

# **Nottinghamshire's Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy**

**'Early Intervention is intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families, or with a population most at risk of developing problems.'**

**Early intervention is a process and may occur at any point in a child or young person's life.'**

Grasping the Nettle, C4E0, 2010

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# Section One: Our Ambition and Context

## 1. Introduction

The Nottinghamshire Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy sets out Nottinghamshire Children's Trust's ambition for the development of early intervention and prevention services. The strategy has been developed in response to the national policy context and the local needs of children and young people in Nottinghamshire and applies across the Nottinghamshire Children's Trust and its constituent services.

Our Strategy defines what we mean by early intervention in Nottinghamshire; sets out the principles that will underpin the future development of services; and outlines the strategy's links to other local priorities and strategies.

Our Strategy further defines the five future key strands of early intervention and prevention work in Nottinghamshire, based upon the five golden threads from C4EO's report on early intervention, *Grasping the Nettle*. For each of the five strands there will be an implementation plan.

The **five** key strands are:

- I. The provision of services to ensure the best start in life**
- II. The development of language for life**
- III. The engagement and support of parents and carers**
- IV. The development of effective structures and processes**
- V. The use and provision of management information**

Lastly, our Strategy outlines the impact indicators that will be used to measure our success in improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.

### **a) National policy context**

Since taking office in May 2010, the Coalition Government has established two independent reviews covering early intervention and prevention:

- *The Foundation Years, Independent Review on Poverty* (December 2010) by Frank Field MP,
- *Early Intervention: The Next Steps* (January 2011) by Graham Allen MP.

Both reports are referred to in the Government's recently produced Child Poverty Strategy with regard to the fundamental importance of the early years in determining a child's life chances. The Government intends to produce a 'new vision' for the early years later in 2011.

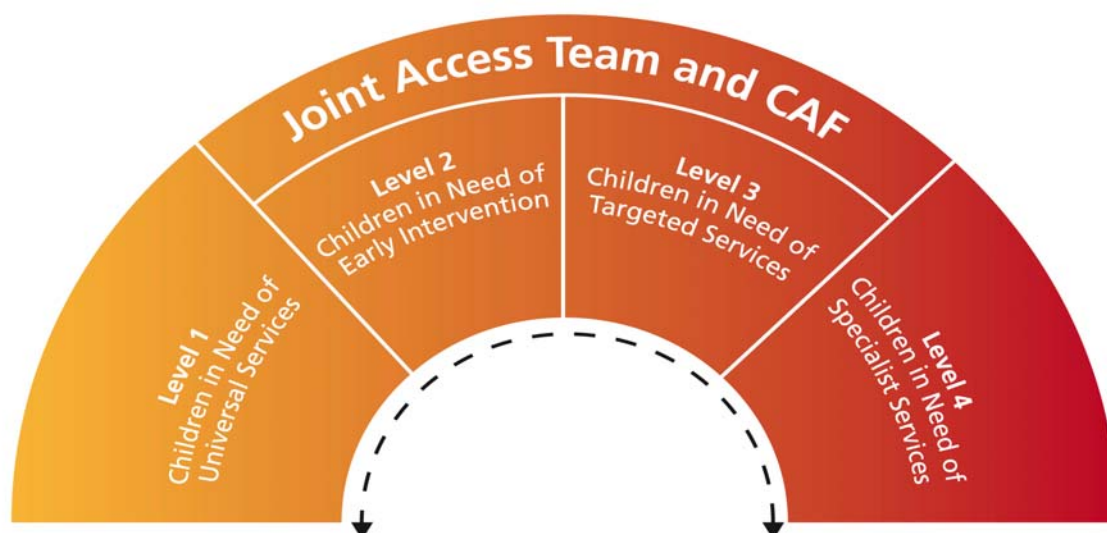
Finally, the recently published final report of the Munro Review of Child Protection (May 2011) recommends that there should be a duty on local authorities and statutory partners to coordinate an early offer of help to families who do not meet the thresholds for services from Children's Social Care, to address needs before they escalate to child protection issues.

## b) Local policy context

The development of effective early intervention and prevention services is critical at a time of reducing resources across the public sector and rising demand for specialist services. For example, the last two years has seen an unprecedented rise in demand for specialist services from Children's Social Care in Nottinghamshire. This has now stabilised, with a much higher proportion of referrals leading onto initial assessments. However, more effective early intervention and prevention services would result in fewer inappropriate referrals and children, young people and their families receiving the support required much earlier and at a reduced cost.

In 2010, the Pathway to Provision initiative was introduced to support practitioners in identifying the most appropriate level of support required by a child, young person or family. The agreed multi-agency thresholds are set out in the Pathway to Provision Handbook across four levels of need, which are represented on the Nottinghamshire continuum of need (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: The Nottinghamshire Continuum of Children and Young People's Needs**



The focus for early intervention and prevention services will be those children and young people whose needs are at either level two (early intervention) or level three (targeted), as defined by the Pathway to Provision continuum of need.

## c) Definition for early intervention in Nottinghamshire

Throughout this strategy, early intervention is defined as:

**'Intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families, or with a population most at risk of developing problems. Early intervention is a process and may occur at any point in a child or young person's life.'**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Taken from Grasping the Nettle, C4EO 2010

## **d) Our early intervention and prevention ambition for Nottinghamshire**

Our ambition for early intervention and prevention services in Nottinghamshire is that **Children, young people and their families will receive the most appropriate support to meet their needs at the earliest opportunity, in order to ensure better outcomes and the cost effective delivery of services.**

This ambition sits alongside the ambition of the Nottinghamshire Children's Trust and the County Council's Children, Families and Cultural Services Department.

***“We want Nottinghamshire to be a place where children are safe and happy, where everyone enjoys a good quality of life and where everyone can achieve their potential”***

Nottinghamshire Children's Trust and Nottinghamshire County Council, Children, Families and Cultural Services Department

## **e) Nottinghamshire's key principles for the early intervention and prevention work**

### **We will:**

- intervene at the earliest opportunity in order to secure the best outcomes for children, young people and families
- target resources at the early years, in order to maximise the future life chances of children and young people
- ensure that children and young people are effectively safeguarded by all of the agencies and staff that work with them
- work together to reduce duplication in areas such as the assessments of need
- ensure children, young people and families will be supported to participate in key early intervention and prevention processes
- ensure that the views and experiences of children, young people and families inform and influence all areas of development
- use evidence-based practice to inform planning for future service provision
- adopt a whole family approach, whilst keeping the child or young person firmly at the centre of any intervention.

## **f) The key priorities and strategies linked with the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy**

The Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy has clear links with a number of the other key priorities of the Children's Trust including:

- building upon the improvements made in child protection
- developing a targeted support service for young people
- reducing the achievement gap at all Key Stages

- addressing child poverty
- improving family and parenting support services
- developing and delivering a clear 'Statement of Intent' for Children's Social Care provision.

The Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy will also link to a range of other strategies across the Children's Trust including:

- the Sustainable Community Strategy
- the Child and Family Poverty Strategy
- the Youth Crime Strategy
- the Nottinghamshire CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service) Strategy
- the forthcoming Health and Well-Being Strategy
- the forthcoming Joint Commissioning Strategy for Disabled Children.

## **2. The key impact indicators for the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy in Nottinghamshire**

In terms of measuring the impact of the Strategy we are developing a range of early intervention and prevention impact indicators. The likely impact indicators are:

- The readiness of children to start school and to progress through subsequent stages (national measure to be decided)
- The success in closing the gap in educational attainment between children and young people from different socio economic backgrounds
- The reduction in the number of children and young people missing school
- The reduction in the rate of teenage pregnancies
- The tackling of inequalities in low birth weight in order improve health outcomes in childhood and adulthood
- The reduction in the number of children and young people experiencing poverty
- The number of children benefiting from an early years place (national measure to be decided)
- The rate of participation in education, training and employment by 16-18 year olds
- The number of families that have been through an evidence-based early intervention programme (national measure to be decided)
- The number of contacts made to Children's Social Care
- The percentage of referrals to Children's Social Care going on to initial assessment
- The number of children requiring statutory child protection intervention
- The number of first time entrants to the youth justice system.

The Children's Trust Executive will lead on the monitoring of progress against these indicators and will agree targets for improvement.

### **3. The target populations for the early intervention and prevention strategy**

The children and young people's chapter of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) published in September 2010, provides a detailed analysis of needs in Nottinghamshire and identifies potential groups of children and young people who might form the target populations for early intervention and prevention services. These include:

- a) children and young people at risk of entering or re-entering Children's Social Care
- b) teenage parents and pregnant teenagers
- c) children and young people missing education
- d) young carers
- e) children and young people with disabilities or special educational needs (SEN)
- f) children and young people engaged in anti-social behaviour, in receipt of a police reprimand or on the edge of criminal activity
- g) children and young people with a parent or carer in prison
- h) children and young people who are adversely affected by domestic violence or who are part of families discussed at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACS), but who are not being currently supported by Children's Social Care
- i) children and young people whose parents or carers have mental health issues
- j) children and young people with alcohol, drug and substance misuse issues or those living with a parent or carer who has alcohol, drug and substance misuse issues
- k) children not ready to participate in education at the age of 4
- l) children and young people undergoing difficult transitions at key stages of life.
- m) children and families experiencing severe or persistent poverty
- n) Children and young people whose families are homeless.

## SECTION TWO: THE KEY STRANDS

### 4. Key strand one: the provision of services to ensure the best start in life

**'Enabling infants to become rounded, capable people results in great and lasting social benefits through a lifetime that includes happiness and security in childhood, achievement in education, readiness for productive work and, above all, successful parenthood.'** 'Early Intervention: the next steps.' Graham Allen MP. Jan 2011

#### Where are we now?

Nottinghamshire has 58 children's centres that offer a range of services involving a variety of partners, which include:

- High quality early learning and family learning activities
- Support to parents who are seeking to return to work through volunteering and training opportunities
- a range of health and family/parenting support services.

The children's centre network is supported by a range of programmes and activities across the partnership, including:

- The Integrated Healthy Child Programme
- The early notification of pregnancy agreements
- The recording of parental consent in the Parent Child Held Record
- The 'Ready for Nursery' groups
- The Home-talk Service
- The Healthy Children's Centres initiative.

#### How will we do it?

Early years provision in Nottinghamshire will be reviewed over the next twelve months. All current services and programmes will be examined with decisions made about which ones to commission through other organisations.

The review will result in:

- The more efficient use of available resources
- The more effective targeting of resources to children and families with the greater needs
- The development of more effective targeted support for children and families within a universal early years framework
- The equitable distribution of early years provision across Nottinghamshire based upon both need and local demography
- The integration of existing early years provision to offer a single point of access to services providing the **Early Years Offer** in Nottinghamshire.



The service review and subsequent development of early years provision will be supported by the following initiatives led by the health sector:

- The development of a partnership approach to the introduction in Nottinghamshire of the 'Health Visitor Implementation Plan 2011-2015' with a focus on the most vulnerable families
- The commitment to the development and roll out of the Family Nurse Partnership arrangements to provide intensive and structured support to the most vulnerable young first time mothers

Finally, the development of early years provision will take into account the recommendations of the recently published report on the Early Years Foundation Stage by Dame Clare Tickell, as and when they are adopted by Government

### **How will we measure change?**

- The Early Years and Early Intervention Service Review by September 2012
- We will establish of a Family Nurse Partnership in Nottinghamshire
- We will adopt a partnership wide agreed approach to the revised role for health visitors with a focus on the most vulnerable families in line with the Department for Health's Health Visitor Implementation Plan.

## **5. Key strand two: the development of language for life**

**“The ability to communicate is an essential life skill which underpins a child’s future development, but more children struggle than is commonly recognised”**

Grasping the Nettle, Executive Summary, C4EO, 2010

### **Where are we now?**

**Nottinghamshire’s Language for Life Strategy** (0-7 years), has been cited as best practice in the C4EO report “Grasping the Nettle: Early intervention for Children, Families and Communities” (2010). Key elements of Nottinghamshire’s current Language for Life Strategy (0-7 Years) are achieved through:

- The Every Child A Talker (ECAT) and Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD) programmes.
- The commissioning of enhanced services from the Speech & Language Therapy (SLT) service which:
  - have developed and supported the implementation of the two year language screen – a universal screen undertaken by health visitors as part of the wider two year health assessment
  - have developed a range of universal training that enables practitioners to be more aware of the importance of language development in young children.

- Families having access to a children's centre Speech and Language Therapist who has the capacity to engage with vulnerable families who are unlikely to opt into clinical SLT services.

All of the above have contributed to a shift in referral patterns to NHS SLT services, with many more under four year olds now being referred, demonstrating that interventions are happening earlier for children.

### **How will we do it?**

Further work needs to be done to ensure that the Nottinghamshire's Language for Life Strategy (0-7 years) becomes embedded in practice. It is essential that the following actions are prioritised:

- Develop and trial training for Key Stage 1 practitioners to ensure they have a good understanding of how to support children's continued language development
- Maintain support from children's centre teachers and Speech and Language Therapists for settings to become confident in the use of the ECAT monitoring tool
- Maintain the training programme for practitioners working with children age 0-5 years to ensure that they have a good understanding of how to support children's language development
- Maintain the current drive to have an identified language lead in every private, voluntary and independent (PVI) setting and Foundation Stage provision in school
- Develop and offer an Accredited Language Lead Programme for excellent practitioners
- Work in partnership to ensure that all parents receive the most appropriate advice and support about how to support their child's language development, with a particular focus at 2 ½ years of age, so that all children receive the Two Year Language Screen as part of the Healthy Child Programme developmental check
- Ensure that health visiting teams can access appropriate training to achieve sensitive implementation of the 2 year language screen

### **How will we measure change?**

- A new SLT contract for children's centres with clear measurable outcomes linked to the outcomes below will be in place.
- Three core Key Stage 1 training packages will be available for schools to purchase. Feedback from trials will be evaluated.
- All settings with children accessing the two year pilot will be using the ECAT monitoring tool effectively to assess children's progress.
- An increased percentage of PVI setting and Foundation Stage provision in school will have an identified and active language lead.
- The Accredited Language Lead programme will be established.
- All children will have a 2 to 2 ½ year language screen as an integral part of their Healthy Child Programme developmental check and those children with potential language delay will be identified and referred to appropriate support.

- All health visiting team members carrying out the language screen will have attended appropriate training from the Speech and Language Therapist Team
- A plan to establish an 8-19 year Language Development Strategy will be in place.

## **6. Key strand three: the engagement and support of parents and carers**

**'What parents do is more important than who they are. Especially in a child's early years, the right kind of parenting is a bigger influence on their future than wealth, class, education or any other common social factor.'** Grasping the Nettle, Executive Summary, C4EO, 2010

### **Where are we now?**

The engagement and support of parents and carers has been developed in a number of service areas within Nottinghamshire, including:

- Children's centres, where parents and carers are encouraged and supported to influence what/how services are delivered in the area through consultation and evaluation, including the involvement at Local Advisory Groups
- Joint Access Teams (JATs) – which have developed a framework for parental engagement which is included in the JAT handbook, with positive examples of parental engagement with JAT processes now emerging.
- Evidence-based parenting programmes, including Incredible Years and Strengthening Families, are delivered across the county in children's centres, schools and other community settings
- The Family Information Service (FIS) offers free, impartial guidance and information for families with children & young people aged 0-20. The FIS maintains a comprehensive Family Services Directory and provides a free phone information helpline and a brokerage service providing advice and guidance on choosing childcare
- The Extended Services programme has been rolled out to every school in Nottinghamshire. Parenting support and parental involvement are part of the core offer for Extended Services.

### **How will we do it?**

Over the next eighteen months the following key actions will be taken to improve the engagement and support of parents and carers:

- The development of an effective framework of specialist and targeted family and parenting support services, based around the delivery of proven programmes, and focused upon those parents who are most vulnerable and in need of service provision.
- The development of a whole family Common Assessment Framework (CAF) tool to support effective needs assessment for families in need of early intervention provision.

- The development of a training pathway for practitioners working with families and children as part of an early intervention and prevention learning and development action plan.
- Parental engagement with the JAT/CAF process will be strengthened in line with the actions set out in the JAT Action Plan.
- The development of an engagement strategy to ensure the views of service users informs our services.

### **How will we measure change?**

- The implementation phase of the Family and Parenting Review will include the development of a set of measurable performance/outcome indicators, which will be used by all parenting programmes so their effectiveness can be measured and compared.
- A quality assurance framework for early intervention processes will be developed, which will include measures to assess parental engagement and satisfaction with JAT/CAF processes.
- The use and benefits of the whole family CAF will be monitored in line with existing CAF quality assurance processes.
- The impact of any new training and development provision for the workforce will be measured in line with existing arrangements in the Learning & Organisational Development Service.

## **7. Key strand four: the development of effective structures and processes**

**'As some children, young people and families need on-going support, while others may have their needs met sufficiently by an 'earlier' intervention to prevent later interventions, a continuum of services is needed to identify the most appropriate intervention to match specific needs at a particular point.'** Grasping the Nettle, Executive Summary, C4EO, 2010

### **Where are we now?**

The Pathway to Provision Handbook provides guidance on when to use the CAF; when to make referrals to the Joint Access Teams (JATs); the "step up, step down" procedures for Children's Social Care; and an outline of service provision at each tier of the Pathway. To support the embedding of the Pathway to Provision, handbooks for the JAT and the CAF have been published.

Since 2007, 42 JATs have been developed across Nottinghamshire. The JATs are the key vehicle for early intervention & prevention in Nottinghamshire. They are based around families of schools and through a virtual team of local practitioners meeting on a monthly basis to offer an opportunity for a single conversation about a child's or young person's needs.

Ofsted, in its feedback from the most recent unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements in Nottinghamshire (February 2011), noted *“the use of the CAF by partner agencies has increased significantly....providing a sound basis for access to a range of early intervention provision”*.

The key issue in the recent past in Nottinghamshire has been the inconsistent application of these processes around early intervention and prevention. Inconsistent application can result in poorer outcomes for children, young people and their families, unnecessary duplication and needs not being identified early enough or at all.

### **How will we do it?**

To ensure that early intervention and prevention processes are applied consistently across Nottinghamshire, the following key actions will be taken over the next twelve months:

- Further develop Joint Access Teams as the key mechanism for early intervention and prevention in Nottinghamshire.
- Deliver the Pathway to Provision enforcement plan to embed the Pathways approach across children’s services agencies in Nottinghamshire.
- Develop district early intervention and prevention management groups to co-ordinate services locally, ensuring they support the needs of children and families and are delivered cost effectively.
- Appoint 7 early intervention district managers by June 2011 to support the delivery of the objectives set out in this strand.

### **How will we measure change?**

Quarterly reports will be presented to the Children’s Trust Executive and the Senior Leadership Team of the Children’s, Families and Cultural Services Department. These reports will focus on both the quantitative data and, increasingly, the qualitative data around the key early intervention and prevention processes.

## **8. Key strand five: the use and provision of management information**

**“There is a recognised need to improve how we use data to support the development of early intervention.”** Grasping the Nettle, Executive Summary, C4EO, 2010

### **Where are we now?**

Services in Nottinghamshire already collect considerable amounts of data, ranging from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Child Poverty Needs Assessment, Capita One and the Estart data system used by children’s centres.

Whilst there is still work to be done in this area to ensure that needs are identified at the earliest opportunity, the challenge in Nottinghamshire is to develop effective measures of impact for early intervention and prevention programmes, processes and services.

### **How will we do it?**

**Identification of target population groups** - there is scope to develop how we use existing data that is collected centrally to improve how we target early intervention and prevention services, particularly through the JATs.

**Measuring of the impact of services** - to enable the measurement of the impact of key early intervention and prevention processes and programmes, an electronic Common Assessment Framework (e-CAF) recording system, will be introduced. It will record the baseline data on children, young people and their families with their consent; the reasons for the completion of the CAF or referral to the JAT; and the outcomes of these processes. This will provide a rich source of information about the needs of children, young people and their families across the county and how effectively they are being met, which can then be used to inform service planning.

### **How will we measure change?**

Quarterly reports will be presented to the Children's Trust Executive and the Senior Leadership Team of the Children's, Families and Cultural Services Department. These reports use the data collected by e-CAF to provide more information about the reasons why children, young people and their families are accessing services and the outcomes as a result.

## **9. The development needs of the children's workforce**

It is critically important the children's workforce in Nottinghamshire have the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver effective early intervention and prevention services.

### **How will we do it?**

- A skills needs analysis will be undertaken across the workforce to identify what learning and development opportunities are required.
- The creation of an early intervention and prevention workforce learning and development action plan.
- Members of the workforce will be encouraged to offer and seek out work shadowing opportunities that will enhance their knowledge in areas that require further development.
- A common induction programme aligned to the NHS Common Knowledge and Skills Framework will be rolled out to all partnership organisations, to ensure that there is consistency in the delivery of a common core of skills and knowledge required by the workforce.
- An additional common induction module will be established that addresses the skills and knowledge requirements for working with parents.

## **10. Approval process**

The approval process for this strategy will be through the leadership team of the Children's Families and Cultural Services Department, Nottinghamshire's Children's Trust Executive and the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board.

## **11. Communication plan**

A communication plan will be developed for the roll-out of the strategy.

## **12. Monitoring & review of the strategy**

The Children Families and Cultural Services Leadership Team and the Nottinghamshire Children's Trust Executive will be responsible for the monitoring and review of the strategy.

## **13. Who to contact about the strategy**

**Jude Burgess**, Acting Group Manager for Early Years and Early Intervention  
([jude.burgess@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:jude.burgess@nottscc.gov.uk)),

**Or Chris Jones**, Lead for Early Intervention  
([christopher.1.jones@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:christopher.1.jones@nottscc.gov.uk))

## **14. Review Date**

The strategy will be reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis.