

23 April 2014

Agenda Item: 8

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN'S TRUST EARLY HELP DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2013 – 2016: UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update to the Children and Young People's Committee on progress in implementing the Nottinghamshire Children's Trust Early Help Development Plan 2013 – 2016.

Information and Advice

2. The Early Help Development Plan has aligned key strategies across the Nottinghamshire Children's Trust and acts as an umbrella for existing work that is underway through the Child Poverty, Early Years and Closing the Educational Gap strategies, including the language for life strategy.
3. The Plan was developed to improve the multi-agency early help offer to children, young people and families across Nottinghamshire and was approved by Policy Committee in October 2013. There is an increased emphasis on early help within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013, and it is also a key focus within the revised Ofsted framework for inspecting services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.
4. The Plan aims to ensure all agencies across the Children's Trust coordinate their early help activities to provide an integrated and seamless service to children and families.
5. The Plan is overseen by the Early Help Executive and reports to the Nottinghamshire Children's Trust.
6. Nottinghamshire has adopted Professor Munro's definition of early help, meaning help provided early in the life of a child and early in the emergence of a problem. The Plan has been developed in line with Nottinghamshire Pathway to Provision which supports practitioners to appropriately identify the support needs of children and families.
7. The Plan has developed and identified a number of key actions to ensure that the multi-agency early help offer is effective, high quality and easily accessible: progress is measured against those actions.

Progress to Date

8. The Plan has a number of work streams and progress on each of these is detailed below:
9. **Improving Access:** A review of the Early Help Unit (the Unit was established in September 2013) has been completed with recommendations being built into the transition plan that will support the alignment of the unit with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) from 1 April 2014. The network of Joint Access Teams (JATs) has been reviewed following a period of consultation and has been replaced by Complex Case Resolution meetings (CCRMs). CCRMs will provide a mechanism for the management of complex cases which are often referred to as “stuck” cases. Alongside this activity the current ‘step-down’ process for families who are no longer in need of support from Children’s Social Care has been clarified and strengthened to enable families to continue to receive appropriate levels of support from early help services.
10. **Assessment:** the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) has been re-worked to simplify its use to ensure children, young people and families have swift access to the most appropriate early help service. The Reworked CAF form is now known as the Early Help Assessment Form (EHAF) and there is an implementation plan for its roll out to all practitioners in the children’s workforce. It is intended that with a simplified method for holistically assessing the needs of vulnerable children and young people, more families will receive the early support they need and thus prevent them from needing more specialist interventions.
11. **Workforce:** a workforce development plan has been established incorporating occupational standards for early help practitioners to ensure the workforce is appropriately skilled and experienced to support families who do not meet the threshold for Children’s Social Care. The plan will be brought before Committee for approval at a forthcoming meeting.
12. **Children’s Health Services:** plans to enable health services such as GP practices to be young people friendly are being developed and work has started to align and integrate commissioning related activity for Health Visiting, School Nursing, Family Nurse Partnership and Children’s Centres to identify opportunities to strengthen the commissioning and delivery of public health services.
13. **Vulnerable Groups:** a Children Missing Education (CME) Strategy has been developed with a supporting action plan to ensure service provision is prioritised to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people.
14. **Performance and Quality Assurance:** an Early Help dataset has been developed with key performance indicators to enable managers to gather robust performance data. The intelligence from the dataset will inform service improvements and standardise reporting for early help and children’s social care in line with Ofsted expectations. This will be achieved via the newly formed Early Help Improvement Groups (EHIGs). The EHIGs provide locality leadership for the early help agenda in a defined area. The three localities are North (Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood), West (Mansfield and Ashfield) and South (Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe). They are chaired by Group Managers in the Early

Help Service; the groups will bring together a core group of managers and practitioners to co-ordinate activity and improve the early help service offer.

15. **Resourcing:** research into evidence based programmes which use effective approaches has been commissioned and a Knowledge Transfer partnership has been established with Nottingham Trent University.
16. **Early Years:** an early years plan has been developed and will be presented to the Policy Committee for approval on 2 April 2014. The plan aims to ensure young children have the best start in life through access to quality early years provision.
17. In summary, there has been a significant amount of activity to implement the Early Help Development Plan since its approval in the Autumn of 2014, to ensure children, young people and families receive the support they need as quickly as possible and enables families to move seamlessly between services when appropriate, having timely access to early help services.

Other Options Considered

18. No other options have been considered. The benefits of well-coordinated early help are widely recognised and the plan supports the Nottinghamshire Children's Trust ambition of Nottinghamshire being a place where children are "safe, healthy and happy, where everyone enjoys a good quality of life and where everyone can achieve their potential"

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

19. The Early Help Development Plan brings together key strategies across the Children's Trust workforce and continues to support work to achieve better outcomes for children, young people and families through the improved coordination of evidence based interventions.

Statutory and Policy Implications

20. 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

21. The Plan supports the ambition for children and families to receive the most appropriate support to meet their needs at the earliest opportunity.

Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Implications

22. The Children's Trust workforce supports 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. The Early Help

Development Plan strengthens the arrangements for working together and improves the tracking of outcomes for children and young people.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the update on the Nottinghamshire Children's Trust Early Help Development Plan 2013-2016 be noted.

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Constitutional Comments

23. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (KLA 04/04/14)

24. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Nottinghamshire Children's Trust Early Help Development Plan 2013-2016 – report to Policy Committee on 16 October 2013

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 – DfE March 2013

Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers – Ofsted December 2013

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-and-evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-services-for-children-need-of-help-and-protectio>

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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