

Committee: Safeguarding Sub Committee	Dated: 4 June 2019
Subject: Early Help	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Rachel Green, Service Manager, Children's Social Care and Early Help	

Summary

The aim of Early Help is to provide the right help, at the right time, in the right place. Early Help is about identifying needs and offering advice, support and direct interventions at the earliest point of discovery.

The appended report provides an update on the work of Early Help in the City of London over the last quarter. Key achievements include a positive multi agency audit on the impact of our work with families and capturing feedback from families on the service the Early Help team provides.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

The Early Help Update

Early Help:

1. Early Help is about identifying needs and offering advice, support and direct interventions at the earliest point of discovery. Early Help may occur at any point from pre-birth and foundation stage through to the teenage years (up to the age of 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities).
2. The purpose of our intervention is to empower families to support themselves and prevent a recurrence of problems, avoiding the potential for escalation, whilst at the same time, helping to reduce the number of families requiring statutory intervention. Support may be offered early in life, or early after the emergence of an identified need. Such needs can include, but are not limited to;

- Families with significant housing needs.
- Families where a parent/carer is experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Children with Special Educational Needs
- Children and young people experiencing stress and anxiety.
- Children who have a caring role for another member of their family (young carers)

Key Progress:

3. Multi Agency Audits were held this quarter, and the findings were excellent. Audit found evidence of good multi-agency working, professional curiosity, transparency to the parent about different agency roles, good work from Health Visiting Team and the work of the Principal Educational Psychologist was praised.
4. Both the Early Help Co-ordinator and the Early Help worker have started Systemic Training, this is alongside the social care team and managers. This programme aims to strengthen our work with children and families in a way that emphasises people's relationships as key to understanding their experiences. The training also helps build resilience of workers and strengthens supervision.
5. Funding has been awarded from the Department of Work and Pensions to run a Reducing Parental Conflict programme with practitioners and leaders.
6. A new monthly Short Break Panel has been established to improve consistency and oversight of packages offered. This means that Parents should have a quicker and clearer response.

Areas for improvement:

7. Draft guidance on Short Breaks has been shared with parents and partners. The next piece of work will be amending the guidance and making sure it is easy to read and understand. Parents need a clear guide as to entitlements and how the short break offer works.
8. The revised Early Help Assessment and Team Around the Family needs to be implemented. This is to ensure each member of a family's strengths and support needs are considered in one place.

Conclusion:

9. Early Help work is progressing well. Families are being supported in a timely way. The social care and early help service was separated into two teams in January 2019. The purpose of this was to give better

focus to each area. the next quarter will see the publishing of Short Breaks Guidance and an update of the Early Help Strategy.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Early Help Update Quarter 2

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Early Help Sub-Group Report

May 2019 – Quarter 2

Early Help Coordinator Update:

1. An external audit of the Early Help Strategy/Early Help Service was completed in March by Mazars. The findings of the report have not yet been received or shared with our service. It's hoped that we will be able to report this back to the Early Help Sub-Group in Quarter 3.
2. The Early Help Worker currently has 16 open cases, a mixture of both short breaks and Early Help cases which are open and active. All Early Help cases have had a CAF completed with just one still in progress. The EHC is also holding two Short Breaks cases.
3. The Early Help Co-ordinator began the Systemic Social Work Supervision and Management course on 30th April 2019 (cohort 2). The Early Help Worker has also begun the certificate in Social Work Practice with Children & Families, which began on the 06th May 2019 (cohort 6). Both courses are 15 days long which will be spread out over the next 12 months. The plan is to start embedding systemic practice into the work in Early Help immediately, as outlined within the Early Help Strategy.
4. The report from the Multi-Agency Case Audits which took place in January 2019 has now been published. The highlights and areas of improvement have been shared with our partners via the Multi-Agency Practitioners Forum. Highlights and areas of improvement included:
 - Evidence of good multi-agency working, professional curiosity, transparency to the parent about different agency roles, good work from Health Visiting Team and the work of the Principal Educational Psychologist was praised.
 - Focus of improvement includes working with perpetrators, including fathers in Early Help work and exploring cultural factors, and how this impact on families.
5. City Parent Carer Forum is now holding a Coffee morning at Sir John Cass Primary School, which will occur on the first Thursday of every month. There will be a monthly speaker at each session. The Early Help Worker will be attending the sessions intermittently to complete some outreach and promote the Early Help Offer. The Early Help Co-ordinator visited Sir John Cass last month to undertake some outreach in one of the Stay & Play sessions.
6. Reducing Parental Conflict – The programme is delivered in two levels:
 - Strategic Leadership Support and Practitioner Training which will be delivered jointly with Hackney.
 - To proceed with the SLS element, the expectation is that each LA completes the RPC Planning Tool. The planning tool is commissioned by the DWP to support local implementation of the Reducing Parental Conflict Programme. It's also used to map out current arrangements, identify local strengths and areas of need.
 - The planning tool is compulsory and there are only two options for completion:
 1. Online Survey and ½ day workshop = All key stakeholders to complete an online survey version of the planning tool before a ½ day wider stakeholder workshop confirms an agreed local position.

2. Full day workshop = Wider stakeholder workshop to introduce the planning tool, agree ratings and identify strengths, areas for development and priorities for change.

The deadline for this piece of work has been set by the DWP for the end of June 2019. We have attempted to negotiate an extension; however, this has not been agreed. The City of London would need approximately 20 stakeholders to partake in the RPC Planning Tool workshop. We're still exploring how we can achieve this, alongside competing priorities already set out.

7. **Early Help Strategy** – Is in draft format, it was presented to the MAPF network on the 24.04.19. The strategy was discussed, agreed and amended accordingly. It has also been reviewed by a parent who is currently accessing Early Help support. The strategy was discussed at CSMT on the 30.04.19, Claire Giraud and Rachel Green will continue to work on this document to get it ready for completion and sign off.

8. **Short Breaks Update** – Currently the EHC has been working with Short Breaks Co-Ordinators in Hackney and Tower Hamlets. They have provided information and guidance on how we can improve our short breaks offer and policy. Our short breaks strategy, guidance and pathway is currently being updated. Some of the proposed changes to the new document include:

- Reflecting the range of legislation which underpins the provision of short breaks for disabled children.
- A change in the eligibility criteria
- A new three-tiered short breaks offer: Universal, Targeted (Core Offer) and Specialist (Enhanced Package)

The short breaks policy will be discussed in the next co-production working group on the 16.05.19. The Local Offer will need updating to include a short breaks statement. A new Short Breaks Panel has been introduced, monthly meetings will be held to discuss all new short break requests, social care assessments/recommendations for overnight respite, personal budget issues and any complex or stuck cases.

The joint procurement for new Short Break Activities with Hackney has begun and we had 16 providers who expressed an interest. The first consensus meeting was held on the 9th April, and we have agreed for 15 providers to move forward to the next evaluation stage. This will begin in the coming weeks, with another consensus meeting to be held in June 2019. The successful applicants will then be invited to deliver presentations at The Guildhall on either the 3rd or 4th July. We will have a parent representative join the panel and we are considering whether we could also have a young person/service user on this panel. Site visits will be completed following the panel presentations. All new contracts should be in place for November 2019.

9. **Early Help Action Plan Update** – Copies of the Early Help Action Plan available

Priority 1: Early Help Casework (Including CAF and TAF activity equivalent)
Objective – Deliver effective, high-quality and consistent Early Help Support across the full network of partner agencies.

During Q1 the Early Help Sub-Group Meeting held some discussions about the reasons why a new assessment framework had not yet been developed within the previous laid out objectives. The EHC reflected on this discussion and discussed the proposal of drafting a new EH Assessment to replace the CAF. The new EH Assessment encompasses some of the old CAF principles and is now a 'whole family assessment' which also embeds systemic ideas. The new timescales are to try and give us enough time to get this approved, tested and make any necessary adjustments. The EHA was presented to the MAPF and received positive feedback, their ideas and suggestions have now been incorporated into the current draft.

Action: Seek out parental views on the new assessment.

Priority 2: Evidencing the Impact of Early Help

Objective - *Develop a robust evidence base that supports the strategic long-term shift in the balance of resources - from crisis intervention to prevention.*

Quarterly reporting of the 'distance travelled' tool has been added to the Early Help performance data set and is ongoing successfully. If the new Early Help Assessment is agreed and implemented then we can begin to have a more robust way of evidencing impact. Impact will be monitored throughout the duration of Early Help support from the beginning to closure stage.

Ref: 2.4: Work with Multi-Agency Practitioners Forum to develop case study / outcomes template.

Action above was not completed. During some MAPF meetings a case discussion does take place. A summary is recorded in the minutes of the meeting. However, that does not translate into case studies which are held in Early Help. Further work needed.

Priority 3: Quality Assurance and Service Improvement

Objective - *Monitor, deliver, and support a consistent and high-quality Early Help offer*

Action for children update to be provided by Pat Dixon.

Priority 4: Raising Awareness and Community Engagement

Objective: *Increase access to and take up of Early Help support*

Early Help Co-ordinator has met with the chair of The City Parent Carer Forum. We have agreed that either the EHC or EHW will link into some future sessions at the monthly coffee drop-in. EHW attended the CPCF coffee morning on the 02nd May, 7 parents attended the session, only two parents were from the City.

In addition, the EHW and Family Involvement Worker at Sir John Cass will explore whether it's appropriate for our EHW to attend a drop-in at least once month to raise awareness of Early Help.

The FYI pages on Early Help will be updated in due course. The EHW will be taking the lead on this task.

Priority 5: Multi-Agency Partnerships and Joint Working

Objective: *Facilitate and support joint approaches to service delivery and development, including responding to emerging themes and needs*

The MAPF network continue to meet quarterly, the last meeting took place on the 24.04.19. EHC had organised a guest speaker to discuss Criminal Exploitation, unfortunately the speaker cancelled at the last minute. This is still an area the group are interested to learn more about, so this will be rearranged for the meeting in the July.

Early Help Network meetings continue every quarter, there continues to be good representation from several London Local Authorities.

EHC is in a Systemic training cohort which has a good representation of Early Help managers and supervisors. It's hoped that this will be used as a good opportunity to further develop links with Early Help colleagues across the country to share good practice, learning and pick up any EH themes.

Priority 6: Service User Involvement and Co-production

Objective: *Encourage service development that is driven by the needs, views and experiences of City of London service users*

During Q1 the Early Help Sub-Group meeting, SC presented a draft parent/carers survey. It was agreed that this could be tested with parents/carers of any cases we closed. The Early Help Worker has proceeded to use the parent/carers survey on three separate occasions since introducing this draft template. The feedback we received was positive with parents commenting that they felt it was easy to complete, accessible and did not feel overwhelmed by the short form. They did not want a form

that would be longer than one A4 page and prefer tick boxes, rather than open questions requiring comments.

Since this date some further amendments and adjustments have been made to the parent/carer form to now include child/young person views. The form is a replica of the parent/carer form and now includes a section to help evidence the journey of the child and parent by referring to their original goals at the time of assessment and rescoring these goals at the end of Early Help support/point of closure.

We remain mindful that we could possibly over consult with the same parents, therefore the Early Help Worker is working hard to request feedback from parents/carers outside of the CPCF. We're seeking views of parent/carers currently receiving Early Help support and who have previously had contact with our service.

10. Draft Early Help Assessment- EHA, Outcomes Plan and Parent/Carer Survey

Why do we need an Early Help Assessment?

Rationale – The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) assessment tool is very old and has always been used in Early Help in the City of London. A large number of Local Authorities have stopped using the CAF assessment tool and have developed and designed their own Early Help Assessment. The reasoning behind the change was in order to adapt to the changing times, update the language and terminology of the assessment and to better encompass new approaches to the work we undertake with families.

City of London had previously explored a new multi-agency assessment framework, however there appeared to have been some difficulty in finding one assessment that worked for a multitude of agencies across Health, Social Care, Education and our partners. It became very apparent that all agencies have their own way of assessing families and there would not be one standard 'one size fits all' approach. The CAF appears to have slowly been phased out of use by our partners and has now become an assessment tool used only in the Early Help team. The feedback from our partners about the CAF has not been positive and a number of consistent themes have been raised. In addition, several professionals no longer view the CAF as an assessment; instead it is used as a referral form to request a service from Early Help. Currently only the Early Help worker completes CAF assessments our partners use their own tailored assessments.

The New Early Help Assessment (EHA)– The new EHA assesses the 'whole family' situation and helps to identify the needs of children and adults in the family. The EHA principles are similar to the old CAF, but it is now far simpler and more straightforward to complete. The assessment is no longer solely child focussed but now family focussed. It is a shared, strengths-based tool that can be used by all practitioners to provide a coordinated response so that families receive the support that they need. EHA principles which are the same as for the current CAF:

- Consent based process
- Assessment should be completed with the child/family
- Should be used as an assessment of strengths and need
- A support plan should be developed with the family with all agencies involved and regularly reviewed at the Team Around the Family.

The assessment aims to:

- Be family/child friendly
- promote a conversation with families – (supports systemic practice)
- Focus on what the whole family want to achieve
- Allow families to set goals from the point of assessment and is outcome focussed.
- Allow the family to decide which areas they need support with and where they may be struggling

Whole Family Approach?

Applying a whole family approach in the assessment requires that:

- All aspects of life: home, work, school/college, social/community and health and wellbeing are taken into account
- The whole person/whole family situation and what matters most to them is understood
- The impact of what's not working well on all family members is understood
- A family's strengths are recognised and built on
- A person's willingness to change is recognised so that support is offered at the right time
- Practitioner's expertise, judgement and advice are recognised
- The EHA can be used to coordinate support from partners as part of the agreed plan
- One assessment/form can be used for the whole family.

Planning & Evidencing Impact – The new City of London Outcomes Plan remains largely the same; however, we have made some slight changes to help support both the families monitoring of their progress, as well as the effectiveness of Early Help Support.

The language has changed in some areas and we have added a column at the end of the table titled 'Impact progress score, which ranges from 0-10'. The Outcomes plan will continue to be reviewed in line with the current Team Around the Family (TAF) review targets of 8-12 weeks.

At each review the family will be asked to score their progress on a scale 0-10, using the RAG guide below. It's hoped that by using a scale, the TAF network and family can finally begin to track a family's journey and monitor progress or lack of any progress with a visual and numerical tool. You will note that the same 0-10 scale is used from the point of assessment.

0-3 - Red	The situation has not improved significantly or has deteriorated
4-7 - Amber	The situation has remained stable with signs of improvement
8-10 - Green	The situation has improved considerably and/or the desired outcome has been achieved

All outcomes/goals on the plan should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound (SMART). It is possible that the goals the family set out to achieve at the point of entry during the assessment are not specifically SMART objectives. However, these goals should be incorporated at the time of the first TAF meeting into SMART goals.

Parent/Child Feedback & Evidencing Impact – Currently there is no way to capture any feedback from the parent or child at the time of closure of a case. The proposal is to use this new parent and child survey to capture their feedback.

The form also allows us to remind families of the score on their original goals at the beginning of intervention/point of the assessment. It requests that they again score themselves now that Early Help intervention will cease. The lead professional/Early Help Worker will refer to the EHA and insert the original score and complete this task with every family as part of the final home visit. Again, it's hoped that by using the same scaling throughout the whole of the Early Help Support we will be in a better position to show the impact of our support and services. It also allows the family to provide us with vital feedback which can help improve the quality of our intervention and improve service delivery.

- The new EHA was shared with our partners at the Multi Agency Practitioners Forum (MAPF) on 23rd April 2019. The group made some recommendations which have been incorporated on all three forms. The use of a new EHA was widely welcomed and the MAPF believe that the EHA should be used to replace the old CAF.
- The EHA was shared with the CSMT on the 30.04.19, and it's likely that some

further amendments will be required following receipt of feedback.

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