

EARLY HELP AND PREVENTION

Annual
Review

2015/2016

Early Help and Prevention Annual Review 2015

1. Introduction

1.1 The Local Authority's responsibility for the provision and co-ordination of a wide range of high quality Early Help and Prevention services for children and their families sits with Targeted Services in the Children and Young People's Department. Established in September 2013, with a newly appointed Head of Service, Targeted Services brought together Restorative Practice (Youth Offending Service, Education Social Welfare and Multi-Systemic Therapy), Youth and Play Service, Family Support, the Intensive Family Intervention Service (IFIP), Early Years and Children's Centres and the Gateway (as a single point of access and referral).

1.2 Early Help and prevention services have been provided through a locality model which integrated practitioners from each of the Targeted Services areas under the matrix management of Senior Locality Managers. The locality areas were aligned with the district model used by Specialist Services (Children's Social Care) to promote communication and co-ordination of services for children and families. Partners from across the public and wider 3rd sector are a key part of the overall offer and work in close collaboration with the Local Authority to improve outcomes for children and families.

1.3 This report seeks to outline the developments which have taken place over a twelve month period, highlight achievement in Early Help practice and identify areas for further improvement.

2. The Strategic Vision for Early Help and Prevention

2.1 In Wirral there is clear multi-agency commitment to Early Help work. In 2014 Senior Leaders from across the partnership came together at the *Committing to Making a Difference* event to pledge support from their respective organisation and commit to the formation of an Early Help Strategic Board (EHSB) to lead, drive and challenge. The EHSB is governed through the Children's Trust and sees quality assurance directed through the Local Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB).

2.2 The EHSB was set up in September 2014 and by early 2015 had set a baseline for Early Help in Wirral through the use of a *Maturity Matrix*, a tool developed and endorsed by the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF). Using a scale of 0-5, with 5 being the most mature, completion of the matrix found that the provision of Early Help services in the areas of *Plan, Deliver, Lead, Evaluate, and Family Focus* were either 'Basic-grade 1' or 'Early Progress-grade 2'. As well as demonstrating a clear and collective understanding of the local position, it supported the EHSB to establish task and finish groups to identify and progress areas for development which included 'Early Help Strategy', 'Early Help Performance Data Set', 'CAF and TAF Working', 'Learning and Aspirations', 'Communication Strategy', and a 'Thematic Group'.

2.3 The task and finish groups set up and monitored by the EHSB achieved a range of outcomes, most significantly the publication in November 2015 of Wirral's *Early Help and Prevention Strategy*, which contains the Early Help Performance Data Set agreed by the partnership. Commitment to a shared strategy for Early Help was evident through attendance and participation of the 65 practitioners, representing 30 services at a series of workshops to devise the strategy.

2.4 In December 2015 the EHSB outlined the Development Plan which will deliver the *Early Help and Prevention Strategy* and its *Partnership Commitments*. The strategy and its accompanying Development Plan clearly outline our joint strategic vision and direction. Aligned with the *Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision* and *The Children's Strategy*, the *Early Help and Prevention Strategy* incorporates relevant pledges such as 'Children Are Ready for School', 'Zero Tolerance to Domestic Abuse', 'Vulnerable Children Reach their Full Potential', and 'Young People Are Ready for Work and Adulthood' to ensure

contribution to the wider strategic vision. For 2016 the EHSB will revise its Terms of Reference and membership to hold Lead Officers and task groups accountable for delivery of outcomes.

2.5 Progress achieved by the EHSB in 2015 is evidenced through the *Maturity Matrix* which has been refreshed in January 2016. The overall evaluation of provision for Early Help services in Wirral has increased, now ranging from 'Early Progress-grade 2' to 'Significant Progress-grade 3'. The development areas required to achieve 'Maturity-level 4' have been incorporated into the *Early Help and Prevention Strategy Development Plan*.

2.6 Internal to Targeted Services a number of developments have taken place to further integrate Early Help and prevention work. In the summer of 2015, following on from the successful completion of Phase 1 of the national Troubled Families Programme, a formal consultation and review was undertaken to merge IFIP and the Family Support into a single Family Intervention Service. Learning from 'what works' with Troubled Families has been effectively used to establish and mainstream an approach which has proven to improve outcomes for local families. Investment in the Family Intervention Service demonstrates the Local Authority's commitment to providing the most effective Services in the Early Help arena.

2.7 In addition, Early Years and Children's Centres have been subject to public consultation and formal review. In 2016 we will launch the new Early Childhood Service, bringing together resource to deliver the ambitions detailed within the formal review document and *The Children's Strategy* that "We must make sure that every child is equipped with the emotional, social and developmental skills to be ready to start school and to learn."

2.8 In late 2015 the senior management structure and responsibilities for Targeted Service were reviewed. This introduces two Senior Manager posts, one with responsibility for Families (Family Intervention and Early Childhood Services) and one for Youth (Youth and Play Services and Restorative Practice). It is envisaged that this will further promote integration of service areas, increase capacity, reduce duplication, and facilitate greater integration.

2.9 Further integration of practice within Targeted Services will be achieved in 2016 through the departmental *Performance Management Framework* and alignment of quality and assurance.

3. Engagement in Early Help Services

3.1 It is our joint ambition to increase earlier identification of need. The processes by which we can measure and evaluate the effectiveness of this have undergone change in 2015 and will now allow us to establish, with confidence, how well this is being achieved. In 2014 the Gateway accepted all referrals for services at levels 2 (single agency) and levels 3 (multi-agency). Performing this function allowed the Local Authority to evidence that the number of children and families requesting and receiving services was increasing. Following consultation with multi-agency partners at the *Locality Working Development Session* in October 2014 it was agreed that the Gateway would stop processing referrals for level 2, single agency services. While the rationale for this was clear (the process created delay for families receiving services and relationships between agencies were adversely affected through lack of communication) the ability to monitor the number of children and families engaging in Early Help services has been effected.

3.2 Attempts to respond positively to this change were established in 2015 by monitoring the number of Early Help Assessments completed. An inter-agency group reviewed a number of assessments in use by service areas and agreed a set of Early Help Assessments. Completion of Early Help Assessments has been monitored throughout 2015 and demonstrates an increase over the year. Completion of Early

Help Assessments has been a performance indicator for the Directorate Plan and reporting at the end of 2015 confirms that the service is on track to deliver the target of 1000 completed Early Help Assessments.

3.3 As the function to progress referrals to appropriate services was revoked the Gateway Team began publishing the Local Early Help Offer to support practitioners to find and access the services needed for families. In December 2015 the Early Help Offer was incorporated into the *Local Offer* website and will be included within the new LSCB website in 2016. The *Early Help and Prevention Strategy* makes a clear commitment to publish and extend the range of services advertised to include voluntary, community and faith groups. To support this online resource plans for the Early Help and CAF Team include providing direct telephone access for children, families and practitioners who will be able to receive advice and guidance from an Early Help & CAF Co-ordinator and/or Early Help Social Worker.

3.4 The *Early Help and Prevention Strategy* addresses the need for increasing the earlier identification of need through the *Partnership Commitment* to introduce a common Early Help Assessment Tool across the partnership for use by both children's and adult services to identify vulnerable children earlier. This will be implemented, monitored and reported by the Early Help & CAF Team.

3.5 Within Targeted Services a number of service areas are able to demonstrate how they have improved systems to increase identification of need. The intelligence-led approach to identifying Troubled Families, the target groups for Children's Centres and panels to support access to Multi-Systemic Therapy are examples of those which have systems in place to ensure that they are working with those children and families most in need of targeted and preventative interventions.

3.6 In 2015 the Gateway received 1949 referrals. Of these 602 cases progressed to CAF, 709 to a single agency service and 62 were linked to an existing TAF episode. An overall 70% of contacts to the Gateway have resulted in children and families receiving a service. In Q2 and Q3 we began recording the number of TAF meetings and children this related to. In Q2 there were 321 scheduled TAF meetings involving 509 children and in Q3 401 scheduled TAF meetings for 534 children.

3.7 A number of approaches have been taken to increase engagement in CAF and TAF. Three Locality Allocations meetings have been held each week to discuss referrals, allocate a Lead Professional to complete the CAF, and support the Lead Professional with the TAF intervention. In total 902 cases were discussed and progressed through the Locality Allocation Meetings.

3.8 Several strategies to increase engagement of partners in Early Help and CAF have commenced during 2015. Under the remit of the EHSB a CAF Champions group was established and there are clear plans to develop this throughout 2016 which will be led by the Early Help and CAF Team. This aligns with the *Partnership Commitments* of the *Early Help and Prevention Strategy* and is detailed in the Development Plan. The Team also launched the Locality Network Meetings in November 2015 with the first of these for 2016 held in January. Responsibility for training in CAF and TAF interventions will transfer from the Local Safeguarding Children Board to the Early Help & CAF Team and will respond to requests from partners to ensure that training will be delivered by those most experienced in completing CAFs and leading TAF interventions. CAF Champions, Family Intervention Senior Practitioners, and Early Childhood Senior Practitioners are already committed to this role. The training and evaluation of impact will continue to be assessed and quality assured by the LSCB.

3.9 During 2015 178 professionals have received training on CAF and TAF processes. The most recent annual review of 'CAF and Information Sharing' found that 84% of attendees rated it as 'Good', 15% as

'Satisfactory' and 1% as 'Unsatisfactory'. For the training on 'Lead Professional and Chairing' 82% rated it as 'Good' and 18% as 'Satisfactory'.

4. Improving Outcomes through Early Help and Prevention

4.1 Systems to evidence the impact of Early Help continue to develop and whilst individual services areas are able to demonstrate impact through early intervention and prevention we are in the formative stages of being able to do this from a whole system or borough-wide multi-agency Early Help perspective.

4.2 A number of steps are being taken to improve the partnership's ability to evidence the impact of Early Help. This includes formalising an Early Help Performance Data Set through *the Early Help and Prevention Strategy*, introducing a consistent means of collecting feedback from families as to whether they believe their needs have been met and ensuring that the information system LiquidLogic is used to record whether or not outcomes have been met.

4.3 For individual service areas there is sound evidence that outcomes for children and families have improved through targeted interventions. In Phase One of the Troubled Families Programme Wirral achieved its target of identifying and working with 910 families who met the national criteria. Of those families 787 achieved what we can term as 'turn around' with 724 achieving 85%+ school attendance, reductions in crime (minimum 33%) and anti-social behaviour (minimum 67%) and 63 gaining employment (minimum 6 months continuous). A total of 280 families improved their economic situation by either gaining employment, remaining in work or making significant steps towards employment. On completion of Phase 1 of the Troubled Families Programme an evaluation was published containing learning from the programme, case studies and testimonials from families which evidence that outcomes had improved. In addition to this two families featured in a short film sharing their experiences and outlining why this new approach had made a difference to their lives.

4.4 In 2014-15 the Youth Offending Service worked with 421 young people in its preventative services. Through out-of-court disposals and initiatives such as the Youth Inclusion Programme young people are supported to stay out of the criminal justice system. Wirral's first time entrance rate has now reduced to 0.46% of the 10-17 year old population. This is a 81% decrease from 2008-09 (equating to 578 fewer young people).

4.5 The outcomes for children and families receiving an intensive support package from Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) are encouraging, with 90% (112) of young people still living in the family home and free from re-offending by the end of their intervention.

4.6 In 2014/15 youth workers contacted some 9,000 young people across Wirral and delivered 13,356 interventions focusing on healthy relationships and sexual health, 19,634 interventions focusing on alcohol and drug awareness and 4,529 anti-social behaviour interventions.

4.7 Since 2014 youth workers have been delivering intensive group-work projects to vulnerable, at risk young women to enable them to raise their confidence and aspirations and increase their resilience. To date, over 200 young women have taken part in these projects (known as GILRS projects) and a recent evaluation saw a 55% increase within the area of their confidence and self-esteem. Given the successful outcomes for these projects youth workers have now begun delivering a similar programme for at risk young men. Youth workers have also developed a peer education theatre in education project which see young people aged 16+ looking at issues affecting young people and delivering performance pieces with follow up workshops in schools and other youth settings. Performances in 2015 have included pieces on unhealthy and abusive teenage relationships and bullying. The group are now

developing a piece which highlights issues regarding exploitation, including child sexual exploitation and radicalism.

4.8 The active engagement and participation of children and young people is a key component of early help and prevention. In 2014, to continue to ensure that young people fully engage and participate in decision making and that services and organisations routinely involve them, a Young People's Engagement and Participation Framework was developed. The Framework ensures that there is strategic, multi-agency leadership and vision to put children and young people at the heart of services. The framework also takes a strategic approach to co-ordinating positive youth engagement so young people are offered a wide range of meaningful opportunities to take part in community and democratic processes. Such opportunities include United Kingdom Youth Parliament and the annual Youth Conference and Youth Parliament.

4.9 Throughout 2015 the LSCB has monitored Distance Travelled for families engaged in CAF and TAF interventions. The findings show that in 99.2% of cases using the distance travelled tool there is improvement. This is based on the experiences of 132 families which were evaluated. This demonstrates that the children and families engaged in these interventions have experienced improved outcomes.

4.10 The number of step downs from Specialist Services to Targeted Services has increased throughout 2015 with 227 in total. The quality of step downs has also improved and this can be evidenced through the auditing undertaken by the Locality Threshold Meetings. These meetings consider the number of cases which have taken 8+ days to be allocated. Initially there were many cases taking 8+ days to allocate, the majority of which would be step downs from Specialist Services which were incomplete. By the end of 2015 this had reduced considerably and can be evidenced through the agendas and minutes of the Locality Threshold Meetings. This continues to be a key focus for the work and sits as a critical and ongoing development for joint working across Children's Services.

4.11 The role of the Locality Social Workers, currently deployed within the Family Intervention Service, is critical to the timeliness and quality of step downs. There are further plans to develop and maximise the contributions being made to this critical area of work and increase the number of effective step downs. In October 2015 the Locality Social Worker allocated to the Gateway joined the Specialist Services front door team on a fulltime basis. This has improved the experience and outcomes for families as referrals are only triaged once. The Locality Social Worker represents Early Help and prevention services, sharing information from Targeted Services which contributes to the decision making process and supports swifter access to appropriate services.

4.12 The Early Help & CAF Team to be launched in March 2016 will see Locality Social Workers becoming Early Help Social Workers with an increase of 4 FTE to 6FTE. This commitment from the Local Authority will enable more effective step downs to occur and improve access to consultations and support for partners. This increase in resource will provide enhanced support to schools and support their valuable contribution to Early Help work.

4.13 Throughout 2015 the Thematic task group of the EHSB met to consider Child Sexual Exploitation and how Early Help and prevention services were responding to the agenda. The group made a number of recommendations which have now been incorporated into the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board CSE sub-group action plan. In 2016 the Thematic Group will be incorporated into a wider *Learning and Aspirations* strand to consider our approach to tackling issues such as radicalisation and

female genital mutilation and ensure that as a partnership we are outward looking and responsive to emerging needs.

5. Quality Assurance

5.1 Many of the processes to quality assure Early Help work are managed through the LSCB. A multi-agency CAF and TAF group meet to audit CAFs completed and TAF episodes.

5.2 Voice of the Child has been a key focus of CAF work throughout 2015. At the beginning of the year 41% cases audited featured the voice of the child. This had increased to 80% by the end of 2015. This improvement was achieved through feedback from the QA Group to practitioners and their managers, increased focus within the CAF and TAF Training Programme and practical learning through team meetings.

5.3 The Quality Assurance Framework and Toolkit provided by the LSCB continues to be utilised by professionals across agencies. To further enhance this, an Early Help Audit Tool has been devised as part of the *Quality Assurance Framework* for Children's Services and will be trialled in February 2016.

5.4 Throughout 2015 an Early Help performance report has been presented to the LSCB who hold the Head of Targeted Services to account for the local performance.

5.5 Engagement with multi-agency partners to evaluate arrangements for Early Help have been focused through the Locality Working Self-Assessment. This was initially completed at the Locality Working Development Session in October 2014 and was reviewed in November 2015. The self-assessment evidences that partners and practitioners within Targeted Services have experienced improvements in a number of areas including 'timeliness, accountability, range of targeted services available, range of agencies acting as Lead Professional and partners been held accountable for TAF interventions.

5.6 Within the Children and Young People's Department quality assurance is provided through Threshold Meetings, the role of the Locality Managers and the Targeted Services Supervision Policy. The Supervision Policy outlines the requirements for each role within Targeted Services. Supervision files are audited as part of the *Quality Assurance Framework* schedule.

5.7 Specialist Services hold Threshold Meetings on a weekly basis which is attended by the Gateway Team Leader. These meetings review decision making, information sharing and outcomes for children. The Gateway Team Leader ensures that the Locality Social Worker contributes effectively to the triage process and that options for early intervention are considered in each case.

5.8 Targeted Services hold Locality Threshold Meetings on a fortnightly basis. Like those in Specialist Services the purpose is to review decision making, information sharing, timeliness of allocation, quality of step downs and ultimately, to provide accountability for Early Help working.

5.9 The role of Locality Manager in providing oversight, accountability and challenge to partners has been important to Early Help systems and processes. Previously there have been three Locality Managers each leading a locality area. While this approach had benefits in regard to capacity the review of Locality Allocation Meetings found that there was some inconsistencies in approach. In 2016 we will introduce a single allocation meeting for all cases in the borough, chaired by the Early Help and CAF Team Manager. In November 2015 partners were consulted about proposals to review the Allocation Meetings. It was agreed that a single meeting with a consistent Chair would improve

outcomes for children, allow partners to attend more regularly and strengthen accountability. This development will take place in March 2016 with the launch of the Early Help and CAF Team.

5.10 An area of focus for 2016 will be to improve systems for collecting feedback from children and families. In line with the *Partnership Commitments* of the *Early Help and Prevention Strategy* we will introduce a common tool for collecting feedback and evaluating the impact of Early Help work. The Early Help and CAF Team will play a vital role in collecting this data from practitioners/services and directly from families via telephone contact.

6. Commitment to Improve

6.1 *The Early Help and Prevention Strategy* and accompanying *Developing Plan*, which are aligned to the *Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision* and *Children's Strategy* contain the detailed strategic vision for further developments. Progress towards their ambitions will be monitored through the EHSB and Health and Wellbeing Board.

6.2 Continued developments within Targeted Services as the Senior Management structure and revised responsibilities are embedded will progress a review of the workforce development needs and introduced a refreshed Workforce Development Strategy.

6.3 Further investment in LiquidLogic will see Family Intervention and the Early Childhood Service utilising improved management information systems with the potential for Youth Services and multi-agency partners to become system users.

6.4 Commitment to increase opportunities for joint training and learning is increasing and will support improved Early Help services and outcomes for children and families in Wirral.