's Board, the Think Family Partnership Board and individual partners, of which CDC is one, to develop an operational delivery model which is now being implemented. This report provides an update on the delivery structures for Early Help and the implications for CDC.
- 4.3 This report also links to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish group, which during October and November 2014, considered the then performance of schools in Chichester District and the state of secondary schools and children's readiness for school (i.e. the under 5's at first entry to primary school). They received presentations and questioned officers from WSCC and The Kemnal Academy Trust (TKAT).
- 4.4 The key findings and points particularly noted by the Task and Finish Group are contained in their report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 18 November 2014 attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.5 The recommendations from this review were that:
 - 4.5.1 A commitment is required from the Council to support family friendly policies.
 - 4.5.2 The Council needs to consider how it may support Early Years and Early Help structures which support families seeking, or identified as needing, help.

5 Outcomes to be achieved

- 5.1 To work with partners to implement the delivery structures and processes for Early Help in Chichester district so that families who seek or are identified as being in need of help receive the help they need sooner, enabling children to be safer and families to be stronger. The outcomes for the Early Help plan centre on:
 - 5.1.1 Giving children the best start in life,
 - 5.1.2 Ensuring children are ready for school,
 - 5.1.3 Ensuring children and young people are ready for the transition to adulthood and,
 - 5.1.4 Keeping families together.
- 5.2 Outcomes measures are being developed and will include a reduction in the number of crisis interventions such as homelessness and children taken into care.

6. Proposal

- 6.1 WSCC is planning to deliver the Family Support Offer (see the Appendix 2) from April 2015, to include a fully operating Family Support Point (FSP) where both the existing Children's Access Point (CAP) and a new Early Help Resource Centre (EHRC) will be located. It aims to have one phone number where callers, both public and professional, will be given options in regards to the nature of their call. This should mean families and professionals will not need to make choices of which agency to approach in order to access support. All priority calls regarding the welfare of a child will go immediately to the CAP to be assessed. The remaining enquiries will go to the Early Help Resource Centre for a range of advice and support which may include referral to Family Support Networks (FSN) based in District and Borough areas.
- 6.2 The FSN will consist of multi-agency representatives providing a targeted and co-ordinated early help response to children and families within that geographical area. The FSN will be a virtual network but will enable services to work together in a more joined up way, helping families sooner and before problems escalate. This approach may also identify gaps and potential duplication in services. The central FSP will be based in County Hall North from the 1 April 2015 and the first FSN pilot is underway in Adur and Worthing (January to March 2015). The focus of the pilot is to test the new way of working between the FSP and the FSN in order to develop the decision making process. Pilots in other Districts and Boroughs will follow after this. Each FSN will have an appointed FSN Co-ordinator employed by WSCC.
- 6.3 Chichester District Council already has a strong commitment to early intervention seeking to resolve issues for residents at the earliest opportunity in order to avoid escalation and costlier remedies. Our staff work with a range of partners in the statutory, private and voluntary sector. They provide specialist services, such as Housing and Benefits, where advice or assistance can be given to families who approach us or may be actively sought by other partner agencies working to support a family. Similarly our staff may identify families in need of help from a service which CDC cannot provide and rather than simply 'signpost' them staff should ensure that a level of support is given to assist the family to find and access the right help. This may be through supporting the family to access advice online, or to access support from another service, or by making a referral to FSN/FSP. In order to manage referrals from or to the FSN or FSP it is proposed that a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) is identified for CDC and that is proposed to be the Community Interventions Manager.
- 6.4 It is important that staff understand their role and feel confident to provide an appropriate level of support to ensure that a family is able find the right help at the earliest opportunity. Equally expectations must be managed to ensure the support CDC offer is aligned to our services. Briefings and training will be provided to ensure staff understand this commitment.
- 6.5 The Community Interventions Manager will be the link to, and support the development of, the local Family Support Network and ensure alignment to the existing work of the Think Family key worker and the Think Family Neighbourhood plans on behalf of CDC. This role will provide a link between partners and other key CDC services e.g. Housing, Revenues and Benefits and Community wardens; and, will also act as an informal triage for referrals

from FSN locally and in the early stages of operation as a point of advice and guidance for CDC staff.

- 6.6 It is, therefore, proposed that Chichester District Council endorses these proposals and commits to support the aims and outcomes of the Early Help strategy and action plan in respect of its delivery model and structures.

7. Resource and legal implications

- 7.1 The Community Interventions Manager is an existing post funded from base budget; the Think Family keyworker is an externally funded post on a fixed contract until 31 March 2016. Early help will impact on their workload but is complimentary to their existing role and will assist delivery of shared outcomes.
- 7.2 There is likely to be additional expectation and workload for some of our services who are already delivering services to, or dealing with, families. It is not possible to quantify this, but it will be monitored. It should be seen as an investment of additional effort at an early stage which will save more complex demand on our services at a later stage, and is an approach already taken by most services.
- 7.3 This arrangement does not affect our Safeguarding Policy.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 West Sussex County Council has led on the development of the Early Help Strategy delivery model and has involved partners in its development and consulted on its delivery and structure. There is an expectation that Districts and Boroughs will be involved in the pilot areas for this delivery model.
- 8.2 The Task and Finish Group reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 November 2014 who endorsed their recommendations to Cabinet. Their recommendations and the outcomes they sought in supporting families and ensuring children are ready for school would be achieved through supporting the WSCC Early Help proposals.

9. Community impact and corporate risks

- 9.1 This strategy has the potential to deliver positive impacts for families. It offers the potential of more effective spending and savings to the public purse.
- 9.2 The corporate risk will be in the level of expectation that is made of CDC to invest resources in support of the strategy. However it offers the opportunity to improve services to residents and reduce crisis demand.

10. Alternatives Considered

- 10.1 CDC could choose not to commit its support and continue alone with its own in-house efforts at early intervention. The risk of following this alternative is that we could lose opportunities for greater partner engagement; lose the ability to influence service commissioning and delivery decisions affecting our district and more vulnerable residents. This could reduce the potential

benefits to Chichester District of early intervention by a range of agencies and mean that problems escalate and require a more costly response.

11. Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder – Early Help could prevent the development of situations which lead to victimisation or offending.	x	
Climate Change		x
Human Rights and Equality Impact – The support will be available to all those needing help in an equitable way and will support those at risk of exclusion	x	
Safeguarding Impact. – Early help should strengthen family’s ability to cope, improve relationships and so reduce risks to children and vulnerable adults.	x	

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee report from the Education Task and Finish Group 18 November 2014.

Appendix 2 Description and Diagram of the Family Support networks

13. Background papers

Cabinet paper 25 February 2014 - Early Help Action Plan for West Sussex 2014-2017