

Children and Education Select Committee
Friday 17 November 2017
Early Help: A Case for Change



Purpose of report: Policy Development and Review

Introduction

1. Access to high quality Early Help services is vital to Surrey County Council's plans to improve outcomes for Surrey's children and families and key to the council's financial sustainability. This report outlines Surrey's strategy to transform Early Help and proposes the steps that will be required to re-purpose the county council's Early Help resources in line with the £6.75m medium term financial plan savings requirements in this area by 2019-20.
2. The delivery of preventative support and early help is not exclusive to Surrey County Council and there are a wide range of other agencies across sectors that contribute to the broader mission. Alongside this report (see Appendix) is a visual representation of the circles of support that exist, with the central (blue circle) representing targeted interventions, and the outer (green) circle representing organisations that contribute to community universal support. In addition there is an example case study (see Appendix) of how Surrey County Council works alongside local charities to support children and families. Surrey County Council continues to have a key leadership role in developing the wider system of early help in Surrey and this report describes proposals to transform this system.
3. The success of the Early Help transformation strategy will be judged against the following four outcomes:
 - a. Reduction in the likelihood of children and young people entering care or other acute and specialist services, where this can be prevented, with families receiving whole family help and support at an earlier stage of intervention (Measure: number of children aged 11+ entering care).
 - b. Significantly more families who require support have timely contact with services leading to better family outcomes (Measure: 100% increase from Apr 2017 baseline).
 - c. Families are enabled to help themselves and to build resilience which will be protective for the future (Measure: Outcome Star data)
 - d. The Early Help transformation needs to realise savings as outlined in the MTFP including reductions in Children's Service demand (Measure: MTFP).

From Improving to Transforming Early Help for Children and Families

Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from foundation years through to teenage years. Surrey was criticised in

the 2014 Ofsted safeguarding inspection for its fragmented Early Help offer which left too many children waiting too long to receive the help they needed. The subsequent Department for Education Improvement Notice requires the county council to "*develop and implement a cohesive, collaborative Early Help offer delivered jointly by all partners*".

4. To support better safeguarding decision-making and to ensure children receive the right help at the right time Surrey established a **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** and **four Early Help Co-ordination Hubs (EHCHs)** in October 2016. As a result of the new arrangements more than **1000 children** are now receiving Early Help following referral to the MASH or step-down from Children's Service's each month. Recent Ofsted monitoring visits have recognised that Early Help has been strengthened. To continue to expand the offer of early preventative support to more children and families in a context of reduced public funding the improvements to the work now must be to fundamentally re-engineer how we provide support to children and families in Surrey.
5. To this end alongside the work to consolidate improvements in the current Early Help system, work has been ongoing with partners to transform Surrey's Early Help offer. An Early Help Transformation Programme Board, chaired by the Lead Member for Children, Schools and Families, was established in April 2017. The Transformation Plan has been informed by an Early Help needs analysis undertaken in late 2016, which has been key to developing the Surrey's 'Child First' Commissioning Plan.

Local Family Partnerships: Surrey's Early Help Model
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6. The Early Help Transformation Programme is working towards implementing a network of local family partnerships across Surrey (previously referred to as 'Family Hubs'). Local family partnerships will bring together a network of key stakeholders in a community who are involved in supporting the health and well-being of children and families. These include statutory, voluntary, faith and community organisations (including businesses) who either provide preventative activities for children and families or are responsible for targeted and specialist interventions. All these organisations contribute to the Early Help offer and by binding them together at a local level it is anticipated that a rich network of integrated provision will be available to children and families in each local family partnership. It is anticipated that each district and borough will be sub-divided into up to five local family partnership areas.
7. The rationale for proposing the local family partnership model is that evidence suggests Early Help is at its most effective at a community level, when local statutory and voluntary organisations work in partnership to support families and professionals build strong supportive relationships between each other and with the families they are supporting. In an operating environment where public finances are constrained it is vital that new ways of working where organisations can more easily share information, resources, skills and knowledge are established to optimise their use and availability, at the same time building upon the assets which are latent in residents and communities. Importantly we have experience in Surrey of the benefits of this community approach through, for example, the Family Support Programme and our successful local partnership delivery of restorative justice.
8. Following a series of partner engagement events, eleven Early Help Advisory Boards have been established, involving all key stakeholders, to oversee the development of local family partnerships and the local Early Help offer in each district and borough.

The Early Help Advisory Boards are currently developing their local Early Help plans and designating their local family partnership reach areas.

9. As part of the transformation programme, work is underway to review the commissioning arrangements around Early Help, recognising the central work that voluntary, community and faith sector partners currently play and will continue to play in the transformed Early Help offer. These services will be commissioned, wherever possible, with partners and at a local (district and borough) level. A core component of the Early Help commissions is Surrey's network of children's centres.

Deploying SCC resources in Local Family Partnerships

10. SCC's Early Help budget primarily sits in Family Services and it is from this budget that the £6.57m Early Help savings need to be identified to achieve whole year savings by 2019-20 (approximately 20% of the Family Services budget).
11. **Children's Centres:** One third of Family Services budget (£11m) is currently used to commission Surrey's 58 children's centres. Proposals to SCC Cabinet in December 2017 will reflect a 20% reduction to children centre funding from April 2019 (£2.2m).
12. The aspiration is to improve services to children and families and to work with the providers of children's centres (these are mainly our primary schools) to develop a new model of delivery freed from the requirements of children centre 'designation' as mandated in (now suspended) Department for Education guidance. Many local authorities have chosen this route to give greater freedom and flexibility to provide the services that are required to meet local need; in Surrey this means freedom to shape children's centres to be a key component of the local family partnership model.
13. The commitment is to work with our partners in schools and the voluntary sector who have a track record of delivering high quality early years services in children centres to design a model which continues to fulfil the children's centre core purpose around health, well-being and early education. The ambition will be to make this more available to families with older children and to develop greater flexibility of staffing to provide resilience and more efficient deployment of resources with others in the local family partnership and across a borough/district. Through better integrating the children centre offer with the work of other services, freeing providers to focus upon outcomes rather than process, and by requiring children's centres to work together across a district/borough the reduced SCC revenue resource can go further in providing the Early Help children and families need.
14. The outline proposal for more effective deployment of children's centre resource will be presented to Cabinet in December 2017 which if agreed will be the platform for a period of engagement with existing providers to develop a new specification for Surrey's children's centres. This will then require public consultation before moving to implementation for April 2019. The Children and Education and Select Committee will have the opportunity to scrutinise the proposals for children's centres as the detailed proposals are developed with partners and providers.

15. **Surrey Family Services:** launched in May 2017 Surrey Family Services brought together a number of different services including: Youth Support Service; Community Youth Work; the Family Support Programme; Children's Centres; practitioners from the Early Years and Childcare Service; and the Early Help Co-ordination Hubs, which together coordinate and deliver a significant proportion of the Early Help across the county. Importantly (particularly in relation to demand reduction and financial sustainability) Family Services also has responsibility for young people identified as requiring a Child in Need social work service and those over the age of eleven who require an Edge of Care service. As part of the new Early Help operating model Family Services staffing will reduce by £2.46m in the course of 2017.
16. Family Services has been designed, with a management structure in place, in order to achieve its key outcomes of co-ordinating and delivering Early Help and reducing demand for acute children's services particularly the number of adolescents who come into care. The next step is to shape the practitioner and support workforce to achieve these outcomes.
17. A key consideration is to ensure that Family Services has the right number of staff to meet the predicted future demand. Through combining the findings of independently commissioned research (Transforming Early Help in Surrey Report 2016) and SCC's own data analysis, it has been possible to estimate the future demand and start to develop a staffing model that is equipped to respond. Based on current analysis it is anticipated that Family Services would be required to work with c3000 families with complex needs a year. When we consider the additional support available to families through the Family Support Programme and children centres it is anticipated that a total of c5000 families will be supported through a multi-agency whole family approach. Based on current analysis this would meet future demand and a staffing model has been developed which reflects this need and meets the requirements of the MTFP.
18. In addition to the right number of staff it is recognised that these staff must have the right skills. Families training is already being offered to staff to further develop existing skills with the aim that by the end of December 2018 all staff will have undertaken 14 days of accredited families training.
19. **Preventing children and young people entering care:** Family Services is developing an Edge of Care Service to target children who are already in care and need to return home and those who are identified as being most likely to come into the care of the local authority. The Edge of Care Service is currently being piloted and is demonstrating success in keeping the young people (aged 12 upwards) with whom it is working out of care. The Edge of Care Service is a directorate resource typically working with young people whose allocated social worker is in Children's Services and who also frequently have significant emotional / mental health concerns and / or associated special educational needs. For this reason the Hope Service (joint Children's Services and CAMHS provision), Surrey Outdoor Learning and Development and the Alternative Learning Programme are part of the Edge of Care package of support. In addition to the Edge of Care provision the specialist adolescent resources which are in all the Family Services district and borough teams

are increasingly engaged in supporting the work to ensure young people can remain safely in their family homes in their community, either as part of an Early Help or Child in Need intervention, rather than coming into care.

20. **Youth Work:** Surrey county council retains a commitment to deliver open access youth work. The amount of open access sessions delivered by the county council youth workers has reduced in recent years as it has been particularly affected by the recruitment freeze. As a result the current provision is uneven across the county and does not reflect need. Through engagement with partners and staff as part of the Early Help transformation a new model is emerging which offers the prospect of greater flexibility and consistency in the youth work offer, which is better matched to need.
21. It is now necessary to redefine the allocation of youth work in each district and borough and to ensure that there is a minimum level of county council resource deployed in every area. It is proposed that there is one dedicated full time youth worker in each district and borough to oversee and contribute to delivery of open access youth work supported by a number of staff as determined through the existing resource allocation scheme. The minimum number of county council led youth work sessions per week per district/borough would be 6 with this rising in relation to the resource allocation scheme to a maximum of 12 sessions per week in the district and boroughs with the highest need / demand. This county council resource needs to be seen as one part of the larger mix of provision delivered by partners and needs to be deployed to complement partner delivery. This resource will be flexible allowing for seasonal and local responses to need.
22. Work is ongoing to develop the future youth work offer in each district/borough overseen by a Youth Work Development Group made up of county and district/borough representatives and the voluntary, community and faith sector organisation who deliver youth work in the area and young people who use the services. The Youth Work Development Group would ensure a coordinated response to open access delivery so that high quality youth work is delivered by the organisation most able to respond to need. The Youth Work Development Group (reporting to the Early Help Advisory Board) would also support voluntary and community groups to enhance youth work delivery, identify funding and offer training and support and better align to the Local Family Partnership operating model. This will ensure open access delivery is considered in all areas that need it in a borough and district.
23. **Staffing Re-structure:** A Surrey Family Services staffing consultation will start in January 2018. The staffing model is being designed to ensure there is sufficient capacity within every district and borough team to undertake the range of Early Help and Child in Need work required and to provide for a dedicated Edge of Care Service. Staff will be identified to work to particular Local Family Partnership areas within their district / borough and will be key players, along with children centre and Family Support Programme staff, in bringing together the integrated network of support for children and families in each partnership area.

24. **Other Family Services Savings:** Family Services staffing changes and children centre re-modelling account for just over £4.66m of savings. The remainder of the savings requirement (£1.9m over two years) will come from a combination of re-commissioning supported accommodation (£500K), non-staffing services savings (£1m) and other contracts and income (£400K).
25. **Working across Programmes:** There are many interdependencies between the Early Help Transformation and other change programmes ongoing across Children Schools and Families. Working closely with the SEND Programme in particular will provide an opportunity to ensure SEND services are embedded into the future Early Help System.

Conclusions:

26. Early Help is a priority for SCC, with clear benefits for improving long term outcomes for children and families as well as opportunities to better manage demand for services at higher thresholds.
27. Consultation and engagement to date has led to the co-design of the operating model called local family partnerships. The local family partnership is a place based model which will see the development of a more integrated network of targeted, statutory and universal Early Help support across sectors and more readily available at a community level.
28. This report has provided the high level proposals for how children's centre and youth work and other Family Services resources will be re-shaped to ensure they fit the future operating model and also realise the required savings. Further engagement and consultation with staff, elected members and partners is now required to fill in the detail of how the component parts of the SCC contribution to local family partnerships will be deployed before this is shared for public consultation in 2018.

Recommendations:

29. That the Children and Education Select Committee:
- a. Supports the strategic direction of Early Help and provides commentary on the Early Help Transformation proposals outlined in the report
 - b. Identifies areas in which the committee and its members can support the Early Help Transformation programme.

Next steps:

Early Help Transformation proposals will be submitted for Cabinet for its meeting on Thursday 14 December.

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Sources/background papers: None

Appendix 1: Example of external partners supporting early help

Appendix 2: Organisations involved in local early help

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