

## Social Care Services Board

### 26 October 16

### EARLY HELP UPDATE

**Purpose of report:** To provide an update on the Early Help System

#### Introduction

1. Surrey County Council's ambition is that children and young people are happy, healthy, safe and confident in their future<sup>1</sup>. As a partnership, we want to prevent events which stop children<sup>2</sup> from achieving this ambition. In particular, we want to prevent a range of different events which have the most significant impacts on children's wellbeing and life chances, and on their families, communities, services and the public purse. These might include, for example, neglect, physical abuse, sexual exploitation, mental health problems, antisocial or criminal behaviour, and disengagement from education.
2. **Early help** means a response, as soon as a problem starts to emerge at any point in a child's life, from foundation years through to teenage years, with the aim of stopping issues escalating or becoming entrenched.

#### Background

3. The Council faces a range of strategic challenges in 2016. The context is characterised by significant reductions in funding, increased demand, heightened regulatory pressure and a changing policy landscape. In our own assessment and that of Ofsted too many children were not getting the right help at the right time. Too many requests for help result in an unsatisfactory response from services. We were saying 'no' too often and missing the opportunity to provide help early and avoid more costly interventions later. We have also been intervening via social care mechanisms (undertaking social work assessments and services) when an early help offer would be more suitable, less intrusive and cheaper.
4. We have an extensive range of early help in Surrey but these services need to be better co-ordinated and more integrated to ensure the children get the right help at the right time. Our task is to deliver on the Department for Education Improvement Notice that requires that we "develop and implement a cohesive,

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<sup>1</sup> A joint vision for children and outcomes framework is currently being developed with our partner agencies.

<sup>2</sup> From this point we use the term children to mean 'children and young people'.

collaborative early help offer”.

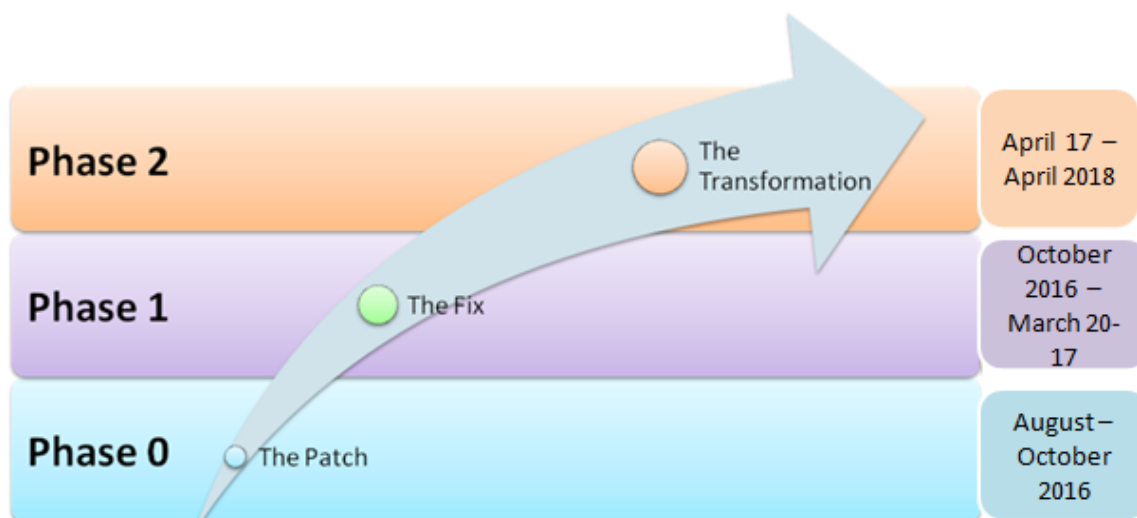
5. Over the last 6-months significant work has taken place to improve the early help system. It has also been acknowledged that a transformational change is required in order to ensure that all families get the right support, in the right place, at the right time, to prevent problems emerging and offer help at the earliest opportunity. Getting this right will create sustainable improvements in children’s lives and life chances in an effective and lower cost way, and reduce costly demand on acute / social care services.
6. We have two key requirements. Firstly the immediate need is to provide early help to children, young people and their families who are referred in to children’s social care; sometimes this will be instead of a social work service sometimes it will be as a step down after a social work service.
7. Secondly, we must rethink our early help operating model, developing a new model with our partners for 2017 – 2021, which will have long-term benefits in reducing demand on social care, SEND and health services while supporting children towards our goal that they will be healthy, happy, safe and confident in their futures.

## **Developing the Early Help System**

### **8. Phase Zero**

8.1. Planning around early help has a number of strands one of which has been planning for the MASH, which we have described as phase one, the “fix” in terms of introducing one front door where decisions can be made about the level of need and pathway required for children and families. In 2015 we undertook an early help practice pilot in South East Surrey in order to develop ways of working across services to deliver a co-ordinated early help offer. Building on the learning from this pilot and to prepare for the launch of the MASH we also introduced “Phase Zero”, a shorter term “patch” to start the process of turning the system around. Phase Zero went live on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016 and introduced a more visible and proactive co-ordination of the system from within the Children’s Service RAIS referral hubs with a small number of Early Help staff engaging with RAIS staff to identify and support appropriate Early Help cases to exit RAIS and reach the appropriate EH service. These colleagues are now established within the RAIS and work to proactively “stick together” children and families with the help they need. Phase Zero has also involved some realignment of council resource to support and deliver Early Help.

8.2. There is now a consistent throughput of cases into Early Help, both from initial contact and following social care input, with approximately 600 cases going from the Children’s Service into Early Help each month.



**Diagram A.** Patch, Fix, Transform

## 9. Phase One

9.1. Whilst Phase Zero has been in operation there has been work in parallel to draw on ongoing learning and to design the system that will deliver Phase One when the MASH goes live on 5<sup>th</sup> October. This has included building the IT system, the Early Help Module, developing the Early Help Coordination Hubs and building capacity within the workforce to respond to families needing Early Help. This capacity building has been supported by SCC’s £2.4m investment in services (with perspective savings of £11.7 million in order to make these savings by 2020) through the 2016/17 Early Help Commissioning Plan. This has seen both SCC and externally commissioned services with an improved ability to respond to an increased demand for Early Help through Phase Zero and once the MASH and EH Hubs are launched in Phase One.

9.2. The 2016-17 commissioning strategy aims to have an immediate impact on the intentions set out below and help us discover ‘what works’ while we develop the plan for 2017-21.

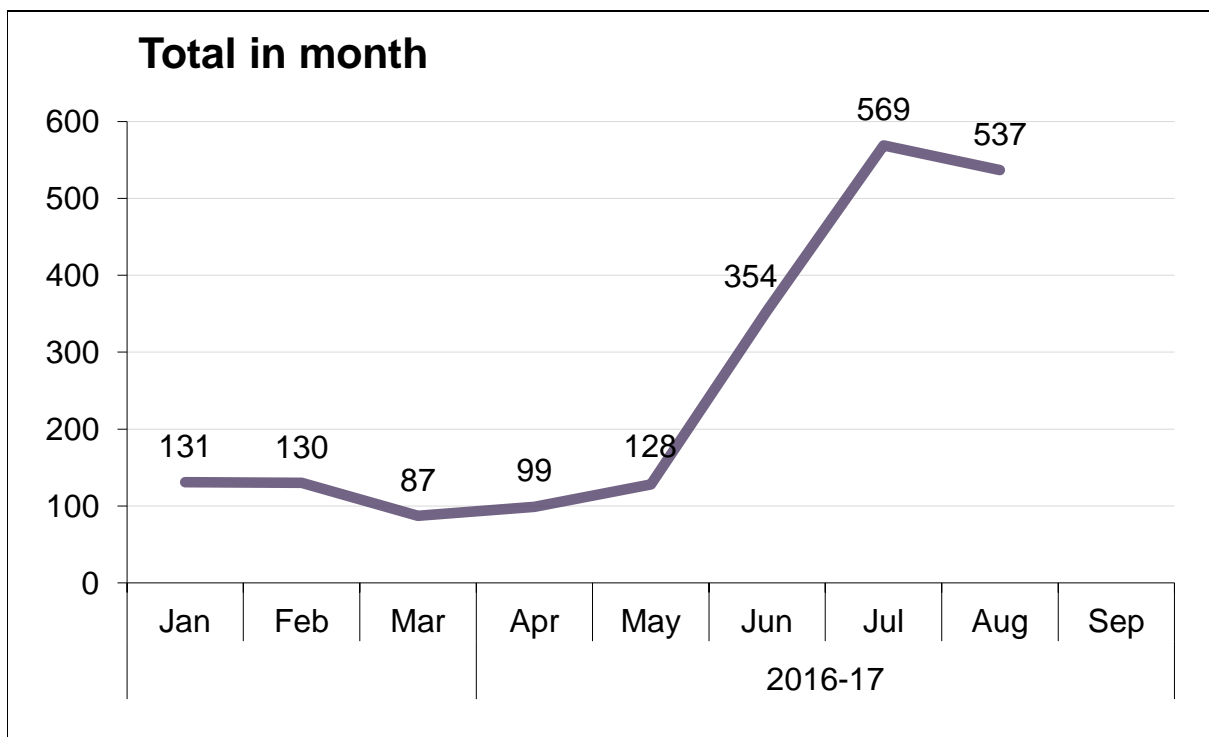
### 10. In 2016-17, we will:

- a.) Develop a local flexible family support service working with children’s centres, primary schools, the family support programme and young people’s service to develop a more joined-up local early help offer.
- b.) Expand our Local Prevention contracts to provide greater support to more young people and start working with young people from the age of 11 years.

Currently, the contract requires the supplier to work with young people from 13 to 19 years, we plan to vary the contract to include 11 and 12 year olds.

- c.) Refresh the Surrey parenting strategy and commissioning strategy to deliver an integrated parental support programme as part of the family support offer to include parent-to-parent relationship support as well as support for families to develop parenting capabilities for children with specific needs.
- d.) Invest in provision of health visitor services as part of an improved local offer
- e.) Redesign the early help system for 2017 – 2021 to include conducting primary research and needs analysis; evaluation of current early help and prevention services; consolidation what we are doing well; and de-commissioning services that are not achieving best-value outcomes

### Number of Contacts resulting in Early Help in the month



**Diagram B.** Increase in Early Help

## The MASH, Early Help and Social Care System

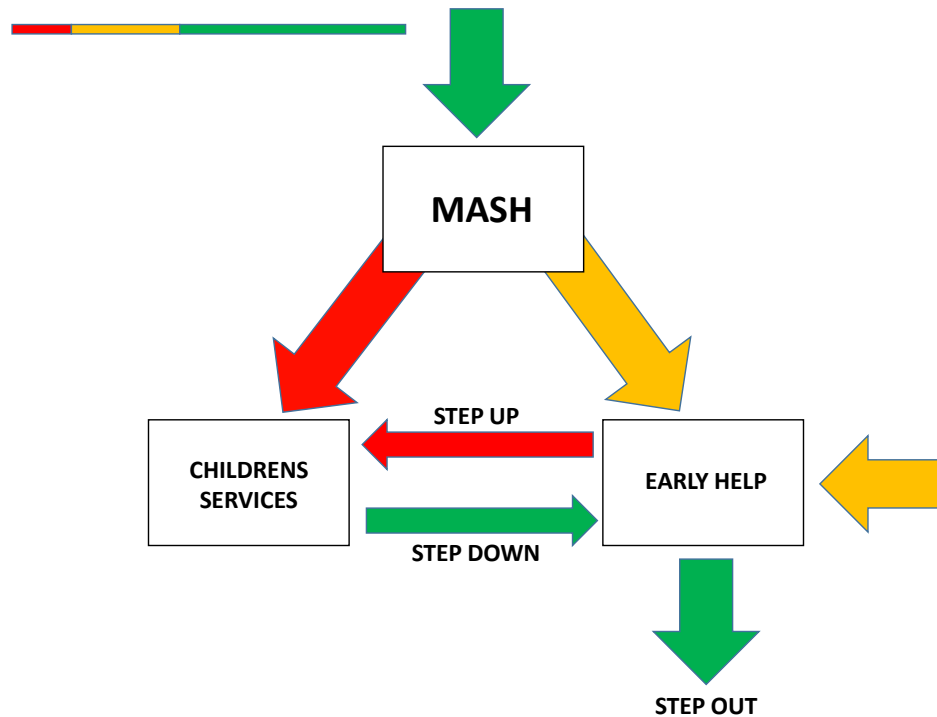


Diagram C. MASH and EH hubs

### 11. Phase Two

- 11.1. The early help commissioning strategy, for the current medium term financial plan (MTFP) period (2016-21), is to decommission the council's preventative services for children and families and re-commission a new model of delivery. The design of this new model will be informed by our insight into need and demand and evidence of what works. Our approach will be innovative and progressive, in an endeavour to improve outcomes for children within a challenging operating environment. This Early Help transformation is being supported by work between Aug-Dec 2016 undertaken with Ernst and Young.
- 11.2. The new model will have two key design characteristics; firstly it will cost less than the current service model therefore allowing us to balance our budget in line with the MTFP. Secondly, it will be designed to reduce and divert demand, allowing us to secure financial sustainability.
- 11.3. Thus Phase Two is the full transformation to achieve that cohesive, collaborative early help offer delivered jointly by all partners. A key element going forward will be re-engaging partners through a series of partnership events and ongoing collaboration, recognising that we have previously failed to take others with us on the Early Help journey but that now we have an opportunity to work together to agree our collective vision and approach to ensure children and families get the help they need when they need it.

11.4. The Social Care Services Board has established a task group to consider the contribution of the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) to the developing early help offer. This work will form an important platform for the Early Help transformation in which the VCFS will have a key role to play.

**Conclusions:**

12. Surrey is now demonstrating progress in respect of Early Help, which will be enhanced with the implementation of the MASH and Early Help Co-ordination Hubs in October 2016. Through the current investment in Early Help the county council has a clear plan to reduce demand on specialist services and to move towards a transformed system where we can be assured that children and families will be offered the help they need when they need it.

**Recommendations:**

13. That the Board notes the progress being made to develop the Early Help offer in Surrey.

14. That the Board endorses the investment and service development that is taking place to provide the children and families with the support that they need

15. The Board should review progress of Early Help at the end of Phase 1 in the first half of 2017

**Next steps:**

16. Officers will work with the Board's task group to review and support the work done by the voluntary, community and faith sector in respect of Early Help and bring this to the full board early in 2017.

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