

**TITLE OF REPORT:**  
**EARLY HELP SERVICE (TARGETED FAMILY SUPPORT) PROGRESS UPDATE**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek the views of the Health and Wellbeing Board on the Targeted Family Support function of the Early Help Service.

**Background**

2. The Early Help Service (Targeted Family Support) was introduced in October 2017 to provide a Tier 2 family intervention service to vulnerable families in the borough experiencing difficulties with children's behaviour, domestic routines, home conditions, managing a low income and ensuring that the family has access to the right services.

Whole-family needs are assessed using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and a support plan is developed. Progress of the plan is reviewed every 6-8 weeks in a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting.

A total of 2615 children have been referred to Targeted Family Support between October 2017 and February 2019 with a total of 1837 children being allocated for a family intervention service co-ordinated by a lead practitioner. Social work teams (755), Education (728), Police (489) and Health (240) are the largest sources of referral for family intervention services. A total of 268 children have been self-referred direct by families.

The current caseload stands at 872 children.

A total of 57% of all case closures conclude with the family completing their support plan, while 11% see the family escalated for a (Tier 3) social work intervention where there is evidence of increased risk.

The service continues to achieve sustained change within families as only 6% of all case closures – and 3% of closures where the family have completed their support plan – are referred to Tier 3 services within 6 months of closure to Early Help. When the reporting period is extended to 12 months, 8% of all closures were referred to Tier 3, while 6% are referred where the family have completed their support plan.

An analysis of Early Help caseloads in November 2018 showed that 87% (973 children) on caseloads were in the 'Vulnerable and 'Just Coping' Thrive categories.

The service continues to develop new and innovative areas of practice, including:

- Gateshead leading a group of 10 regional Local Authorities in delivering the Reducing Parental Conflict Programme which will test up to £2.75M of new provision to help reduce the impact of parental conflict on children;

- A new 'Families First' pathway for parents of children undergoing assessment for ADHD and autism and building further on national recognition for ADHD work in 2016;
- Introducing the Team Around the School (TAS) model in January 2018 and extending this to two further schools from April 2019;
- Developing further the wide range of evidence-based, group parenting interventions available to families with children of all ages.

The Early Help Service continue to support and deliver training opportunities across the children's workforce (CAF, Level 3 Safeguarding, Domestic Abuse, Adolescent-Parent Violence & Abuse).

A refreshed Gateshead Early Help Strategy (2018-2021) is placing a higher emphasis on Early Help as "everyone's business" to broaden the partnership responsibility for delivering timely and effective support to families in a range of contexts and settings.

### **Proposal**

3. It is proposed that the Early Help Service (Targeted Family Support) provides direct performance reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board against a timescale agreed by the Board. It is further proposed that the Board supports and promotes Early Help as a wide offer of support across a range of services.

### **Recommendations**

4. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to consider:
  - the progress and impact made by the Early Help Service (Targeted Family Support) since inception in October 2017;
  - providing the governance structure for the implementation and review of the Gateshead Early Help Strategy;
  - how partners can contribute to a Gateshead Early Help 'Offer' which provides families with timely and effective support.

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