

TITLE OF REPORT: Early Help Service (Targeted Family Support)

REPORT OF: Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director – Children, Adults & Families

Summary

This report provides a summary of the performance of the Early Help Service (Targeted Family Support) in 2019-2020 and the pandemic response of the service from March 2020.

Background

1. The Targeted Family Support element of the Early Help Service continues to provide a high-quality family intervention function to vulnerable families with dependent children across the borough. This includes whole-family support to all household members on a range of issues, including children's behaviour, school attendance, domestic abuse, low income and housing conditions.

End of Year Performance

2. Family intervention was delivered to 1,467 children within 895 families between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. Performance data shows that the service is successful in supporting families to make sustained changes with over 90% not entering statutory social work services within 12 months of closure to Early Help.
3. The Gateshead target for the Troubled Families Programme was met, achieving 100% of the required outcomes for 1,930 families over the five-year delivery period between 2015-2020 and generating £1.54 Million in Payment by Results (PbR) revenue for the Local Authority.

Pandemic Response

4. Family intervention, including face-to-face contact, has continued throughout the pandemic and has included:
 - an increased focus on practical support, including delivery of food, prescriptions and contraception;
 - delivery of 450 sports activity packs to vulnerable families;
 - development of a large online parenting hub, providing links to free materials for parents/carers;
 - transfer of all four parental conflict programmes to online platforms in conjunction with Relate;

- working across a 7-day, Monday-Sunday pattern to support those most in need;
 - redeployment of staff to support colleagues in children's homes.
5. A total of 797 children from 387 families are currently receiving support on service caseloads.
 6. COVID-19 has not prevented our continued strong performance in delivering the national Troubled Families programme in 2020-2021. Successful outcomes have been achieved for 116 families out of a target of 323 – 35% of the overall target with 7 months of the extended programme remaining.
 7. Gateshead continues to lead the North East referral hub or 'Gateway' for the national Reducing Parental Conflict Programme which offers four evidence-based support pathways for couples and co-parents experiencing relationship distress and has to date processed 662 referrals from across the region.

Recommendations

8. OSC is asked to consider the end of year performance of the Early Help Service (Targeted Family Support) and the pandemic response.

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