



## Report to Children, Young People & Family Support Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021

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**Report of:** Carly Speechley, Director Children and Families

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**Subject:** Early Help Review

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The Committee have previously received an update on Multi-Agency Support Teams (MAST) and expressed an interest in the Early Help Review.

This report provides an introduction and an update on the Early Help Review for Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny Committee.

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**Type of item:** The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	X
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Other	

**The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:**

- **Note the update, and consider if there are any future matters for the Committee work programme**

**Background Papers:**

**Category of Report:** OPEN

## Summary of the key messages:

The aim of the Early Help Review is to articulate an ambition for locality based early intervention services to children and families across Sheffield. This review officially commenced on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2020. Progress was initially impacted by Covid-19. The Steering Group with senior managers across the people portfolio met to recommence the review on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and work has continued since then.

Sheffield City Council are committed to providing early help to children, young people and families. Significant investment and support has resulted in multi-agency working to identify children and families who may need early help and a wide early help offer being available.

However;

- Despite our investment in Early Help, increasing poverty and emergent risk have resulted in increasing demand and complexity
- We need a more consistent and fair approach across the city for all children, young people and their families
- Sometimes families are not able to access early help or have to wait too long
- Our 'reach' is not wide enough for all the children, young people and families that need help and support so demand for acute and reactive services continues to increase
- Partners tell us it can be difficult to navigate our early help system, they aren't always clear how to access services and sometimes there is duplication which is inefficient and means families have to tell their story more than once
- Our families have increasingly complex needs which cannot be addressed through a single agency or single issue response
- Our workforce tells us the current offer is difficult to navigate, there are multiple processes to identify need and numerous pathways depending on need identified.
- There is a disproportionate resource allocated to identification and assessment which means there are not enough 'case holding' workers to undertake the keyworker role for families.
- Improving our Early Help offer to meet the additional needs of more families will reduce demand for acute services which is both better for children and more cost-effective provision.

The Early Help review aims to:

- Develop **one** integrated and coordinated offer of early help services delivered in localities which is strengths based and whole family
- Streamline pathways into the offer based on data and referral information
- Increase case holding capacity whilst maintaining specialist function
- Co locate services with partner agencies where possible

The Steering group agreed a two phased approach to the review;

- Phase One will articulate a coherent Sheffield City Council Early Help Offer and is anticipated to conclude in early 2022
- Phase Two will articulate a coordinated partnership Early Help Offer for the City and will commence in early 2022.

## **Background Information**

### **What do we mean by Early Help?**

Early Help refers to the wide range of support available to children, young people and families from universal provision through to targeted non-statutory intensive support (including our “Edge of Care” services), to prevent additional needs arising or escalating. All services who work with children, young people and parents should work to the guidelines in Working Together 2018 that describes the reach of Early Help as follows;

*Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.*

*Early help can also prevent further problems arising; for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care, or in families where there are emerging parental mental health issues or drug and alcohol misuse.*

*Effective early help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to:*

- *identify children and families who would benefit from early help*
- *undertake an assessment of the need for early help*
- *provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child*

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682047/Working-Together-to-Safeguard-Children-2018.pdf)

Why does Early Intervention matter? This 2 minute video illustrates why beautifully...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liPtHMa7WCY>

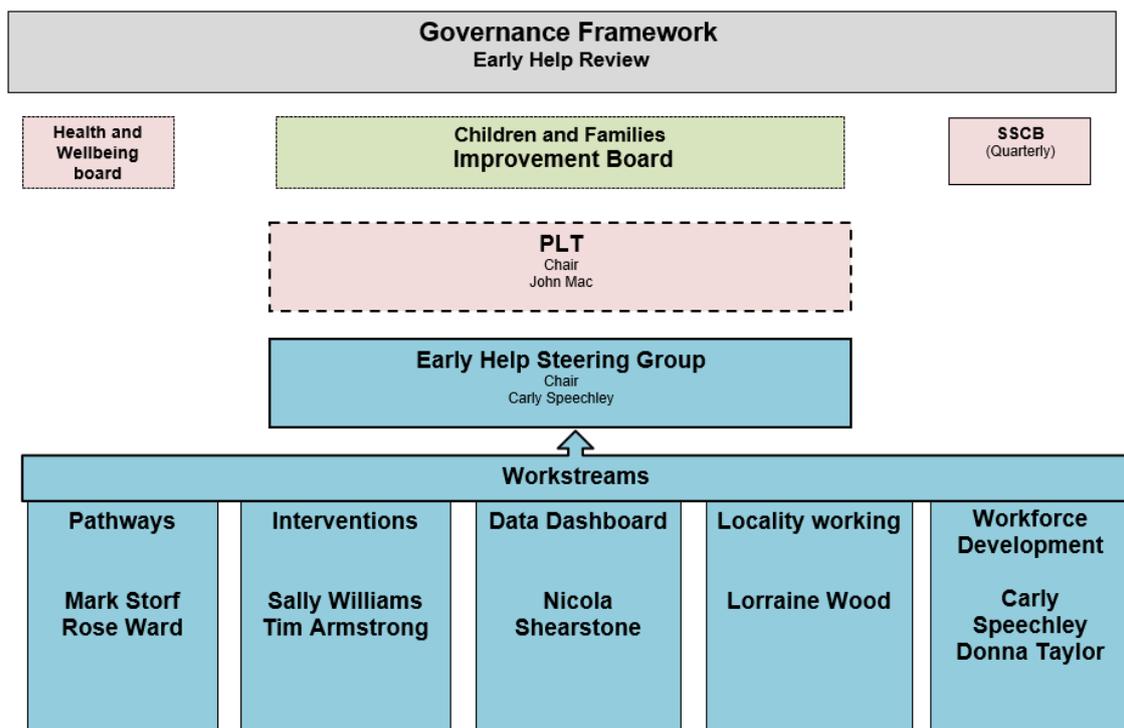
## Vision for the Early Help Review

Sheffield will be an inclusive city where we work together to ensure that all children receive the right support at the right time so that they live a happy and fulfilled life

## Ambition

To have a clear pathway into one integrated early help offer that has been co-produced with all stakeholders including; children, young people, families, staff, practitioners, and partners

## Governance for Phase One



The steering group agreed the co-produced vision articulated in the inclusion strategy encompasses our vision for early help across the City.

Phase 1 of the review is being progressed by the following workstreams;

## **Interventions Workstream**

### **What success would look like;**

A clear and comprehensive Early Help interventions model/framework comprising evidence-informed practice that clarifies what interventions are on offer and what outcomes each intervention should deliver against so that we can understand what works, where the gaps are and make decisions about what we offer each family based on their needs.

### **Progress and next steps**

- Development of the Early Help Outcomes Framework, with input from partners, schools, parents, children and the Early Help workforce.
- A draft of the Early Help Interventions Menu is being tested on with a focus group of partner agencies this week for their input with the aim of creating one clear offer easily navigable by referrers who have identified additional needs of children, young people and/or families.

## **Data Workstream**

### **What success would look like;**

- Comprehensive information sharing agreements that enable all Early Help and relevant health services to share information
- Reduced number of IT systems for Early Help services and better use of data to assist frontline work, to measure impact, to assess our performance and to target our resources.
- Data sets that inform us of the differing demands in different localities across the city

### **Progress and next steps**

- Many Early Help services now using the same IT system and so more easily able to see and share information
- Progress with developing improved data sharing agreements with partner agencies to enable frontline practitioners to have all the relevant information they need to improve the support that they offer to children, young people and families.
- Further IT developments planned subject to financial constraints

## **Pathways Workstream**

### **What success would look like;**

- Streamlined pathways into the offer based on data and referral information
- Our Services will work together well and have simple processes that support a 'Tell Us Once' approach that enables more families being offered timely support that meets their needs

### **Progress and next steps**

Work underway to create a single point of access into children, young people & families services with a single referral form – initial testing with a small range of services due to begin in November 2021 with expansion and development over the coming months.

## **Workforce Workstream**

### **What success would look like;**

- An Early Help workforce all trained to a clear knowledge and skills framework that are skilled and supported to do high quality work with children and families
- All Early Help workforce to have up to date, relevant job descriptions, permanent team structures and clarity re: role and remit and how their work benefits children and families
- Clear career development pathways for the Early Help workforce, with more opportunity for side-ways moves as well as attainable progression opportunities
- Increased case holding capacity overall whilst retaining advisory and specialist expertise in our workforce, and Early Help workers work with the whole family where possible.

### **Progress and next steps**

- A workforce redesign process is underway to align job roles with the outcomes framework for Early Help and the newly created Early Help Knowledge & Skills Framework. Anticipated implementation date for practitioner roles is January 2022.
- An enhanced learning & development offer has been developed to ensure that the Early Help workforce are skilled and supported to do the work that is needed.

## **Localities Workstream**

### **What success would look like;**

- Families can access early help services in their neighbourhood, and the provision available is the right type and amount to meet the needs of that community (informed by good quality data)
- Early Help practitioners work together well to provide multi-agency joined up services that meet families need in that community
- The Voluntary and Community sector, Police, Community workers, neighbourhood officers, health workers, schools and Early Help workers together deliver support to children and families as needed.

### **Progress and next steps**

- Connecting Practice Events have been held regularly in each locality to bring together the SCC, partner agency and VCF sector Early Help practitioners that serve that community, to build relationships and promote the provision available for families.
- Phase 2 of the Early Help Review will further progress the Early Help offer across this wide range of agencies for the families of Sheffield.

### Sheffield Early Help Outcomes Framework

- ✓ **SAFE & NURTURED** – Children & young people are safe, secure & nurtured within their home
- ✓ **SAFE COMMUNITIES** – Children and young people are safe and supported in their community so that they are not at risk of harm
- ✓ **GOOD HEALTH** - Children and young people have good physical health
- ✓ **EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY** – Children and young people are resilient and emotionally healthy
- ✓ **ENGAGING EDUCATION & ACTIVITIES** – Children and young people access their education, employment, and their local community

*And in all of our work we ensure that children and young people with additional needs get identified and receive appropriate support in a timely manner.*

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