

**Children and Young People's Early Help Strategy**

**Agenda item 8**

Date	12 May 2015																
Board Sponsor	Gail Quinton, Director of Children's Services																
Author	Hannah Needham, Strategic Commissioner – Early Help & Partnerships																
Relevance of paper	<p><b>Priorities</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Older people &amp; long term conditions</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mental health &amp; well-being</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Obesity</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alcohol</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (specify below)</td> <td>No</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Groups of particular interest</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Children &amp; young people</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Communities &amp; groups with poor health outcomes</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>People with learning disabilities</td> <td>No</td> </tr> </table>	Older people & long term conditions	No	Mental health & well-being	Yes	Obesity	Yes	Alcohol	Yes	Other (specify below)	No	Children & young people	Yes	Communities & groups with poor health outcomes	Yes	People with learning disabilities	No
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Recommendation	<p><b>1. That the Health and Well-being Board (HWB) is asked to:</b></p> <p><b>a) Approve the proposals to refresh the governance arrangement, as outlined in paragraph 21, by replacing the Children's Trust Executive Board as a sub group of the HWB with a Children and Families Strategic Group and strengthen the involvement of other groups (e.g. Health Improvement Group) in overseeing the implementation of the Children and Young People's Plan,</b></p> <p><b>b) Note the feedback from the recent Children's Services Safeguarding Peer Review outlined in paragraph 15,</b></p> <p><b>c) Consider and agree the role of the Health and</b></p>																

## Background

**Well Being Board in leading the development and implementation of the revised Early Help Strategy and its contribution to the wider Children's agenda,**

- d) Note the plans to refresh the Children and Young People's (CYP's) Early Help Strategy to capture the role that all partners have in meeting 'early help' demand and to inform future funding/commissioning decisions, and**
- e) Note the timescales for consultation to inform the development of the CYP's Early Help Strategy including using the stakeholder event (4 June) arranged on reviewing the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.**

2. The NHS planning guidance for 2014/15 and beyond, requires CCGs to work with partners to develop a five year strategy for health and social care in Worcestershire.
3. This five year strategy, approved by the Health and Well Being Board in July 2014, brings together the various discrete plans and activities that health and social care partners are committed to delivering in the coming five years. It also provides a clear sense of direction for local partners to work collaboratively to deliver local plans including the Children and Young People's Plan
4. The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP), also approved in July 2014, outlines how partner agencies across Worcestershire will work together to improve outcomes for children and young people. A key priority within the CYPP is delivering the Early Help Strategy. The Health and Well Being Board delegated responsibility for progressing and performance monitoring the CYPP to the Children's Trust.
5. From April 2015, the Care Act requires the local authority to develop preventive services for adults, and to put the well-being principle at the heart of all it does. It describes three levels of preventive services: primary, secondary, and tertiary. The Care Act creates the opportunity for alignment across ages, so that the Council has a single approach to prevention, developing resilience among people living in Worcestershire, but making sure that, when people do need help, they can get the right help at the right time, before problems get worse.

## Early Help Strategy 2011-2015

6. To meet the expected levels of demand, providing impactful 'preventative'<sup>1</sup> services needs to extend beyond the county council remit. Therefore, more needs to be done to recognise and clarify the roles, responsibilities and relationships of wider partners and other commissioned services in preventing issues arising and/or escalating. There also needs to be greater emphasis placed on building individual and community resilience to improve the ability of people and communities to look after themselves and each other. These principles underpin the Connecting Families concept which aims to:-
  - Introduce a whole system response in overcoming challenges that prevent/delay positive outcomes for children and families,
  - Provide greater focus on **prevention, protection and recovery** to help families **thrive**,
  - Develop a common approach to targeting resources (human, capital, system), monitoring and evaluating impact and assessing/understanding need,
  - Build on and 'adds value' to existing good practice seen within models of inter-agency working.
7. The existing CYP's Early Help Strategy (approved in September 2011) focused on developing an 'early help offer' across Worcestershire. The development of this 'offer' focused on Worcestershire County Council's responsibilities and resources and has driven the commissioning of six 0-19 early help service arrangements, one for each District area. It also focused on the alignment of other early help services such as the schools funded Early Intervention Family Support services and the Stronger Families Service<sup>2</sup>.
8. The six 0-19 service arrangements are all now in place and the focus has switched to performance monitoring and evaluating impact on outcomes, which include tackling health inequalities. Performance information does suggest that the existing offer (including Stronger Families) is improving the lives of those individuals and families reached by early help services. However, further evaluation needs to be carried out to ascertain the wider impact on outcomes including cost benefits.
9. Throughout the implementation of the Early Help Strategy the demand on specialist services (e.g. children's social care) has continued to increase, despite the introduction of the early help offer. The financial

<sup>1</sup> Primary, secondary and tertiary prevention

<sup>2</sup> Worcestershire's response to the national Troubled Families agenda.

## Early Help Strategy 2015 onwards

landscape has also changed significantly since 2011 with public sector resources reducing. For example the County Council budget to commissioning 0-19 early help services is set to reduce by c.£4.5million (from £7.7million) by 2017/18.

10. It is therefore intended to refresh the current Early Help Strategy to:-
  - a. shape the future WCC/NHS commissioning intentions,
  - b. seize the opportunity within the Care Act to align preventative and demand management approaches across ages; and to
  - c. provide clarity on the expectations of cross agency / organisation involvement in preventing issues arising and/or escalating.
11. The refreshed strategy will be underpinned by a needs assessment completed by Public Health. The scoping of the needs assessment began in September 14 and the first phase was completed in February 2015.
12. The emerging headlines from the first phase of the needs assessment are:-
  - If we carry on as we are then the need for early help services is **forecasted to grow over the next 5 years**. The main reason for this is a higher and rising birth rate in more deprived communities where the risks of poorer outcomes are greater,
  - Using the PREview model to forecast demand, children and young people living in the most 40% of deprived localities in Worcestershire are most likely to need additional preventive interventions,
  - The rates for all current early help and specialist/critical provision (health & LA commissioned) are significantly higher in more deprived areas,
  - Based on the current number of early help assessments, currently commissioned Early Help Providers are unlikely to reduce projected demand on their own.
13. The needs assessment concluded with a number of statements that will be considered throughout the development of the refreshed Early Help Strategy. These include:-
  - Shift towards better identification and prevention of maternal mental health & depression to improve child outcomes (and save money),
  - Enhance efforts to prevent the need for early help or

## Safeguarding Peer Review

- intervention, in particular during the early years through intensive ante-natal and post-natal home visiting for disadvantaged families by strengthening parenting advice/support and by focusing outreach and family support to most vulnerable families,
- Develop a greater focus on the emotional health and wellbeing of children at school,
  - Maximise the benefits of community assets,
  - Target multiple poor behaviours amongst adolescents with evidence-based 'cluster interventions,'
  - Introduce parenting skills classes in secondary school as part of PSHE programme, ideally resulting in a parenting qualification,
  - Integrated services are key to facilitating the holistic approach to connected problems. For example, when tackling adolescent multi-factor risks (youth crime, mental health.)
14. The headline facts, figures and conclusions from the needs assessment will be used over the next six months to consult with a wide range of stakeholders and service users through a variety of forums. The purpose of the consultation is to help co-design the key priorities within the refreshed Early Help Strategy and the actions within the supporting implementation plan. An outline of the consultation activity is in Appendix 1.
15. The County Council recently asked for a Local Government Association (LGA) facilitated Safeguarding Children Peer Review to take place as part of our desire to be a learning organisation. Ahead of the review the identified key areas that the County Council wanted the reviewers to focus on were:-
- Are the structures, systems, processes and management focus right to deliver children's social care services moving forward?
  - Are the current strategies and plans for improvement having impact?
  - A view on corporate support for children's safeguarding,
  - The quality of front-line practice specifically focusing on how the front door is working,
  - A view on the multi-agency partnerships and partners engagement with supporting the improvement of outcomes for children and families.
16. The reviewers spent time with senior managers, front-line staff, members and partners to have open and honest conversations about our services and how we protect and support children and families in Worcestershire.

They identified the following key points in their feedback:

### **Key strengths**

- There is a committed workforce which is keen to make a difference to children and families,
- There is an overall sound strategy and backing from the whole council to make any necessary changes within our service,
- From observations made during their visit, timely decision making at the Access Centre was found and there is good evidence of the rationale of decision making,
- There are many examples of how work is having a good impact. For example, the POD social work model in schools, in-house social worker recruitment drive and the Stronger Families programme,
- There is strong and committed partners and tangible examples of partner engagement,
- Resources have been prioritised and there is a commitment within the financial strategy to address cost pressures within children's services.

### **Key areas for consideration**

- Social care practice is open to further improvement to help keep children safe moving forward,
- The Family Front Door needs simplifying and there needs to be a clearer understanding of where the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub will fit in,
- Provide clarity on the difference between the Worcestershire-wide early help strategy and the council commissioned early help services,
- The Health and Well-being Board could do more to add a unique children's focus in their current strategy,
- Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) requires more pace and scrutiny, with some multi-agency areas slow to develop,
- The need to further develop consistent financial projections based on forecast demand and complexity.

17. Whilst all of the above will not be achieved in coming days, it will require a step up in pace and focus in these areas. This includes strengthening the role of the Health and Well Being Board in its contribution to the wider Children's agenda, particular in relation to the Early Help Strategy and wider demand management pressures across Children's Services.

## **Strengthening the governance across the Children and Families Sector**

18. Public Health are also crucial in helping to address the demand management pressures through their focus on prevention and reducing health inequalities. The Peer Review also concluded that greater consideration should be given to integrated commissioning between Children's Services and Public Health around services for children and families.
19. In order to develop and drive through the ambition of the Early Help Strategy (including Connecting Families) and respond to the recent Peer Review feedback, the current governance arrangements across the children and families sector need to be strengthened.
20. The Children's Trust Executive Board (CTEB) is a formal sub-group of the HWB but has no formal decision making responsibilities and therefore seeks to implement the Children and Young People's Plan by influencing the plans and actions of all partners. It is also restricted in membership and therefore does not include some key strategic partners such as the CCGs. This has hampered the ability of the Children's Trust Executive Board (CTEB) to meaningfully add value to the children's agenda. There is also increased emphasis on the Health and Wellbeing Board acting as a key partnership for promoting children's outcomes and owning and integrating commissioning activity across the children's sector. The existing CTED is therefore no longer the best model to develop these relationships for the future. However, a key strength of the existing Children's Trust arrangements has been the wider stakeholder engagement and it is intended to build on this through the proposed Children and Families Strategic Group.
21. Recognition also needs to be given to the development of Local Children's Trusts, which are different across each district area, and are used as a vehicle for sharing information and discussing local solutions to meeting the needs of children and families. However, there are different facilitation arrangements within each area now the dedicated Children's partnership facilitation support has been removed. In some cases this has resulted in District Councils or Early Help Providers facilitating these groups and this stretches already limited capacity.
22. Therefore the Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to approve the following proposals:-
  - **Disband the current Children's Trust arrangements and replace it with a wider stakeholder group called the Children's and Families Strategic group, which**

## **will be a sub-group of the HWB.**

This Group will:-

- Have a wider membership than the current Children's Trust Executive Board including, Local Members and senior officers of organisations that commission and provide services for children and families in Worcestershire,
- Meet twice a year to review performance across the children, young people (and families) sector, share progress and success and agree areas for development, potentially by using HWB development sessions,
- Create space for strategic/senior officers and Members to focus on the needs of children and families and ensure there continues to be strategic oversight of improving outcomes for children and families,
- Have strategic oversight of the Connecting Families programme. The effectiveness of early help and safeguarding services will be monitored by Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board.

- **Encourage Local Children's Trusts to continue with the remit of influencing and managing demand and integrated working across their geographical area.**

They will not be formal sub-groups of the Strategic Group, although Chairs will be invited to form part of the Strategic group. Providers and Commissioners will also be encouraged to continue to use Local Children's Trusts (or equivalent) to seek feedback on local performance, engaging key local partners (e.g. schools, Members) and find solutions to particular challenges. Each Local Children's Trust will need to consider the ongoing facilitation and servicing groups, the role of local Members and the right meeting structure which adds most value.

- **Maximise the use of the HWB and the existing HWB sub-groups, including continuing to use the Health Improvement Group, to consider the specific needs of children and young people in relation to the HWB key priorities.**

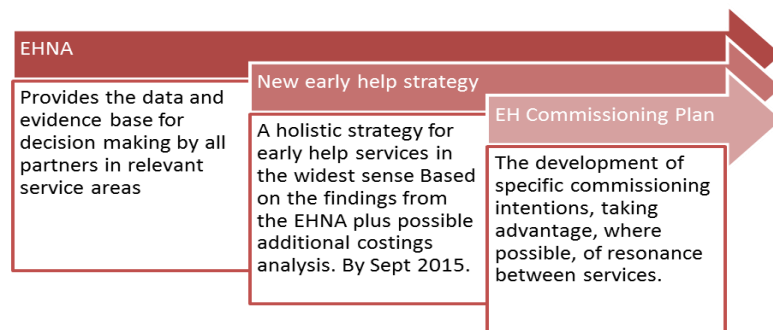
## **Next Steps**

23. Pending approval from the Health and Well Being Board, initiate the first meeting of the Children and Families Strategic Group. A tentative date has been set for the 23 June 2015.
24. The output of the consultation and needs assessment activity will be used to shape the Early Help Strategy throughout August and September 2015 ready for approval through the respective governance groups,



including the Health and Well Being Board, in November 2015. The Strategy will clarify:

- future service design models that build on the principles of integration and enabling individuals and communities to support themselves,
- what residents (potential service users) and communities can expect;
- the roles, responsibilities and relationships between agencies and organisations from across the children and families sector;
- the next iteration of transformational change across the sector including the opportunities to maximise resources e.g. social finance; and
- the expectations of how services will be evaluated to evidence success.



## Background Documents

- Appendix 1 -Early help strategy- consultation and Engagement