

Early Help Family Support Strategic Plan 2016-2017

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1. Role and Purpose

The service aims to enable all Southend's contributors to Early Help to: act before the needs of children and families escalate; focus on achieving priority outcomes for those children, young people and families who need it the most; give every child the opportunity to reach their full potential; and to have flexible services that provide the right support, at the right time and at the right level.

Early help means providing help for children and families as soon as difficulties start to emerge or when there is a strong likelihood that challenges for the young person may emerge in the future. Although research shows that the greatest impact can be made during a child's early years, early help is not just for very young children as problems may emerge at any point throughout childhood and adolescence. Early help includes targeted services designed to reduce or prevent specific problems from becoming entrenched.

Building on existing best practice and processes, the new service provides:

- A single, integrated system and 'front door' for the identification, referral, assessment, and monitoring of Early Help.
- A core offer to schools, early years settings and GPs to support them to fulfil their statutory duties with regard to Early Help.
- A traded service to provide additional Early Help support to individual schools, particularly with regard to improving school attendance.
- A specialist whole family support service to meet complex needs and fulfil the troubled families agenda
- An offer of support and guidance to all providers of Early Help services to children and young people.

The purpose of this document is to establish a Strategic Plan that governs local delivery of the refreshed Early Help Family Support Service. A separate Strategic Plan that covers those programmes in place in the operational area covered by Southend Youth Offending Service (YOS) has also been established.

The document will outline the expectations placed upon Southend Early Help Family Support Service, effective partnership arrangements with both the statutory and voluntary sector, and how these arrangements generate effective outcomes for children and young people who need Early Help and/or Family Support. Achieving these expectations contributes to the Ofsted Improvement Plan in meeting the recommendations from the recent Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services, in particular, Recommendations 4 and 8.

The success of this document as an Early Help strategy will be evidenced by its ability to provide children and families with help as soon as needs present themselves, regardless of age, to prevent those needs from escalating and requiring more intensive help and support later on.

It will demonstrate the interface with Southend Youth Offending Service and other partners, and the need to work closely with other major transformation programmes to realise Southend's ambitious vision for Early Help.

2. Structures and governance

Integrated governance has been established since February 2016 in the form of The Early Help Governance Group with a wide representation of partners. Terms of Reference have been signed off by the Success for All Group. The Early Help Governance Group will operate as a Task & Finish group until summer 2017 to oversee Phase 2 of the Early Help Refresh.

Likewise Early Help Family Support performance and priorities contribute to the priorities and strategic actions of the borough's Children & Young People Plan. 'Continue to reduce crime, disorder and anti social behaviour' and 'Continue to improve outcomes for vulnerable children' remain amongst the borough's corporate priorities thus ensuring the Service works closely with all other relevant partner agencies and that there is a clear understanding across the partnership of issues and needs of young people.

The need to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable and hard to reach children, young people and their family's remains a high priority for the council and the Children's Partnership. Within the context of tighter council budgets, we are all now moving more swiftly to target resources to those most in need. Our shared vision for all Southend children and young people is to help them raise their aspiration and achievement, ensure they have the opportunities they need for inclusion, facilitate their participation in decision making that affects their lives and strive for excellence in the services we provide for them.

3. Partnership arrangements

The Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) has now been further refreshed and from 1 April 2016 is now incorporated as part of the Early Help Family Support & Youth Offending Service. It incorporates the following teams and services:

- Youth Offending Service
- Connexions team
- Targeted Youth Support team/Young Carers
- Troubled Families
- Integrated Locality Service/Early Help
- Young Persons Drug & Alcohol Team
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Community Engagement
- All Children reported to the Police and registered as Missing
- Standard and Medium Domestic Abuse referrals

The Youth Offending Service continues to fulfil its statutory duty under the Crime & Disorder Act to prevent offending and re-offending across the borough of Southend.

Our overarching aim is to close the divide between families that have access to opportunities and those that do not by creating role models, strengthening families, targeting services and focusing delivery in the community.

The focus of work now moves into Phase 2 of the Early Help Refresh. This phase is complex in that it seeks to establish much wider integration with partners, beyond the new 'core' EHFS service, and alignment with other key transformation programmes.

Phase 2 is about whole system change and is, therefore, inter-related with the other transformation programmes, such as A Better Start and Integrated Health Commissioning

4. Priorities

Key Objectives and Targets for 2016-17

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of us all and families must be encouraged and supported to identify their own issues and solutions. It must also be recognised that Early Help spans a wide spectrum of services, provided by a wide range of agencies to meet a wide range of needs and that all children, young people and families' needs should be met by universal services wherever possible.

Our aims are to:

- Work with families at the earliest opportunity to prevent needs from escalating.
- Professionals have confidence that if they submit a request for early help, the needs of the child and/or family will be met regardless of thresholds;
- Early Help Assessment is through a single, cumulative assessment process
- All aspects of Early Help assessment and the impact of the help provided are recorded and tracked in a systematic way.
- Ensure that Early Help and Statutory Thresholds are appropriately allocated from the first point of contact working towards achieving Ofsted Recommendations 4 and 8.

Key Objectives:

- Embed the Single Front Door process
- Embed the co-location of First Contact Front Door with the EHFS Front Door working together to ensure needs are met regardless of thresholds working towards achieving Ofsted Recommendation 4
- Ensure the new integrated front door provides the mechanism to capture Southend's offer more extensively, including the preventative / early intervention services provided through Children's Centres, Public Health, Integrated Commissioning, ABS, VCS, etc.
- Establish much wider integration with partners, beyond the new 'core' EHFS service, and alignment with other key transformation programmes

5. The Vision

Working together will enable us to shift away from managing short time crises towards effective support and intervention at the earliest stage possible and, in doing so we are committed to the following common set of principles:

- all children, young people and families need's will be met by universal services wherever possible
- families will be encouraged and supported to identify their own issues and solutions

- we will build resilience and the capacity to achieve by having a joined up approach to families' needs
- we will improve the identification of children in need and in need of protection through increased understanding of the impact of an adult's problems on a child's life
- we will have an honest, open and transparent approach in supporting children and their families
- we will work with families at the earliest opportunity in order to stop problems from escalating
- we will adopt a multi agency/disciplinary approach to both assessment and intervention
- safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of us all

It will also work towards the vision of 'Creating a Better Southend' by:

- Continuing to reduce crime, disorder & anti social behaviour
- Continuing to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and adults
- Reducing inequalities & increasing the life chances of people living in Southend
- Delivering cost effective, targeted services that meet the identified needs of our community
- Fulfilling the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in line with 'Working Together to Safeguarding Children'.
- Working to achieve the aims and objectives of the School Improvement Strategy 'Improving Learning Together'
- Working alongside and enhancing the aims and objectives of the Southend Better Care Fund plan and A Better Start project.

It will incentivise partners to work collaboratively whilst recognising the statutory responsibilities of all involved and enable families to take responsibility for their past, present and future - to look at their family dynamics as a whole.

Shared outcomes will also increase communication between professionals, support families to turn-around quicker and establish long term sustainable change which, in turn, will result in measurable cost savings to all agencies.

6. Service Delivery Plan

The Service requires us all to support children and families to address their needs at the lowest possible level, to prevent their needs escalating and to not refer to services at a higher level until we are sure we have done everything we possibly can to meet such needs at a lower level.

Furthermore, it will enable us to adhere to DCLG 4 Key Principals and Conditions of Grant:

1. A full family assessment identifying all needs for all family members in the household.
2. A SMART action plan incorporating all needs for all family members in the household.
3. A dedicated family worker, who is known by all members of the family.
4. All identified needs are aligned with the Local Authorities Outcome Plan and these needs are met and sustained over the appropriate time frame before a claim can be made.

Service Delivery Plan - Objectives

The table below clarifies the threshold between levels, whilst recognising that every family member is unique and decisions concerning level of need require reflection, discussion and professional judgement.

Level	Needs	Outcomes
<p>Level 1 - Universal A broad set of support which aims to increase the protective factors and decrease the risk factors facing children, young people and families. The complex mix of individual, family and community factors which combine to keep individuals safe and well, and for any problems or concerns to be tackled informally and quickly, without the need for more specialist support.</p>	<p>All children and families who live in Southend have core needs</p>	<p>Children & young people make good progress in most areas of development</p>
<p>Level 2 – Targeted/Emerging Needs Children & families have emerging needs where a range of early help services may be required, co-ordinated through an early help assessment where there are concerns for a child's well-being or a child's needs are not clear, not known or not being met.</p> <p>Accessed via TACAF, Children & Family Panels, YOS Prevention</p>	<p>Average of 1-2 presenting issues and additional support required</p>	<p>Life chances of children and families will be improved by offering additional support.</p> <p>De-escalation from Social Care Escalation to Level 3 prevented.</p>
<p>Level 3 - Complex/Intensive Children & Families have multiple needs that require complex support Accessed via EHFS Intensive support and/or Troubled Families Expanded Programme</p>	<p>Average of 3 – 8 presenting issues within the family and Intensive support required</p>	<p>Life chances will be significantly impaired without this support.</p> <p>Interconnected and layered problems and dynamics are reduced.</p> <p>Escalation to Level 4 prevented.</p>
<p>Level 4 - Statutory Child Protection Care Proceedings Child in Need Youth Statutory Orders/Custody Youth Treatment Orders</p>	<p>Children & young people who have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect</p>	<p>Likely to suffer significant harm and/or serious and lasting impairment without the intervention of statutory services</p>

All requests for Early Help Family Support are submitted through the revised Early Help Family Support Assessment (EHFSA) with the exception of Stage 4 requests (e.g.: those with acute needs, or in need of protection) which go straight to First Contact.

All EHFSA's are accepted and acknowledged within 24 hours through the existing Early Help contact point email address. The Duty Manager assesses all requests, looking at both current and historic issues for ALL family members and is available for professionals and families to seek advice. Every request is allocated measurable outcomes, and impact is monitored and tracked against the borough's Outcomes Plan.

All children and their families have access to a wide range of specialists throughout the Early Help Family Support & Youth Offending Service. This includes youth workers, domestic abuse worker, missing & CSE Co-ordinator, connexions workers, a police officer, a young person's mental health worker, young carer's worker, teenage pregnancy worker, young person's drug & alcohol workers and youth offending workers.

This results in one of four outcomes of which referrers are notified within 48 hours:

1. Alternative help suggested as no other concerns or issues within the family and the presenting issue is better addressed at a universal level with support from Early Help Community & Information Officers
2. Children and families have emerging needs and will be supported via TACAF, Children & Family Panels (chaired weekly by the Early Help Family Support Service) or other services within EHFS – eg YOS prevention
3. Family has multiple needs and will be supported through EHFS Intensive Support;
4. Immediate Safeguarding concerns about significant harm; referral discussed with First Contact team and referrer notified.

1. The restructure of services has strengthened the community team by bringing together, on the ground community knowledge and experience with the SHIP information Service. These two community elements complement each other and together will provide a comprehensive service for families needing information and support accessing universal services.

The community team will signpost to provision, accompany families if required and keep in touch after provision has been located to ensure that it has met the needs of the family. *'Keeping in touch'* will prevent families escalating to more intensive levels of service and ensure that the most appropriate and relevant provision is provided. The Community & Information team will respond to referrals quickly and informally, without the need for more specialist help.

They also encourage uptake of community projects, involvement in Community Hubs, inform families of community activities and undertake monthly telephone contact for an agreed monitoring period. Volunteers are also able to offer both family and 1-1 mentoring.

2. The Team Around the Child/Young Person and Family (TACAF) support need at the lowest level. A TACAF can be accessed via de-escalation from Children and Family panel or directly following referral into the front door. Families will go straight to TACAF level if the lead professional has already identified services/agencies to meet the needs of the child/family.

Actions are agreed by all including the family and reviewed on a six weekly basis. The lead professional is responsible for arranging the TACAF meetings and completing the review paperwork. Should during the TACAF process additional actions or safeguarding concerns arise, the lead professional is responsible for referring through the single front door for additional actions or following the SET procedures for safeguarding.

Children & Family Panels have multi-agency membership and continue to be held weekly. Where children and families have emerging needs, the Panel appoints a Lead Professional to oversee the agreed Action Plan, ensuring that SMART outcomes meet the needs of the family.

The Lead Professional where applicable, completes a whole family assessment. This is a full Family Story Assessment carried out with the family within 10-15 days. There are EHFS practitioners within this process who can be either the allocated Lead Professional or can also undertake specific single agency pieces of work and/or assessment as required.

3. All families requiring complex support have an EHFS practitioner as Lead Professional who, in addition to undertaking the full Family Story Assessment, provides intensive support to the family. This includes 7 days per week provision, including early mornings and evenings for up to one year.

Within the Early Help Family Support & Youth Offending Service there is an overall Quality Assurance process which contains standardised measures for all the services to ensure the work undertaken is of a high quality and is effective in achieving outcomes for children, young people and families.

All Children & Family Action Plans and Family Plans specify the support and intervention of both the EHFS Service and any other agency involved with any family member alongside the family's actions.

They include SMART measurable outcomes in line with Southend's Outcome Plan, clear timescales and 6-8 week reviews. All Services complete monthly QA audits, the results of which are compiled into quarterly reports to CSMT and shared with staff.

The overall success of Southend's integrated offer of Early Help is measured by:

- Improved outcomes for children and families in line with Southend's Outcomes Plan.
- Achievement of DCLG performance targets and Payment by Results.
- The quality of professional understanding of the profile of children and families requiring Early Help and their progress across a broader range of outcomes.

Southend's commitment is also to providing the best possible offer of Early Help to children and families across the borough to improve outcomes for the following groups:

	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	LEAD AGENCIES	CONTRIBUTORY AGENCIES
Pre-birth to 9 months	Have improved health outcomes in their development milestones, their general physical health such as dental health, and emotional well-being	Public Health Midwifery Health Visiting Children's Centres A Better Start	Voluntary & Community Sector
Children 0-5 years	Are better prepared for starting school in terms of their health and well-being and preparedness for learning	Public Health Children's Centres A Better Start EY Inclusion EYFS School Improvement Early Help Family Support	Voluntary & Community Sector
Children 5-11 years	Have improved attendance, attainment and progress	Primary schools School Nursing Behaviour support School Improvement Educational Psychology Early Help Family Support Short stay (alternative) provision	Voluntary & Community Sector
Children 11 year +	Are well prepared for their transfer to secondary school and have improved attendance, attainment and progress	Secondary schools Colleges School Nursing EWMHS Early Help Family Support Behaviour Support School Improvement Educational Psychology Short stay (alternative) provision Connexions	Voluntary & Community Sector
CYP with a disability, poor school	Have priority access to targeted services	Schools & Colleges Early Help Family	Voluntary & Community Sector

attendance, living in families beset by poverty arising from unemployment, anti-social behaviour or offending		Support & Youth Offending School Nursing EWMHS (Emotional wellbeing mental health service). Children in Need Police Connexions	
Children with SEN and disability	Receive the assessment and coordinated help they need to close the gap in education and health and social care outcomes	Early Help Family Support Disabled Children Educational Psychology EWMHS (Emotional wellbeing mental health service). Children in Need Connexions	Voluntary & Community Sector
Children at risk of anti-social behaviour and offending	Are identified early and supported to make a positive contribution	Early Help Family Support & Youth Offending SMAART Schools & Colleges Behaviour Support Police Connexions Youth Work	Voluntary & Community Sector
CYP whose needs are assessed via a CAF or EHA and/or have a coordinated approach through a TAC (CAF or Early Support)	Are more likely to experience improved outcomes in health and education, and are less likely to be accommodated, leading to a reduction in the requests for care placements and admissions to care	Early Help Family Support & Youth Offending Children's Centres Youth Work	Voluntary & Community Sector
Parents and carers who have a parenting gap in the care they provide to their children due to difficulties such as learning difficulties, mental health problems, alcohol and substance misuse and/or domestic	Are supported to make sustainable changes and improve their parenting skills	Early Help Family Support & Youth Offending Adult care and support Adult Learning Disability Adult mental Health Adult Alcohol and substance misuse Domestic Abuse Police	Voluntary & Community Sector

<p>violence</p>		<p>Housing Children in Need</p>	
<p>CYP showing the signs and symptoms of maltreatment, neglect or abuse</p>	<p>Are identified early, referred to children's social care, have a social work assessment and an intervention appropriate to the assessed needs and risks. Risks are reduced so that children are not left too long in unsatisfactory circumstances, but where risk is not reduced decisive action is taken.</p>	<p>Early Help Family Support Multi-agency referral and assessment Children's social care Police</p>	<p>Voluntary & Community Sector</p>

- **Risks to future delivery**

Risk management is an active process within Southend EHFS & YOS, one which is incorporated into our performance management framework

SERVICE OBJECTIVE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROLS	OWNER
Embed the Single Front Door process	<p>Delay in new process being adopted across all agencies and partners</p> <p>There are currently many views on what the terms Early Help, Early Intervention and prevention mean. This can be a barrier to collective understanding and the role and function of the single point of contact.</p> <p>Lack of awareness of new inspectorate and DCLG requirements</p>	<p>Promotion/workshops to schools and all other agencies to promote new way of working and overcome any barriers.</p> <p>Better understanding across all services and agencies regarding where and to whom it is best to refer families for different aspects of early help (pathways) and why.</p> <p>Southend Outcome Plan to be core to all cases. All Action Plans link to Southend Outcome Plan and monitored via Quality Assurance Audits and supervision.</p> <p>New Database in place Quality Assurance Audits linked to inspectorate requirements.</p>	
Embed the co-location of First Contact Front Door with the EHFS Front Door working together to ensure needs are met regardless of thresholds	Conflict of decision making.	<p>Ensure clear processes are in place</p> <p>Ensure that Duty Managers sit alongside each other so that constructive decision making can take place and appropriate decisions are made for the family.</p>	
Ensure the new integrated front door provides the	Only a proportion of Southend's broad EH offer is recorded, so in an inspection	Achieving effective integration and improved outcomes for	

<p>mechanism to capture Southend's offer more extensively, including the preventative / early intervention services provided through Children's Centres, Public Health, Integrated Commissioning, ABS, VCS, etc.</p>	<p>we can only share a limited picture of our offer and its impact.</p>	<p>children and families is a complex challenge requiring strong corporate and operational leadership.</p>	
<p>Establish much wider integration with partners, beyond the new 'core' EHFS service, and alignment with other key transformation programmes</p>	<p>Co-location of other specialist services with the core EHFS to provide the most appropriate support at the single point of contact, enabling swift access to services which may otherwise be subject to long waiting lists - thus reducing those waiting lists</p>	<p>Need to clarify those resources that are essential to be co-located in EHFS, and those which need to be provided from the broader partnership 'offer'. Work with Integrated Commissioners to explore how Early Help can best align with other major transformation programmes</p>	

E-signature or signature:

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