

Early Help Development Plan



2013 – 2016



Introduction

Early help as defined by Eileen Munro¹ is that provided early in the life of a child and early in the emergence of a problem. In Nottinghamshire, services are considered to be providing Early Help when the child or young person's needs are assessed to be at levels 1 to 3 within the Pathway to Provision (Universal, Early Intervention and Targeted Services).²

This plan has been developed to further improve the multi-agency early help offer to children, young people and families across Nottinghamshire. It takes account of the increased focus on early help within Working Together 2013 and within the proposed Ofsted framework for inspecting services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. The activity driven by this plan is intended to improve outcomes for children and young people and reduce the need for specialist or statutory interventions. The plan brings together work across the Children's Trust to ensure that all agencies coordinate their activities to provide a coherent and seamless service to children and families. The priorities within the plan have been informed by feedback received at the Children's Trust Stakeholder Events held in October and November 2012.

The strategy will be overseen by an Early Help Executive, which will in turn report to the Children's Trust Board.

Ambition

Our ambition is for children, young people and families to receive the most appropriate support to meet their needs at the earliest opportunity.

This 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"

What is Early Help?

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. In Nottinghamshire, services are considered to be providing Early Help when the child or young person's needs are assessed to be at levels 1 to 3 within the Pathway to Provision (Universal, Early Intervention and Targeted Services).

Services that provide Early Help to children and families in Nottinghamshire include children's centres, Targeted Support Services, Young People's Services (youth service), early years settings, schools, colleges, services for children with special educational needs and disabilities, midwives, health visitors, school nurses, GPs, Family Nurse Partnership, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, community paediatrics, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, contraceptive and sexual health services, the police, and voluntary and community sector providers.

These services provide a range of support and interventions to children and families including evidence based parenting programmes, breastfeeding support, learning support, help to find education and employment, short breaks for disabled children.

¹ Munro Review of Child Protection (May 2011)

² www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/pathwaytoprovision

Principles

Our approach to providing early help is underpinned by the following principles:

- Help should be provided at the earliest opportunity and in a way that is responsive to the needs of children and families requiring support, whilst ensuring that clear thresholds to services are promoted and maintained;
- Children and young people should be effectively safeguarded by all of the agencies and staff that work with them;
- The views and experiences of children, young people and families should inform and influence the design and delivery of early help services;
- A whole family approach should be adopted, whilst keeping the child or young person firmly at the centre of any support;
- Assessments should be made in a timely way and should lead to the provision of well coordinated support to children and families;
- Our early help offer should be clear and well understood so that children and families experience a seamless transition between services;
- Our early help offer should be evidence-based and reflect the needs of the population, whilst ensuring that new innovations are encouraged and supported to develop the evidence base for their effectiveness;
- Appropriate sharing of information between agencies should take place to ensure effective identification, assessment and service provision to children and young people.

Outcomes

Through this plan we aim to achieve the following outcomes for children and young people:

- Children and young people are safe and happy
- Children and young people are healthy, both physically and emotionally
- Children and young people are in education, employment or training and achieve to the best of their ability
- Children and young people have a voice and make a positive contribution in their local communities

Turning priorities into action

In order to ensure that our multi-agency early help offer to children and families is effective, high quality and easily accessible, we will:

1. Simplify and improve access to services by implementing an operating model that comprises of an early help unit providing the gateway to locality-based services, clearly articulated in the Pathway to Provision;
2. Refresh our commitment to a common assessment approach through the implementation of a multi-agency CAF improvement plan, ensuring that families receive the coordinated support they need, clearly articulated in a specific child/family CAF action plan;
3. Ensure that staff across the Children's Trust have the necessary skills, knowledge, confidence and capacity to meet the needs of vulnerable children, young people and families by implementing a multi-agency workforce development plan and developing an appropriately specialised service to those on the edge of social care;
4. Align key commissioned health services (CAMHS, health visiting, school nursing, sexual health) with the local authority early help offer so that children and young people have access to the appropriate service to meet their individual needs;
5. Assess whether service provision adequately meets the needs of vulnerable groups of children and young people and re-commission where this is found not to be the case;
6. Establish an early help dataset, case tracking arrangements and a quality assurance framework to ensure that we are providing quality services and that our resources are deployed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and families; and
7. Establish a resourcing plan for early help that ensures that our resources are deployed efficiently and effectively on evidence based approaches that meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and families.

We will also continue to embed the Language for Life strategy as we recognise that communication skills are critical in enabling children to achieve their best educationally and socially.

We will also develop an early years strategy to ensure that young children have the best start in life, allowing them to reach their potential and achieve success in adulthood. This will be cognisant of the policy changes emerging from the Department for Education with regard to early years, including the role of local government in relation to the childcare sector. The strategy will identify key activities required to ensure the council maintains its statutory duties within the context of economic constraint, and will explore opportunities for maximising resources through greater collaboration, integration and partnership.

Closing the Educational Gap and Child Poverty

This early help development plan will act as an umbrella for existing work underway through the Child Poverty and Closing the Educational Gap strategies.

We recognise the profound impact that poverty can have on a child and their family, and remain committed to tackling child poverty and thus improving children's life chances.

We recognise the link between disadvantage and educational outcomes and are committed to ensuring that we reduce the attainment gap so that all children are able to reach their full potential.

This means that we will align activity under the three strategies and will report progress in a coordinated way to the Children's Trust Board.

The early help development plan also has links with the ONE project, which will deliver an integrated assessment and planning process for children with special educational needs, and with the Five Steps to Collective Responsibility strategy, which aims to improve the educational outcomes for learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The interdependencies with these strategies will be managed through the responsible officer attending the Early Help Executive.

How we will measure success

The success of the plan will be measured by progress against the following impact measures:

Indicator	Target	Baseline	National Average
Percentage of children having their needs met through the CAF process* Percentage of children having their needs met by early help services (CYPF Plan indicator)	Increase	TBC	N/A
Percentage of enquiries to the MASH that result in no further action to Children's Social Care* Percentage of enquiries to the MASH that result in appropriate action by Children's Social Care or Early Help Services	Reduce	TBC	N/A
Children on child protection plans* (rate per 10,000)	Reduce	48.4 (2012/13) 40.6 (2013/14 Q4)	37.9 (2012/13)
First time entrants to the youth justice system*	Reduce	351 (2012/13)	–
Percentage of overall absence in primary, secondary and special schools**	Reduce	5.0% (2011/12)	5.1% (2011/12)
Attainment gap at age 16 for 5 A*-C (inc Eng and Ma) between pupils for whom the Pupil Premium provides support, and the rest	Reduce	31.5% (2012/13)	unvalidated 25% (2012/13)
Attainment gap age 11 for Level 4+ in reading, writing and mathematics between pupils for whom the Pupil Premium provides support, and the rest	Reduce	20% (2012/13)	unvalidated 17% (2012/13)
Percentage of young people in academic years 12-14 not in education, employment or training*	Reduce	3.2% (2013/14 Q3)	5.3% (2013/14 Q4)
Breastfeeding prevalence rates at 6-8 weeks*	Increase	Notts NHS 41.4% (2013/14 Q2) Bassetlaw NHS 32.8% (2013/14 Q2)	47.2% (2012/13)
Under 18 conception rate** (rate per 1000 females aged 15 – 17)	Reduce	31.9 (2011)	30.7 (2011)
Dependent children who live in households whose income is below 60% of the national average**	Reduce	17.0% (2011)	20.1% (2011)

* Denotes quarterly reporting.

** Denotes annual reporting.

As the early help dataset is implemented, this will provide further key performance indicators to measure the impact of the plan.

Governance

The plan will be governed by the Children's Trust Board, which will receive biannual progress reports on actions undertaken and outcomes achieved. The Board may request additional, more comprehensive progress reports relating to Early Help, Closing the Gap and Child Poverty.

The detailed action plan to support this development plan will be overseen by the Early Help Executive, chaired by the Corporate Director for Children, Families and Cultural Services, and comprising members from across the Children's Trust.

The plan will be reviewed after one year.

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