

Name of meeting: Children's Scrutiny Panel
Date: 8th November 2019
Title of report: Early Support Partnership

Purpose of report:

To update Scrutiny on development of the Early Support Partnership, the Family Support service and to provide information on three programmes (Family Group Conference, Multi Systemic Therapy and the Family Mental Health Service), in order to generate discussion and help Councillors decide whether to investigate and debate issues and hold the executive to account.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	N/A
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	N/A
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director?	Jo-Anne Sanders – Service Director Learning & Early Support
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	
Cabinet member portfolio	Councillor Viv Kendrick Councillor Carole Pattison

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: N/A

Public or private: Public

(Have you considered GDPR?) Yes

1. Summary/Background

The new Early Support Service was established in April 2018. The service offers non statutory services to children, young people and their families in line with the Kirklees Early Support Strategy. The service has developed considerably and now includes Family Support, Parenting and Group Work, Family Group Conferencing, Multi Systemic Therapy Family Mental Health Service, Stronger Families, Early Years and Children's Centres/Kirklees Community Hubs. A Youth Offer will be developed as part of the service.

Early Support for children and families is more effective and less expensive than intervening when problems become entrenched. Even if early support cannot stop problems escalating, targeted and evidence based interventions for those at most risk can still make a difference and reduce the need for the high costs of statutory involvement and taking children into care. These kinds of services are better for children and families but are also important to ensure that the local safeguarding system is sustainable. Without enough early and targeted support pressures on social work can become too high, reducing the quality of decision making and practice and raising costs. Thus, in summary, effective early support is better for children, better for the local safeguarding system and better for the public purse.

The August 2019 Ofsted inspection report stated the 'Kirklees early help strategy has recently been refreshed, but is not fully embedded. There are examples of good and impactful work with families through community hubs, and appropriate signposting to services. However, the local authority is not evaluating the impact of early help provision, limiting its understanding of what is effective and why. The new multi-systemic therapy service provides edge-of-care provision. The service is still in its infancy and it is too soon to evaluate its effectiveness'.

It was identified that it was important to undertake a review of the Early Support Partnership following the publication and launch of the Kirklees Early Support Strategy and therefore Peopletoo were commissioned at the beginning of the year to evaluate Early Support Services which included Local Authority and external partner delivery. A report was published in May with a number of recommendation:

- Develop a vehicle to oversee and drive the Early Support Partnership; Board, Task and Finish groups.
- Develop a clear multi-agency pathway with panel process, aligned to the hubs.
- Agree two high level administrative areas – suggest North and South.
- Adopt 4 localities based around the 4 designated Children's Centres.
- Increase the management capacity and reorganise around the multi-agency, early support partnership approach.

With the agreement of Children's Services Senior Leadership Team the recommendations are currently been implemented.

2. Key issues/current position section

Family Support Service

Family Support remains a stable team with any staff movement being internal promotion and opportunities including successful applicants to the Kirklees Step-up to Social Work programme. The response to recent recruitment was positive and a large number of applications were received indicating that this is a service that people are now wanting to work in which continues to be a positive step.

Up to the end of March 2019 the Council commissioned two services as part of the Early Support Offer which were delivered by Action for Children and Humankind. A decision was made by Cabinet for the services to be managed in house and be delivered as one entity to allow for consolidation of services and alignment to the Early Support Strategy. The services delivered under the contracts were subject to the implications of the Transfer Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (as amended) ("TUPE") and staff successfully transferred to the Council on 1st April 2019 and integrated into the Family Support Service. The majority of these staff have now transferred to Kirklees Council terms and conditions.

Action for Children were commissioned to deliver the Children's Centre Core offer in the Dewsbury East and Dewsbury West areas which includes universal and targeted services and Family Support and Humankind (formerly known as DISC) were commissioned to deliver the Family Intervention Project (FIP) which was set up to provide intensive Family Support.

Family Support are currently supporting 670 children (16.10.19) at Early Support status which does not include cases supported that are open to Social Care. These cases represent 32% of Family Support's current work and the total equating to the region of 985 children being supported by 43.5 FTE Family Support workers.

The area with the highest number of referrals to Family Support is Dewsbury and Mirfield at 108 (average of 18 per month) followed by Spen and Cleckheaton with 111 (average 11 per month) and Ashbrow, Greenhead and Lindley with 100 referrals, average 10 per month. The lowest number of referrals was received in Colne Valley and Golcar with 63 referrals (average 6.3 per month) and Holmfirth, Denby Dale and Kirkburton with 65 referrals (average 6.5 per month).

The service receives an average of 90 referrals per month with the highest number being received from schools closely followed by children's social care.

The Family Support offer is continuing to develop and is currently embedding a local offer based around 4 geographical areas underpinned with teams working in the children's and families areas linked to the community hubs. This is developing a unifying but not uniform offer, reflecting the needs of young people, families and the communities.

Parenting Team

The dedicated parenting team within the Family Support offer a number of evidence based programmes to meet the needs of Kirklees parents which range from Early Parenting to support with the impacts on children subject to domestic abuse. *Please see Appendix 1*

The team has recently started some improvements to the parenting offer following identifying some issues with recruitment and retention of parents on the groups. These included availability of venues suitable to run the programmes in the 'right place' for parents, lack of local venues was further compounded by a reduction in support with transport to get to these venues. A further issue was identified as inappropriate referrals being made when no assessment had been made of the parents readiness to be able to undertake a programme, parents with mental health, drug or alcohol problems who are already struggling with appointments etc. are being set up to fail when expected to attend up to 12 weekly 3 hour sessions with a group of strangers in an often unfamiliar venue.

The team have started to address these issues by allocating members of the team to each community hub area to build relationships with schools and other professionals; this has led

to some good work in some areas where group work is thriving and support is been received in finding venues in these hub areas. A good example of this is in the Thrive hub; close links have been built with the community centre and Orchard Primary Academy and are running three different programmes a week at the school and community centre with further proposals currently on the table with the community centre and the school. The team continue to develop the offer in the community hub areas and have flexibility to shape the offer to the local needs

A further development has been to offer parents a home visit prior to them joining the programme to assess if they are aware of the programme content and outcomes and to explore whether the programme is in the right place and at the right time. These visits have proved successful in establishing a relationship with the programme facilitator before walking through the door on day one of a programme. Steps can also be put in place to address any anxiety problems of attending a programme e.g. asking the worker to accompany to the first session.

Next steps for the parenting team is to explore running some sessions during each school holiday to bring families together in the learning environment and to capture the impact on the children of parents attending the programmes.

Family Group Conferences (FGC's)

Family Group Conferences (FGC's) originally emerged from New Zealand and are voluntary decision making meetings to help families find their own solutions to problems.

FGC is a restorative approach and the process empowers a family and their wider family network to draw on their strengths and resources to make a safe plan for their children. FGC's ensure the family network have a chance to hear and discuss the concerns. They also give an opportunity for everyone to be listened to including the child and young person(s). It can be an opportunity to be informed of any resources that could help them improve family life. Further information about FGCs can be found on the **Family Rights Group website**.

FGC now has a stable workforce, with a staff team of 2 team leaders and 10 coordinators all on substantive contracts. This will allow for the further development of the service and embedding of the entitlement at the earliest opportunity to prevent children and families rising through the social care system.

Since the start of the expanded FGC offer in April 2018 the team had received a total of 365 referrals up to 20th September 2019, of which 318 were received from children's social care and the others from schools and Family Support Workers. 114 of the referrals had outcomes met where there was a successful FGC i.e. there is a safety plan around the child, appropriate contact arranged or the child is kept within a safety network.

59% of the referrals were from North Kirklees with the majority of the families living in the the 0-30% most deprived areas of Kirklees.

The main referral points for Kirklees families for an FGC are currently Children in Need (CiN), Child Protection (CP) or when a Public Law Order (PLO) is initiated when children are most at risk of becoming looked after, however it is still recognised that the service needs to engage with families at the earliest opportunity.

The next steps for FGC is to further develop the service and embed the entitlement at the earliest opportunity to prevent children and families rising through the social care system.

Multi Systemic Therapy (MST)

Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) is an intensive family and community based intervention for children and young people aged 11-17, where young people are at risk of out of home placement in either care or custody due to their offending or having severe behaviour problems.

The key goals of MST are to break the cycle of anti-social behaviours by keeping young people safely at home, in school, and out of trouble. Further information on MST can be found on their website <http://www.mstuk.org/>.

The newly initiated team quickly developed to learn the MST model; there has been stability in all clinical positions with no movement out of the team. All clinical staff including therapists, supervisor and back up supervisor have attended initial orientation and relevant supervisor and booster training.

Since the team began seeing families in February 2019 they have had a highly successful period with excellent individual, team and family outcomes, especially for a new team. There has also been suitable referrals to the service which have been high and consistent throughout the period.

It is particularly impressive that all therapists are above target for adherence to the MST model, as reported by all families. Beyond the data reports there have been some very successful individual cases that have resonated and have been celebrated with local stakeholders, who have recognised the role MST has played in reducing the risks of care and custody for some of the children identified as being at most risk, and in turn the financial and resource savings to the local authority and partners.

- **100%** of young people are living at home at the end of the MST intervention (target = **90%**).
- **92%** are in school at the end of the MST intervention (target = 90%).
- **92%** of young people have had no new arrests during MST (target = 90%).

Next steps for the MST team will be in the first year to mainly focus on the development of the staff to provide targeted outcomes for families using the MST model, developing relationships with key stakeholders and ensuring long term sustainability and funding.

In the next period it is planned that the MST service in Kirklees will expand to develop two additional teams, one to focus on young people at risk of exploitation (MST-E) and one to develop services for children with a plan to return home from the looked after services (MST-FIT). This is an exciting time for MST in Kirklees but will lead to changes in staffing for the MST standard team, including transitions of therapists and recruitment of additional supervisors. The impact on the team will be planned and phased to ensure minimal disruption to development of staff and outcomes for families.

Kirklees MST has made a successful bid to the national Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) which means more investment will be made in protecting children who are at risk. The exact amount is still to be confirmed, but four organisations including Kirklees Council will receive a share of more than £2million which will fund the new MST-E service in Kirklees.

The YEF is a new initiative to tackle youth offending by intervening early. Its goal is to focus on those who are most at risk of involvement in youth violence, diverting them away from becoming serious offenders.

Mental Health in Families Team (MHF)

The Mental Health in Families team coordinate appropriate early support for parents who have mental health difficulties and share information relevant to the welfare of their children, with a focus on managing risk, increasing resilience, building strength and encouraging independence and reducing long term need for services. The service works restoratively and use a whole family approach to identify and explore the impact of parental mental health upon families, lifespan and intergenerational issues.

The team continues to work with professionals who are case holding from both adult mental health and children's social care regularly using them for case consultation in order to better understand and analyse the impact of parental mental health upon children. The team are facilitating greater collaboration between workers from the two services, which is resulting in improved assessments and plans for families with improved outcomes. They are using reflective supervision to identify how they have made a difference to the way cases are worked by professionals from each service, developing their approach from an individual focus to a whole family understanding. The team are also developing links with The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and have worked with their team successfully on several cases to collaborate more effectively with professionals from children's social care.

Alongside case discussions for specific families, MHF run bitesize sessions for children's social workers in order for them to better understand mental health services, the role of workers in the service, basic diagnosis information, legal frameworks, responsibilities and processes.

Next steps for MHF is to develop the support to duty and advice, in order to better inform decision making with regard to parental mental health and risk, along with increasing the support provided to assessment and intervention and increase links with the looked after and connected persons part of the service, as well as with colleagues from early support services.

Community Hubs

There are 17 Community Hubs across Kirklees with a defined partnership of schools bringing together Early Years, Primary and Secondary partnerships with each having named leadership. The hubs are at varying stages of maturity and act as a vehicle for a broad range of services to come together at a local level. Hubs are also a way of working that is designed to contribute to and support development of place based working arrangements.

There is a Kirklees Community Hub leader's network which provides a forum for all hubs to share good practice, work on common enablers and blockages, engage with partners and provide peer support and expertise.

The council provides strategic support for the development of the hubs employing a small project team and more recently agreed to resource coordination of the hubs and subsequently 9 FTEs Community Hub Coordinators were employed. There has been positive feedback on the value of the coordinators and options are currently being explored to how the roles can be sustained.

Family Support are now linked to the Community Hubs, with the Casework Consultants been the primary contact. The consultant's role is to embed 'whole family' working through relationships with critical partners including schools to provide seamless Early Support services. The support they provide includes guidance to key workers and lead professionals, supporting allocations, assessments and effective caseload management.

The casework consultants are funded through the Stronger (Troubled) Families and some from the wider Early Support Budget. The Troubled Families programme was due to end in March 2020, but the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government has announced that it will continue for a further year, however it is unclear what the extended programme will look like, but further announcements are due in November.

Youth Offer

A Youth Summit was held in May with 150 attendees with the Children's Commissioner for England and the West Yorkshire Police Crime Commissioner as key note speakers. The aim of the event was a call for action to develop a new Youth Offer for the Young People of Kirklees.

A detached Youth Offer has been implemented over the summer holidays and will continue to the end of the year. Over the six week period we deployed and delivered 5 Detached Youth Work teams working across areas of Huddersfield, Batley and Dewsbury. These areas were identified using data from anti-social behaviour (ASB) and gang referral reports.

The programme involved 13 Kirklees Council employees from across Communities Service and Early Support, as well as 5 youth workers from local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) youth providers. The majority of sessions were delivered late afternoon, typically 14:30 to 17:30 when young people were out, but some sessions were delivered later in the evening.

Youth workers engaged groups of young people in informal settings including the street, parks, open spaces, industrial estates and housing estates. The approach was based on the following key principles:

- Young people's voluntary engagement
- Informal education
- Community development
- Community safety

52 sessions were successfully delivering totalling 156 hours of Detached Youth Work.

Youth workers reported good engagement across all areas and a total of 878 contacts were made with young people, including 553 individual young people. Young people discussed a wide range of issues with youth workers including conversations on their community, health and well-being and local provision for young people.

Next steps are to continue delivering the detached youth sessions until the end of the year whilst a permanent Youth offer is developed and integrated into the Early Support Service. A Youth Programme Development Board has been established, with work streams which will inform the new Youth Offer across Kirklees.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

Effective Early Support services working together reduces the number of children requiring social care and becoming looked after and therefore children staying within their family.

3.2 Working with Partners

Working closely with communities and our partners enables integrated services to identify local need and ensures the right support at the right time for children and their families. In order to continue to build and strengthen the partnership with schools the Community Hubs programme is now under the leadership of Early Support.

3.3 Place Based Working

The Early Support Partnership approach is based on building communities, developing resilience and establishing networks. As well as developing a place based offer around 4 geographical and diverse areas, it is recognised that some services work best across the authority as a whole.

3.4 Improving outcomes for children

The Early Support Partnership vision is that every child and young person should have the opportunity to reach their full potential and that they are best supported to grow and achieve within their own families and communities.

3.5 Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

The Early Support Budget continues to have increased budget pressures due to the development of the service and sustainability of some roles and teams that were previously grant funded.

4. Consultees and their opinions

The Kirklees Children's 10 Point Improvement plan identifies the need to rebalance the safeguarding system through redeveloping better early support and preventative services.

5. Next steps

- Work with partners to embed the Early Support Strategy through the Early Support Task & Finish group chaired by the Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Partnership.
- Implement the agreed recommendations from the PeopleToo report.
- Coproduce and implement a Kirklees Youth Offer.
- Coproduce and implement a Children's Centre Core offer
- Support place based working
- Continue to work with the Performance Information Unit to develop data to evidence the impact of Early Support.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

n/a

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

n/a

8. Contact officer

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9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

The three programmes are identified in the Kirklees Children's 10 Point Improvement Plan as part of Priority 3: Early Support and Edge of Care and will also support the outcomes in the Kirklees Council's Corporate Plan 2018/20 and the Kirklees Partners and Early Support Strategy as outlined in 2.5 of this report.

10. Service Director responsible

Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director: Learning and Early Support

Appendix 1

Parenting Team Current offer (September 2019)

- Liberty – *(recognise the tactics and beliefs used by abusive partners, and the effects of domestic abuse on children. This knowledge empowers them to avoid future abusers, keep their children safe and make positive choice. We are running 5 Liberty with 49 parents out of 65 accepting a place attending. We also have a waiting list for a men's groups which we hope to get running shortly*
- SEN Family Links- *(for parents to understand the importance of their own well-being and recognise that children with additional needs still require boundaries and routines. Looking at child development to recognise that parents often expect too much or too little of their child with additional needs). We are running 3 programmes with 26 parents out of 32 accepting a place attending*
- Steps- *(techniques to develop confidence, self-esteem, positive self-talk and set goals for the future often a natural progression from Liberty). - 3 programmes running with 28 parents out of 31 who accepted a place attending, with one further programme due to start after October half term*
- PX2- *(A programme for Young people 13 – 19yrs to develop self-esteem and confidence). 2 programmes at BJ College with 15 accessing the programme. These groups are small due to the nature of the young people's needs and are run as a 45 minute lesson with support from the college support staff*
- Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities – *(Identify factors that impact on the parent child relationship such as Domestic Abuse. Build resilience, recognise the importance of parent role modelling and community support to have a violence free lifestyle) - 2 programmes running with 15 parents attending out of 22 who accepted a place.*
- Early Parenting- *(a 6 week hands on programme based on the child's journey messages to help parents to understand the importance of a positive attachment, child development, communicating effectively, and the importance of play) - programme 12 parents completed the first programme, with 2 more programmes due to start shortly*
- Safer Healthier Homes *(for parents who are struggling with keeping their home conditions at an acceptable level to understand the impact this has on their children) cohort 24 currently running with 8 parents and facilitated by Paddock Trust- putting a member of the parenting team into these sessions this cohort has improved retention by building a positive relationship with the participants and supporting in the session as required.*
- For Community Hubs we have a policy of being able to tailor programmes to meet the needs of their families e.g. taster sessions, and are having a more visible presence at school hub events to build positive relationships with schools and families

Appendix 2

Case work consultant case study

Family made up of Mum, partner, and four children.

Family were discussed with me at Primary School as a family that might need support but who historically had been reluctant to engage. Mum approached school as her youngest son was due to start school in the September and she thought he may find it hard due to some additional health needs he had. Head teacher met with Mum and discussed options of support and Mum decided she would also like to see me.

I supported school to complete an Early Support Assessment and initiated a Team around the Family (TAF) meeting. Concerns were around school attendance and exclusions, health of various family members including Mums Mental Health, risk of eldest being involved with gangs/drugs, none of the family were working and finances were challenging.

We worked together and put a plan in place to address all the education concerns, engaged Mum in school and with me, supported her to attend GP and support around her health, eldest child received support from the Base around Cannabis use, attendance and behaviour improved massively and once mum addressed long standing problems which impacted on her mental health she felt well enough and was very keen to find employment, which she has now achieved with support through my role as a consultant linked with the community hubs and the stronger families network links with the Job Centre. Mum is working for the first time ever and loving it.

The family remain engaged with school and other services and the TAF should close although Mum isn't quite ready for that yet and wants the TAF to remain involved for a little longer, school are happy to do this as they have seen the benefit for the whole family.