

**TITLE OF REPORT: Early Help Update**

**REPORT OF: Caroline O'Neill Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing and Learning**

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## **Summary**

The purpose of this report is to update Families Overview and Scrutiny on the Early Help Service which was implemented on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017

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## **Background:**

In England and Wales we spend £17billion a year on addressing damaging problems that affect children and young people such as going into care, mental health issues, school exclusions, unemployment and youth crime.

To reduce this cost and improve outcomes early intervention is crucial. Early intervention requires an investment to deal with root causes rather than the much greater costs of dealing with issues once they have escalated.

A child or family can experience multiple problems at once, therefore, early intervention requires a multi-agency, holistic approach to enable families to receive the appropriate support, in the right place and at the right time.

## **Profile of Early Help:**

The Early Help Service is made up of four teams:

- Targeted Family Support Team
- Specialist Support Team
- Early help Hub
- Special Needs and Disabilities Team

Following a comprehensive review of the Domestic Abuse Service in July, it was agreed to consolidate this function and move it into Early Help.

A review has also been undertaken which will bring Family Support and Contact, currently functions within Children's Social Work, into Early Help.

## **Efficiencies and effectiveness:**

The Early Help Service is committed to exploring future restructure options to consolidate functions to make them more effective and efficient by:

- Exploring further restructure options
- Seeking to explore options for income generation
- Reconvening task and finish groups to look at a one Council approach-thinking and doing by having a shared vision and outcomes
- Do more with less- share resources/ideas across the Council and beyond with partners, voluntary organisations and stakeholders
- Utilise the skills/experience and expertise of our workforce by breaking down silos
- Ensuring service redesign is not always about reductions in budgets but the redistribution of resources to areas where it is needed the most.

#### **Initiatives and Pilots:**

- Safe and Together initiative – A partnership with five other LAs to deliver interventions designed to support children who are exposed to domestic abuse
- DWP Local Family Offer- Funding has been received to provide training on parental conflict recommended by the Early Intervention Foundation. Gateshead is now leading a group of ten Local Authorities in bringing together validated provision to help address parental conflict
- FamiliesGateshead – Part of the national Troubled Families initiative which helps our families in most need of support and can generate additional funding through payment by results

#### **Conclusion:**

The Early Help Service continues to change and evolve.

The Service as a whole is made up of early intervention and prevention as well as statutory services such as Youth Offending Team and SEND/ Disabilities Team.

All services within Early Help have a role to play in helping children, young people and families who are most vulnerable and in need of help and support to thrive.

Early help and intervention is a force for transforming the lives of children, families and communities. It's importance today in terms of policy and practice owes as much to its economic sense, as well as the social and personal benefits that it can generate.

## **Recommendations**

OSC are asked to accept the Early Help Update and presentation and agree to receive further updates on the Early Help Service at Committee.

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