

26th July 2021

Agenda Item: 15

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL WORK

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE EARLY HELP STRATEGY 2021 - 2025

Purpose of the Report

1. The report is brought to raise Members' awareness of the recently published Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Early Help Strategy 2021 – 2025 and to confirm reporting requirements to future meetings of the Committee.

Information

2. The Early Help Executive, established in January 2020 and chaired by the Group Manager for Early Help and Youth Justice Services, is a sub-group of the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership ('the Partnership'). The executive brings together senior stakeholders from across the Partnership and its membership includes Local Authority children's services, health providers and commissioners, district councils, police, Department for Work and Pensions and third sector partners.
3. Last month, the Partnership's Strategic Assurance and Improvement Group approved for publication the Nottinghamshire Early Help Strategy 2021-25, attached as **Appendix 1**. The intention of the Early Help Strategy is to establish an overarching set of principles which all Early Help services are signed up to, no matter their area of particular focus and which of the above plans they are governed by. The strategy also sets out priorities for development over the next five years. These are goals shared by all services – ways of working that services are yet to have fully embedded but that they strive towards together.
4. The Partnership's approach to Early Help is underpinned by the following principles:
 - Our ambition is for Nottinghamshire to be a place where birth and social background do not hold people back from being healthy, safe and happy, and being able to contribute to society.
 - We believe Early Help is everyone's responsibility, and that this is how families will receive support from the right service at the right time for them.
 - We will take a holistic approach considering the needs of the whole family when assessing and responding to the needs of children and young people

- We will work together, with families in the centre; a multi-agency partnership of universal and targeted services, community organisations and families.
- We will take a strengths-based approach, focussing on family assets and using relationship-based practice.
- We will endeavour to commission and deliver evidence-based interventions that have been shown to make a difference.

5. The Partnership's Early Help development priorities are:

- **Community Resilience** – promoting and supporting communities to be resilient is about equipping them with the tools to confidently and creatively use their assets to develop local solutions which address local challenges
- **Family Hubs** – bringing a range of teams who serve the same local community together is one of the ways that we will ensure closer integration and joint working to achieve shared outcomes for families
- **Contextual Approaches** – for several years the Early Help Partnership has taken a Whole Family approach, with assessments that consider the strengths and needs of all household members and not just those of an individual child. We are ambitious to expand this model to include the wider context in which the child is growing up, and in coming years staff will be trained to assess the neighbourhood, peer group and online context.
- **Data Maturity** – our work as a partnership is underpinned by the appropriate and ethical use of data. We are committed to improving the way we work together to share what we know about our families and their neighbourhoods so that we can use the data that is collected to understand need and improve services for families.

Implementing the development priorities in Nottinghamshire County Council Children's Services

Community Resilience

6. The Community Resilience task and finish group has identified several objectives to work on over the coming months to help build resilience in some of Nottinghamshire's most disadvantaged communities. These include exploring how the Partnership can:
- Learn from models of social prescribing developed within Public Health to enable early help practitioners to support families
 - Introduce community organising approaches within the early help workforce so that we can encourage parents to engage with and develop local peer support networks that are sustaining
 - Explore how aspects of community resilience (community organising / self-help / Peer Support) can be built into commissioning frameworks
 - Scale up evidence informed peer-led parenting programmes in local communities using Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC).

7. The plan to scale up evidence informed peer-led parenting programmes is progressing well despite the challenges of the Covid pandemic. The Empowering Parents Empowering Communities programme offers a range of peer-led parenting programmes such as Being a Parent, Living with teenagers, Parenting children with ASD/ADHD and a parental conflict course called Being a Parent Together. Parents are recruited, trained and supported by four coordinators working across the County and within the Children's Centres. In the past year 30 schools (mainly primary) have been successfully engaged by the Empowering Parents Empowering Communities Hub Coordinators and by the end of the summer Nottinghamshire's Family Service will have recruited and trained over 30 parents as Volunteer Group Leaders. A number of parent volunteers have been recruited to deliver Empowering Parents Empowering Communities courses within the Children's Centre Service. In autumn 2021 work will begin to engage secondary schools in the programme. Recruitment and training of volunteers is being managed in a phased manner to ensure volunteers are well trained and supported. Empowering Parents Empowering Communities courses usually last about eight weeks. Over the winter and spring the Family Service and the Children's Centres have worked collaboratively to offer condensed versions of the programme remotely. In total the volunteer Parent Group leaders have delivered up to a dozen courses to just over 60 adults.

Family Hubs

8. The Family Hubs Task and Finish Group is chaired by the Group Manager for Early Childhood Services and involves a range of partners including District Councils, Health Services, Youth Service, Early Help Services, Children's Centre Service, Inspire Culture, Job Centre Plus and many more. The group has been brought together to scope the development of Family Hubs in Nottinghamshire in line with national policy direction.
9. Family Hubs are for families with children and young people aged 0-19 years. They can access a broad range of services to overcome difficulties and build stronger relationships amongst family members.
10. Family Hub services have a range of objectives, varying from area to area, but will broadly speaking provide early help and intervention for families with the aim of improving education, health and public service outcomes for children and adult members of the family. This will mean all children and family service professionals move away from silo-working and work in a much more joined-up way, supporting the whole family. This matters, whether it is about improving the support for every family on day-to-day basis, or at the other extreme, ensuring that children are not ignored, and abuse spotted before it is too late.
11. The Task and Finish Group is currently carrying out mapping and engagement exercises to identify potential physical assets that could provide services for families with children aged 0-19 years, including young people up to the age of 25 years who are Care Leavers or have an Education Health Care Plan. Target areas are being confirmed and will be a mixture of 'priority neighbourhoods' identified with district and borough councils, as well as areas with greater numbers of children in low income households and areas identified using the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI).
12. Consultation and active engagement of children, young people and families will be a priority of the group and where possible, the group is keen to get families involved in the governance and delivery arrangements of these new Hubs.

13. A virtual Family Hub is also being created using both the Notts Help Yourself website as an online resource for all families, and the Early Help Unit as a route into services and support.
14. Further reports focusing on Family Hubs will be brought to the Committee as work progresses and consultation findings with families and stakeholders are reviewed and analysed. Committee will be asked to approve proposals to create Family Hubs in areas of need, using existing appropriate physical and virtual assets of the County Council and its partners.

Contextual Approaches

15. The focus of the Contextual Approaches Task and Finish Group will be on workforce development across the early help partnership. The ambition is to upskill the workforce to recognise and respond to the way children, young people and families are being affected by their environment, or 'context'.
16. Multi-modal training, tools and templates will be developed to support the workforce to assess contexts in which a family lives when undertaking assessments. Staff will learn to be mindful of the impact of issues such as peer groups, social media, parental conflict, education exclusion, health inequalities and local employment opportunities on a child, young person or families presenting behaviours.
17. Contextual Safeguarding training has already been delivered with several professionals who work with adolescents, to understand and respond to extra familial harm (criminal or sexual exploitation, youth violence, radicalisation, harmful sexual behaviour). The reach of this training will be extended to a wider group, including police, district and borough council community safety teams and housing departments.

Data Maturity

18. The Data Maturity Task and Finish Group will provide governance, overseeing data sharing and use across all partners to support families. Data sharing agreements between different Local Authority departments and health, housing and police will be reviewed to achieve the regular submission of relevant open individual level data feeds. Data will be aggregated and analysed on a locality level, with partners able to access data dashboards through a shared and secure online data hub.
19. This will allow services to target relevant support, getting the skills mix in their teams and hubs right for the community they are serving.

Other Options Considered

20. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

21. The Nottinghamshire Early Help Strategy 2021-2025 aligns with the priorities of the Council Plan 2017-2021.

22. The report ensures Members are informed of the progress of developments against this high profile agenda.

Statutory and Policy Implications

23. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

24. There are no financial implications for publication of the strategy and these priorities will be delivered within existing resources.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Committee:

- 1) agrees to receive an annual update of progress against the priorities in the Early Help Strategy 2021 – 2025, attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 2) considers whether there are any further actions it considers necessary as a result of the information contained in this report.

Steve Edwards

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Constitutional Comments (AK 25/06/21)

25. This report falls within remit of Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (LCD 25/06/21)

26. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

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.

[Family_Manifesto.pdf \(strengtheningfamiliesmanifesto.com\)](https://strengtheningfamiliesmanifesto.com)

[Planning early childhood services in 2020: Learning from practice and research on children's centres and family hubs | Early Intervention Foundation \(eif.org.uk\)](https://eif.org.uk)

[The best start for life a vision for the 1,001 critical days.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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