

8 July 2013**Agenda Item: 10****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE****ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EARLY HELP UNIT ALIGNED TO THE MULTI-
AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB****Purpose of the Report**

1. To report the establishment of an Early Help Unit aligned to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), to manage and signpost referrals to a range of early help services.
2. To seek approval to establish two additional early help officer posts to be located within the Early Help Unit.

Information and Advice**The Early Help Unit**

3. It is proposed that an Early Help Unit be fully established by September 2013. The key functions of the Unit will be to:
 - provide information packages to the MASH to support decision making and to identify where early help services or youth justice are already involved with children and young people
 - analyse cases that the MASH has assessed as not meeting the Children's Social Care threshold as set out in Nottinghamshire's Pathway to Provision to determine whether an early help service can be offered
 - act as a direct contact point for professionals and families wanting to access early help services
 - advise on the completion of Common Assessment Framework (CAF) assessments, to audit the quality of assessment and planning and to hold a register of completed CAFs
 - provide a comprehensive training and support package for practitioners and managers using the CAF
 - track the outcomes of young people receiving early help by developing a comprehensive data set to include:

- the 0 – 19 year old offer from Early Years & Early Intervention and Targeted Support
 - preventative referrals made to Youth Offending Teams.
4. It is envisaged that this model will reduce inappropriate referrals to the MASH, and will enable the effective tracking of CAFs and the support and intervention provided by a range of universal/early help agencies.

Resources

5. A request for project management assistance in the establishing of the Early Help Unit has been agreed by the corporate Improvement Programme.
6. Interim arrangements for the accommodation of the Unit have also been identified at Meadow House, Mansfield, although the medium term ambition is to co-locate the Unit with the MASH once space can be identified (this is anticipated in January 2014 following the proposed relocation of the MASH).
7. A staffing structure for the Unit, which will report to the Group Manager for Early Years & Early Intervention, has been agreed as follows:
- Team Manager 1 FTE
 - Senior Practitioner 0.8FTE
 - Early Help Officer 4 FTE
 - Targeted Support Case Manager 2 FTE
 - Seconded Early Years practitioner 1 FTE
8. Each of the above posts is currently established within either the Targeted Support or Early Years Service, except for two additional Early Help Officer posts which require establishing. As such, the majority of the Unit will be established through the realignment or secondment of existing staffing resource from the Early Years and Early Intervention and Targeted Support and Youth Justice Services.

Other Options Considered

9. No other options have been considered in relation to developing the Early Help Unit as the benefits of well-coordinated early help are widely accepted. Research has shown that it is better for families to receive support before difficulties escalate thereby preventing the need for more intrusive and expensive services. This is underpinned by the Council's Early Intervention Strategy.

Reasons for Recommendation/s

10. The establishment of the Early Help Unit and two additional posts will support the structure to effectively signpost referrals from the MASH that do not meet the Children's Social Care threshold for statutory social care intervention.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required

Implications for Service Users

12. The Early Help Unit will work alongside the MASH to support referrals for families to be passed to the early help services, namely Targeted Support and Early Years & Early Intervention, and will strengthen the management arrangements for improved tracking of individual children's outcomes.

Financial Implications

13. The two new Early Help Officer posts will cost annually approximately £36,000 per post based on Hay Band A costs plus on-costs of 25%. Capacity is scoped within the proposed structure to cover for sickness, annual leave and training time. The costs of both posts will be met from the revenue budget of the Early Years and Early Intervention Service.

Equalities Implications

14. Due regard has been given to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Safeguarding of Children Implications

15. Both Targeted Support and Early Years & Early Intervention work with vulnerable children and young people. In some instances the cases are complex with some safeguarding concerns which do not meet the threshold for statutory Social Care assessment and intervention. Both services are early intervention and prevention services working with children, young people and families to avoid them requiring statutory Child Protection assessment and intervention. The development of the Early Help Unit will strengthen the arrangements for working together and improve the tracking of outcomes for children and young people.

Human Resource Implications

16. The majority of the posts needed to establish the Early Help Unit will be identified from existing structures in Targeted Support and Early Years & Early Intervention. The two additional posts will require the same person specification (qualification, skill set and experience) as the current Early Help Officer posts. Day to day management will be provided by the Early Help Team Manager.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) the establishment of an Early Help Unit aligned to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub be noted.
- 2) the establishment of two additional Early Help Officer posts be approved.

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Constitutional Comments (LM 21/06/13)

17. The Children and Young People's Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

Financial Comments (KLA 20/06/13)

18. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 13 of the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Pathway to Provision document

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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