Meeting: **Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date/Time: **Tuesday, 5 March 2019 at 1.30 pm**

Location: **Sparkenhoe Committee Room - County Hall**

Contact: **Gemma Duckworth (0116 3052583)**

Email: **gemma.duckworth@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Mrs B. Seaton CC (Chairman)

Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC   Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC
Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC   Mr. G. Welsh CC
Mr. J. Kaufman CC   Mrs. A. Wright CC
Mrs. C. Lewis   Mrs. M. Wright CC
Mrs. R. Page CC

**Please note: this meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's web site at http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk
– Notices will be on display at the meeting explaining the arrangements.**

AGENDA

Item   Report by

1.   Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January   (Pages 5 - 12)
      2019.

2.   Question Time.

3.   Questions asked by members under Standing
      Order 7(3) and 7(5).

4.   To advise of any other items which the
      Chairman has decided to take as urgent
      elsewhere on the agenda.

5.   Declarations of interest in respect of items on
      the agenda.

6.   Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance

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with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule
16.

7. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order
36.

8. Evaluation of Early Help Services.   Director of   (Pages 13 - 66)
Children and
Family Services

9. Leicestershire's New Safeguarding   Director of   (Pages 67 - 76)
Arrangements 2019.   Children and
Family Services

10. Update on Complaints Handling within   Director of   (Pages 77 - 84)
Children and Family Services.   Children and
Family Services

11. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on 4
June 2019 at 1.30pm.

12. Any other items which the Chairman has
decided to take as urgent.

QUESTIONING BY MEMBERS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The ability to ask good, pertinent questions lies at the heart of successful and effective scrutiny. To support members with this, a range of resources, including guides to questioning, are available via the Centre for Public Scrutiny website www.cfps.org.uk.

The following questions have been agreed by Scrutiny members as a good starting point for developing questions:-

- Who was consulted and what were they consulted on? What is the process for and quality of the consultation?
- How have the voices of local people and frontline staff been heard?
- What does success look like?
- What is the history of the service and what will be different this time?
- What happens once the money is spent?
- If the service model is changing, has the previous service model been evaluated?
- What evaluation arrangements are in place – will there be an annual review?

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Leicestershire
County Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 22 January 2019.

PRESENT

Mrs B. Seaton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. J. G. Coxon CC   Mrs. R. Page CC
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC   Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC
Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC   Mr. G. Welsh CC
Mr. J. Kaufman CC   Mrs. M. Wright CC
Mrs. C. Lewis

In Attendance.

Mr. I. D. Ould CC – Cabinet Lead Member for Children and Families
Mrs. D. Taylor CC – Deputy Cabinet Member.

53. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2018 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

54. Question Time.

The following question, received under Standing Order 35, was put to the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Question from Mrs Sue Whiting

How many children in the care of Leicestershire County Council, aged 11-17, are in residential accommodation outside the authority and transported back into Leicestershire have   a) an EHCP
        b) do not have an EHCP?

Reply from Mrs B Seaton CC

As at 11 January 2019, there are six children in the care of Leicestershire, aged 11-17, who are in residential accommodation outside the authority and are transported back into Leicestershire for their education.

a) Three children have an EHCP (and attend special school provision)
b) Three children do not have an EHCP (and are in mainstream education).

Mrs Whiting asked a supplementary question around whether there has ever been a request for an EHCP assessment for the three children, aged 11-17, currently in the care of Leicestershire County Council in residential accommodation outside the authority, and transported back into Leicestershire for mainstream education who do not have an EHCP?

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Children and Family Services undertook to seek this information and provide a written response to Mrs Whiting.

55. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

56. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

57. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

Mr I D Ould CC declared a Personal Interest in the report on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Provision – High Needs Block Development Plan (minute number 61 refers) as a lifetime member of the National Association of Headteachers.

58. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

59. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 36.

60. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 - 2022/23.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Children and Family Services and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2019/20 to 2022/23 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Children and Family Services Department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr I D Ould CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Children and Family Services, to the meeting for this item. Mr Ould praised the work of the officers in ensuring that the budget was as positive as could be expected.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

Service Transformation

i) Concern was raised around the lack of certainty of future contributions from partner funding and the Government's Troubled Families grant to support the Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF) programme. This would equate to a loss of £2.3 million of income from October 2020. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner had recently confirmed the continuation of funding towards the SLF programme. The Cabinet Lead Member reported that there

was to be a ministerial visit to Leicestershire on 7 February to discuss the programme, and support for SLF had been received from Ministers. A report was due to be presented to the March meeting of the Committee on the evaluation of the Early Help Review.

Proposed Revenue Budget

ii)   The revenue budget had not taken into account any pay or price inflation. A central contingency was held which would be allocated to services as necessary.

Growth

iii)   Attention was drawn to G2 – Supporting Leicestershire Families – transition to a new model when external funding ceases. The 2018/19 MTFS had made provision of £1 million per annum for 2018/19 and 2019/20, after which this funding would be removed.

iv)   Other significant areas of growth included Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, due to the volatility of this area, and the use of agency staff in Children's Social Care. Although the Department's Recruitment and Retention Strategy was starting to have a positive impact, there would be an ongoing need for agency staff to cover vacancies.

Savings

v)   There were no new savings against the Department's budgets in this MTFS.

vi)   It was noted that the annual target for CF2 – Growing Mainstream Internal Foster Carer Provision – had fallen short in 2018/19. However, this had been offset by the savings achieved from the recruitment of specialist foster carers, and it was anticipated that the target would be fully achieved in 2019/20 as a result of successful recruitment campaigns. Members highlighted that, whilst increasing foster carer provision did deliver savings for the department, it was also a better way of delivering services.

vii)   The contract for Wrap Around Therapeutic Services had now commenced and savings were expected to accrue from 2020/21. An update on the progress of this would be provided to the Committee in due course.

viii)   With regard to the savings from disabled children's respite care, it was noted that this related to the review of a specific contract to ensure that a greater range of options for respite care were available to service users.

Dedicated Schools Grant/Schools Block

ix)   Under the National Funding Formula, there was a mixed picture as to how schools were managing financially. A new project had been developed to work with schools to look at developing their financial capacity as there were some concerns around the way schools were forecasting their budgets. A new post would be recruited to, for two years, to work with schools on their budgets in order to get a clear picture of the situation. The County Council had also considered a number of factors which could indicate whether a school was

operating well financially, but no correlation had been found between the school's position and any specific funding.

x) In terms of the teacher's pay increase, schools had received a grant, which had commenced in September 2018, to cover the cost of the teacher's pay award. This was funded on a per pupil basis and the general response that had been received from schools was that this was covering the cost. A new grant was also expected in September 2019 to cover the increase in the employer's contribution to the teacher pension scheme.

xi) In relation to a query around the National Funding Formula calculating notional school allocations based upon pupil characteristics, it was stated that this ensured that schools were given the same amount of funding for pupils with the same characteristics, irrespective of where the school was located. However, there would still be a degree of unequal funding to local authorities, as specific characteristics such as deprivation, low attainment and the receipt of free school meals, determined different levels of funding.

xii) The financial challenges faced by Church of England schools was significant, with more than half of all such schools nationally at risk of becoming insolvent over the next few years. It was therefore pleasing to note the work being undertaken in respect of school financial planning.

High Needs

xiii) The confirmed level of funding for the High Needs DSG was detailed in the report; no inflationary increases had been assumed although it was hoped that they would be made available.

Specific Grants

xiv) It was difficult to confirm when some of the specific grants for the department would be allocated. In particular, the Early Years DSG grant would not be confirmed until June 2020, which was after the 2019/20 financial year. There was no indication that any of the grants would not be available for the 2018/19 financial year.

xv) The County Council acted as the conduit for maintained schools in relation to grants around maintained school sixth forms, pupil premium, universal infant free school meals, and the PE and Sports grant.

xvi) The government had now confirmed that it would fund the additional responsibilities associated with the Virtual School until 2020.

xvii) The Youth Justice Good Practice grant had not yet been confirmed. It was assumed that it would be at the same level as 2018/19, but if this was not the case, it would perhaps be necessary to make some reductions to services. Previous reductions in service had not prevented the County Council from meeting its statutory requirements. However, if further reductions in service were made this could be a risk.

Capital Programme

xviii) The programme focused on two significant areas, one of which was the need to provide additional primary school places. An estimated 895 additional places would be delivered in 2019/20. In response to a query, it was not possible to ensure that these places would only be allocated to Leicestershire county children. The County Council had a duty to ensure that there were sufficient school places within the county for the children of Leicestershire; this was the case.

RESOLVED:

a) That the report and information now provided be noted;

b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 28 January 2019.

61. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Provision - High Needs Block Development Plan.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services setting out the High Needs Block Development Plan to develop local Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision. The views of the Committee were sought as part of the consultation process agreed by the Cabinet at its meeting on 18 December 2018. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were raised:-

i) It was acknowledged that there had been a significant increase in the demand for high needs placements, and it was possible for parents to exercise their choice of the provision that their child received. In response to a query around the long term sustainability of the Plan, it was stated that this would meet needs for the next five years. A risk arose when the level of grant funding did not correlate with the number of placements required.

ii) The Development Plan supported the wider SEND Strategy. Where possible, mainstream provision was offered to children with SEND, but the child's needs had to be met. The local authority would challenge a particular school where it was felt that more could be done to support a child with SEND.

iii) The High Needs Recovery Plan emphasised the fact that provision was being developed rather than services being cut. It was the intention that the consultation exercise would ensure that no child was adversely affected by the proposals.

The Committee was pleased with the report and the progress that was being made. Members particularly welcomed the proposal to increase local provision.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

62. School Admissions and Appeals in Leicestershire.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services detailing the current arrangements and performance data for admissions and appeals in Leicestershire's maintained schools and academies; the risks, challenges and priorities in relation to the future allocation of school places; and the local authority's duties concerning school attendance in Leicestershire. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following was highlighted:

i) Concern was raised by a member around the cost of transport for getting children to a school which was more than two miles from their home. There were instances where parents were unable to get their children to the school they had been allocated due to the distance and location, which ultimately resulted in poor attendance.

ii) Particular concern was raised around the large housing development being built in Oadby, and the fact that there was no guarantee that children in this area would be offered a place at their local school. There were enough school places in Oadby for local children; however, many of the schools were academies, which limited the control the local authority had on the school's admission arrangements, and were also popular with parents applying for school places from outside of the immediate locality. This issue had been raised with the Regional Schools Commissioner on an ongoing basis, but aside from taking away parental choice of where they could apply for their child to attend school, it was a difficult situation to manage.

iii) The Cabinet Lead Member for Children and Families expressed concern that there were negative outcomes arising from the fact that academies had so much autonomy. The fact that the local authority had no control over the admission process for academies negated its role in pupil place planning, which was undertaken on an annual basis. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the Department for Education expressing the concerns of the County Council over the admission criteria.

iv) A request was made that armed forces children were given a specific category in the priority criteria. Although the County Council did discuss the placement of armed forces children with schools, its School Admissions Code currently reflected that determined by the Department for Education which did not allow for armed forces children to be prioritised. However, the national code was due to be reviewed and this could therefore be suggested for consideration.

v) It was noted that the number of successful appeals for first time admissions to school and secondary transfers had reduced significantly, although the number of successful mid-term applications had increased. The Appeals Panel was independent of the County Council; this was therefore not an area which the County Council could influence.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

63. Quarter 2 2018/19 Performance Report.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services presenting the department's performance for the period July to September 2018 (Quarter 2). A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

The following points were noted:

i)   The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation had now risen to 90.9%, and the percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training was now over 61%.

ii)   It was noted that a report would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee on the success around apprenticeships for care leavers.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

64.   Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 5 March 2019 at 1.30pm.

1.30 – 3.30pm   CHAIRMAN
22 January 2019

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Agenda Item 8

Leicestershire County Council

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 5th MARCH 2019

EVALUATION OF EARLY HELP SERVICES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the findings in relation to an evaluation of the Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF) team, introduced in 2013 as a result of the Troubled Families (TF) Project. The report also highlights a number of areas of current performance.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The proposal to introduce a multi-agency SLF team, focused on providing intensive support to families encountering defined difficulties, was considered and agreed by the Cabinet in April 2013.

3. The SLF team forms part of the Children and Families Service, and is directly linked into supporting the priority within the Children and Families Service Plan to provide early intervention through working with families to build strength, resilience and confidence, and the priority in the Children and Families Partnership Plan to support children and families to be resilient.

Background

4. During 2012 the Government introduced the national TF programme. This provided a framework for a number of partner agencies, notably local authorities, Police, Health and the Department for Work and Pensions, to work with families with complex problems. The programme attracted national funding for agencies working with families who have a combination of three defined problems - unemployment within the family, a child in the family with poor school attendance or are involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.

5. In 2014 the TF unit extended the project for a further five years from 2015 and allowed greater flexibility in enabling regions to determine the criteria for working with families. In Leicestershire this was extended to include families affected by domestic abuse or mental health or containing a child who was broadly defined as needing help. In addition to national funding, the SLF project in Leicestershire attracted £100,000 funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner and £30,000 from each of the District Councils annually, to both co-work on and support the project. The national project is due to finish in 2020 and funding from partner agencies and the national TF unit will end by this date.

6. The approach adopted by SLF has been to provide one to one intensive support to families through a keyworker. The worker provides practical hands on support, can often have an assertive and challenging relationship with the family, agrees desired outcomes and assists the family to reach the goal of self-sufficiency.

Research and Findings

7. The evaluation project involved an analysis of 787 closed cases supported by SLF dating back to the start of the project, and included a review of case management data, questionnaires, interviews and focus groups with service users, interviews with staff and feedback from stakeholders. The evaluation report is detailed and lengthy and the findings are outlined in six separate evaluation reports focussing on different elements of the project. In addition, there is a summary report drawing together the main areas of learning (Appendix A). The evaluation and current performance in relation to payment by results (PBR) provides strong evidence in relation to the success of the approach. The summary of the findings are as follows:

    - The majority of families (72%) of the closed cases, made positive progress in one or more of the ten key domains used to assess family progress.

    - In relation to these domains, families made most progress in improving boundaries and behaviour (72%), adult wellbeing (70%), social networks (65%) and children's emotional needs (64%).

    - The impact of SLF support in relation to referrals to Social Care is significant. Notably 68% of families had involvement with social care prior to SLF intervention; this drops to 25% of families during SLF intervention and 33% of families after the case is closed to SLF.

    - The TF funding is allocated to individual projects based on the amount of families reaching positive outcomes. Leicestershire remains a high performing PBR local authority, both regionally and nationally. To date, ten claims have been submitted under the programme. Claim 11 was submitted at the end of January 2019. Through these claims, Leicestershire has delivered positive outcomes for 1596 families. This equates to 58% of the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) target of 2770 families.

8. The evaluation also gives a detailed breakdown of the impact SLF intensive support has on families suffering from different types of difficulties and along with this the findings identified a number of underlying themes:

    - There are notable results in relation to groups of service users categorised as;
        i.   Single parents reliant on benefits
        ii. Teenage parents requiring support around parenting and child development behaviour.
      Half of this group of service users made the most positive progress. Interestingly, however, in contrast the half that did not make progress were more likely to require social care involvement.

    - Families with three or more adult females living in the household made significantly less progress than other categories of service users.

- Families categorised as having less complex needs and requiring support around a child's mental health and behaviour started from a high starting point. However this group still made significant progress where financial difficulties were identified and supported from the outset.

- The research highlights issues in relation to the impact of domestic abuse on families. Around 52% of adults and 32% of children had been victims of this type of abuse. There was a strong correlation between domestic abuse and poor adult mental health, and parenting difficulties and behaviour issues relating to the children, particularly with aggressive behaviour, bullying and mental health.

- Families with children with learning disabilities and special educational needs made mixed progress. Some families fared better than others as a result of SLF intensive support. The research highlighted that early identification of families not yet in receipt of formal diagnosis, or where children are transitioning between schools, could lead to improved outcomes in this area.

- The research found that families have a better chance of success when they acknowledge their issues and accept support from networks including family, friends, other community networks and partner agencies. Building resilience in and around families to achieve sustainable outcomes has been a key area of learning from the project.

- It is of particular note that SLF achieved very positive results in supporting adult family members into employment. Around 55% of families report achieving progress in this area and significantly, Leicestershire is the second highest performing local authority in achieving progress through to a continuous employment outcome. Of the 1596 families claimed to date, 642 have entered and sustained employment for either 13 or 26 weeks, dependent on the type of benefit that they were initially claiming. The highest performing local authority is Liverpool.

9. The evaluation report also highlights the following:

- That there is an evidence base to highlight the benefits of the troubled families approach and there are therefore clear financial implications associated with reducing early help services.

- Service users provided extremely positive feedback after intervention with SLF workers. Additionally SLF staff have high levels of confidence that their work will affect change in families.

- That early help work with partners should be further developed and communication with partner agencies could improve. Additionally the TF evaluation of Leicestershire recommended that more support for families from the voluntary sector could also be developed.

- The report also makes a series of recommendations linked to developing support from parents in relation to children with mental health issues and special educational needs and supporting children affected by domestic abuse in the household.

Resource Implications

10.　In considering the national picture, the Local Government Association (LGA) highlighted the stark situation in relation to funding for early intervention work in a November 2018 briefing paper. This highlighted that since 2013, early intervention grants had been reduced by £500 million, and it was anticipated that this would equate to a 40% drop in early intervention funding by 2020. The LGA warned that reductions in funding for preventative work could lead to a £2 billion funding gap by 2020, unless some form of action was taken to reduce the numbers of families requiring statutory children's services. The report highlights that many Councils have diverted spending on preventative and early help work into services to protect children who are at an immediate risk of harm; an area where demand has grown steadily since 2007.

11.　The national Troubled Families funding is due to end in November 2020. In preparation for this, and in light of the results of the evaluation, the intensive family support previously led by the SLF team (working in partnership with a number of district councils) has been mainstreamed within the newly formed Children and Families Wellbeing Service. This has led to a number of staff who had worked within the SLF team from Melton Borough Council and Blaby District Council being TUPE transferred into the Service. However if the Department for Education nationally does not provide any follow on funding from troubled families for early intervention work, there will be a shortfall in funding to the Children and Family Wellbeing Service from November 2020. The evidence from the evaluation indicates that this may have implications on both positive outcomes for families, and place increased demands on statutory children's services.

12　The local evaluation into early help work provides evidence that investment in early support to families encountering difficulties can have both benefits to families and to local authorities by reducing demand on statutory children's services, and through supporting families to become independent by increasing employment prospects

Conclusions

13　The evaluation report is comprehensive and draws in findings from research into 787 Leicestershire families. There are some notable success factors around the progress a large percentage of families with complex problems have made and evidence shows that this has a positive impact on reducing the number of families requiring specialist intervention from social work teams.

14.　The evaluation report has significantly influenced the Early Help Review, providing an evidence base for integrating youth related services, SLF and 0 to 5 focused children's centre programme. Although there have been financial challenges linked to the review of Early Help Services, intensive one to one support for the most complex families has been preserved within the new integrated Family Wellbeing Service. This has been as a direct result of evidence from the evaluation. The evidence has also provided the platform to progress developments notably in triage, assessment, emotional wellbeing support, the response to domestic abuse and working with partner agencies including schools, health and district councils.

Background Papers

None

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

15. None

Equality and Human Rights Implications

16. There are no direct equality and human rights implications under the current funding arrangements. If, in the future, funding is reduced to early intervention services then this could lead to an adverse impact on children and families with disabilities or other protected characteristics.

Appendices

Appendix A – Early Help Evaluation Summary

Officers to Contact

Name: Jane Moore – Director of Children and Family Services
Telephone: 0116 305 2649
Email: Jane.Moore@leics.gov.uk

Name: Chris Thomas – Head of Service, Early Help and Community Safety
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Early Help Evaluation

Summary Report – Report 1

Paula Forster
July 2018

Strategic Business Intelligence Team
Leicestershire County Council

Early Help Evaluation – Final Report

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Produced by the Strategic Business Intelligence Team at Leicestershire County Council.

Early Help Evaluation – Final Report

Contents

Early Help Evaluation – Final Report

1. Background

Leicestershire

Leicestershire is committed to supporting the improvement of outcomes for its residents. The challenge is to achieve this against a backdrop of reduced budgets and increasing demands to services where the pressure on resources will continue to increase. There is a need to refocus the work of the council's Early Help services to reduce demand on services in line with these budgets reductions.

Scope

This evaluation covers Early Help families which were supported by a case worker from the Supporting Leicestershire Families Service and Children's Centre's who received an assessed service during 2013 and 2017.

Links with National Troubled Families Programme

This evaluation recognises and acknowledges wider evaluation activity associated with the National Troubled Families programme due to the large cross over of families within both cohorts.

The current position for Leicestershire partnership self-assessment against the six strands of the Troubled Families Service Transformation Maturity Model is as below:

Family experience of transformed services	Developing
Leadership	Early
Strategy	Early
Culture	Developing
Workforce development	Developing
Delivery structures and processes	Developing

Contributions

Over 100 families consisting of almost 500 individuals[1] and over 50 partners contributed their voice towards this evaluation. In addition there have been significant contributions from over 100 staff in the Early Help Service.

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[1] Anonymised in all reports

Early Help Evaluation – Final Report

Key Areas of Need

Workers regularly collect 57 indicators of need. The following needs are prevalent at the start of the Early Help intervention in over 50% of Early Help cases in the evaluation cohort;

- Parenting difficulties (78%)
- A heavy reliance on benefits (65%)
- Low-level adult mental health (64%)
- Work-related benefits (62%)
- Single parent families (60%)
- Other adult mental health (59%)
- Negative child lifestyle (57%)
- Financial difficulties (56%)
- Unstable/disruptive family relationships (54%)
- Violent or aggressive behaviour in children (53%)
- Adult domestic abuse victims (52%)

More Information

Outcomes are also captured by workers using an outcomes tool called Family Star Plus[2]. For further information see

APPENDIX 1A – FAMILY STAR

CHAPTER 10 – RESULTS – FAMILIES PROGRESS

REPORT 5 – UNDERSTANDING DEMAND BETTER

REPORT 6 – THEORY OF CHANGE AND THEORY OF ACTION

For further information on objectives of the Evaluation and the Early Help Service see

REPORT 7 – TECHNICAL REPORT

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[2] Burns, S & MacKeith, J. (2013) The Family Star Plus User Guide and The Family Star Plus: Organisation Guide, Brighton: Triangle Consulting

Early Help Evaluation – Final Report

2. Report Structure

There are seven reports making up the evaluation of Early Help case work as below:

Table 1 – Early Help Evaluation Reports

Report Title	Description of Report Contents	Pages
Report 1 – Summary report	A summary of the key findings (this report)	48
Report 2 – What Families Say	Families perspective of Leicestershire County Council's Early Help service – in-depth insight into what families value and what could be different	122
Report 3 – Early Help key worker confidence survey	Leicestershire County Council's caseworkers level of confidence against a number of key requirements of their role in supporting families[3]	17
Report 4 – Multi agency and other asset based strengths	A multi-agency perspective of Leicestershire County Council's Early Help service and further in-depth insight from families into multi-agencies as well as other asset based strengths and deficiencies within families and communities	191
Report 5 – Understanding demand better	In-depth analysis of nine different groups of Early Help families - Understanding how their needs interrelate and which families make the most and least progress	113
Report 6 – Theory of change and theory of action	Provides information on the theory of change and theory of action underpinning the Early Help evaluation and some further detailed findings around families progress around key domains where change is measured	150
Report 7 – Technical report	Background and technical details of the scope and methods used to inform the evaluation	37

[3] Additional worker feedback can be found in report 2 & 4

Early Help Evaluation – Final Report

3. Objectives

The purpose of this evaluation is to explore and understand from the perspective of family, partner and staff experience:

- What has been working in Leicestershire since May 2013
- What needs to be improved or done differently to support:
    - Staff and service development
    - Transformation
    - Commissioning
    - Delivery of services
  Which will:
    - Most likely improve the outcomes of families requiring Early Help support

The evaluation also aims to provide:

- An understanding of what works for what types of families:
    - In what circumstances
    - Why it works and;
- When things do not appear to go well or improve:
    - Why that might be

The evaluation of the Early Help casework provides an evidence base on which to understand:

- What is working well
- What needs to be developed
- How the Early Help service might be transformed, and;
- Identify which families the service could be working with in the future

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More Information
For further information on objectives of the Evaluation and the Early Help Service see
REPORT 7 – TECHNICAL REPORT

Early Help Evaluation – Final Report

4. Methods

A total of 5,486 families (and over 20,000 individuals) were identified as being supported by a case-worker from the Early Help Service during the evaluation period of 2013 to 2017. A large portion of families did not have sufficient data to be included across all methodologies, for example due to the length and nature of the intervention or due to the nature of the research methodology.

To summarise, the key methods used to inform this evaluation include:

- Evaluation design - including development of the Theory of Change and Theory of Action
- Family Star Plus[4] (measuring progress)
- 57 indicators assessed and collected by workers – Identifying need
- Cluster analysis (need)
- Cluster analysis (progress)
- CHAID analysis (progress)
- Parent voice (in-depth interviews and journey maps)
- Parent voice (surveys)
- Child and young person's voice (pop up event)
- Child voice - pre and non-verbal children (worker observations)
- Survey of staff[5]
- Most Significant Change (staff)[6]
- Most Significant Change (partners)
- Case studies
- Analysis of stuck cases
- Stakeholder analysis
- Stakeholder participation

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[4] Burns, S & MacKeith, J. (2013) The Family Star Plus User Guide and The Family Star Plus: Organisation Guide, Brighton: Triangle Consulting
[5] Bandura (1997)
[6] Davies R and Dart J (2005) The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use. Available at: http://mande.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/MSCGuide.pdf

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More information

For further information on Family Star Plus, see
APPENDIX 1A

For a short summary of the methodologies used and the number of participants and cases used for each methodology see
APPENDIX 1B

For an example of the in-depth journey maps supporting this evaluation see
APPENDIX 1C – MANDY'S JOURNEY MAP

For detail of the further 14 in-depth journey maps supporting this evaluation see
REPORT 5 – UNDERSTANDING DEMAND BETTER

For more detailed information around needs, demographics, other characteristics and progress see
APPENDIX 1D – SUPPORTING INFORMATION AROUND KEY FINDINGS
REPORT 5 – UNDERSTANDING DEMAND BETTER

For more detailed information on the methodologies used and background see
REPORT 7 – TECHNICAL REPORT

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5. Executive Summary

5.1 Conclusions and Key Takeaway Points

Context

1. **The families being supported by a caseworker from Leicestershire County Council's Early Help Service have a diverse and complex range of needs.**
   There are significantly more single parent families and families living in social housing, requiring support from the Early Help Service than the Leicestershire average. Leicestershire families need Early Help support in particular around parenting and their mental health, finances, domestic abuse and SEND related issues. Multi-agency support and development is key to families being provided with the right support.

Effectiveness of the Council's Early Help Service

2. **The Early Help Service is an effective, highly valued and innovative service established in 2013 in response to the Troubled Families agenda.**
   Early Help casework focuses around an evidence based multi-agency/key worker approach. The service is highly valued by families and partners. In addition, it is significant that staff have extremely high levels of confidence in being able to effect change for complex families with diverse needs (ranging from 93% to 100% average levels of confidence for 'all or most of the time' across eleven key activities and approaches). Where progress is measured, 72% of families make progress in one or more of ten domains. The service has worked with families across Leicestershire with some of the most complex problems and the majority of families sustain changes when they are no longer supported by the service and 67% aren't re-referred to the Early Help service.

   > **A key finding from the evaluation**
   > The impact of Early Help support in relation to social care referrals is significant. Notably 68% of families had involvement with social care prior to Early Help support and this drops to 25% during intervention and 38% after the case is closed

Areas for Improvement

3. **There are a number of findings documented throughout the detailed evaluation reports which provide Early Help management with a robust evidence base on which to transform the service further.**
   Detailed findings include statistical and qualitative evidence on which to base decisions around step ups, length of involvement, assessment (including presenting factors which are significant in influencing needs and outcomes), re-referral, appropriateness of service being offered and measurement.

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Key findings from the evaluation

Some high needs families are less likely to make sufficient progress under the current Early Help offer. One of these groups[7] features victims of adult and child domestic abuse and whilst half of these families make higher progress than the overall, the other half of these families are significantly more likely than the overall to have social care involvement after the Early Help intervention. What is also interesting about this group overall is that 95% have or have had teenage parents (significantly higher than other groups). They are also significantly more likely to have children with violent and aggressive behaviour, school behaviour issues, children with child development concerns, learning difficulties, low level mental health and other SEND issues, poor parenting and unstable and disruptive relationships in the household. In addition, 64% of this group are also single parent families, 50% are re-referred to Early Help, 45% have children's social care involvement during the intervention and 45% have Early Help involvement for over a year (which is significantly higher than other groups). These families are also more likely to start and end with lower Family Star Plus[8] readings. Ending with lower Family Star Plus readings is a significant characteristic of the 12% of families that went on to have a child protection plan after the intervention.

Of the families in this group that make higher progress than the overall, whilst there are no statistically significant findings in relation to specific needs or other characteristics, one of the cases in the detailed reports highlights some factors that are notable.

"Kristy" was abandoned by her mum at 18 months and lived with her violent dad and drug dealing extended family until she was 13 when she became a looked after child with multiple difficult placements. A parent at 18, having four children with four different dads, Kristy and her children experienced significant domestic abuse and difficult encounters with the criminal justice system, social care, the school and their community.

Kristy felt "*alright* [about Early Help support] *because I needed that support to be honest. I couldn't keep kicking off".* Kristy was ready, welcoming and accepting of the Early Help intervention. She valued her worker supporting her in meetings, with forms and spending long lengths of time talking to her and helping her to see things from a different perspective. Kristy valued the support her worker gave her practically and emotionally around her own mental health and diagnosis of ADHD and her son's SEND diagnosis and support to get him onto an EHCP Plan. Kristy also valued having courses that got her out of the house, help around finances such as accessing DLA and with budgeting, being flexible around what Kristy and her family needed support with, general praise and encouragement, support from the police and school. Kristy's worker ensured Kristy had support in place when the case closed through a school family support worker and from the GREAT project. Kristy has not re-entered the Social Care, Early Help or Criminal Justice system and says "I've totally changed".

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[7] Cluster D
[8] Burns, S & MacKeith, J. (2013) The Family Star Plus User Guide and The Family Star Plus: Organisation Guide, Brighton: Triangle Consulting. See Appendix for further details

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4. **There is an opportunity for strategic leads across Leicestershire to come together to review the evidence, considering how the issues can be better addressed collectively to improve outcomes for families in Leicestershire (*particularly for families with higher needs and where their trajectory is likely to end up resulting in higher cost services across the system, such as in social care, health and the criminal justice system*).**

Meeting needs and supporting outcomes for Leicestershire's families is not the sole responsibility of the council's Early Help Service and despite the Early Help Service providing a good foundation in supporting many families diverse and complex needs there are structural issues which require addressing. There is an opportunity for the wider system to have a different response to families requiring support, meeting unmet needs and improving outcomes for families not making sufficient progress under the current offer and structure.

Did you know?

The Troubled Families Programme requires Local Authorities to undertake a self-assessment against six domains in its Service Transformation Maturity Model with a rating of "Early", "Developing", "Maturing" and "Mature". For Leicestershire the partnership self-assessment for the majority of domains is "**Developing**". A collective response to the system structure will likely support improving Leicestershire's position to "Maturing".

It is significant that Leicestershire partners were involved in Leicestershire's self-assessment illustrating agencies across Leicestershire wanting to work together and develop practice. Areas of Leicestershire's self-assessment where there were elements of "Maturing" included family experience and workforce development.

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5.2 Outcomes

A wide range of outcomes are being achieved for families being supported by a case-worker from the Early Help Service, most notably around their health, mental health and wellbeing, parenting and relationships, education and SEND, keeping them safer and reducing social care involvement:

> *Afia feels if she hadn't have got the support; things would have been much more stressful. "That stress would have affected my health and that would have impacted on the whole family"*
>
> *Afia, age 40*

> *"Since we've made all the changes with our son and his behaviour has got better his younger brother's been more affectionate to him. I think we talk differently to him now, like when he's doing stuff he shouldn't we think more about how much he can understand and what he might be feeling so we can deal with it with that in mind while still putting in the boundaries"*
>
> *Parent feedback*

> *"My worker helps me with my anger issues. She helps me listen to my mum"*
>
> *Child/young person's feedback*

> With her workers support Mandy gets May referred to the paediatrician through the doctors. May meets the criteria for a CAMHs referral. Her worker also *"applies to get SENDIASS involved, Menphys SOS and DLA for James…family funding for sensory items…a trampoline...timers......she puts a lot of things in place, all of which help"*
>
> *"She comes to James's appointments, even a three hour sensory one...ADHD behaviour workshops...our worker wants to learn and finds it interesting"*
>
> *Mandy, age 47*

> *"Our worker has brought us out of a crazy place we were heading"*
>
> *Parent feedback*

> *Isobel feels if she hadn't have got the support from Early Help, things "wouldn't have been good…I definitely wouldn't be in a better place...it was the kick up the bum I needed…I would have been involved with social services again"*
>
> *Isobel, age 38*

> Sofia wants her ex-partner to take her to court around contact with Sebastian. *"I know for a fact he'll have to see me at the Children's Centre because it's a contact centre and that will put my mind at rest. I know the staff that work there. I know he'd be safe but I also know he won't do that"*
>
> *Sofia, age 28*

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By enabling improved relationships and parenting, mental health and wellbeing, making improvements to families' financial and home situation, getting families the right multi-agency support across key domains and building on family strengths, the following key impacts and outcomes are being achieved for families by the Early Help Service:

1. Families are healthier, in particular around their mental health and wellbeing;
2. Children and young people have improved educational prospects;
3. Families are significantly safer;
4. Parents and young people make progress towards work and many go into work or apprenticeships;
5. Families are less isolated;
6. There are improvements to children's behaviour and development;
7. Parents are able to control their anger;
8. In general, families have a much improved future outlook; and
9. More costly services are averted, particularly in relation to health, social care and the police.

As well as multi-agency support and families own qualities and support networks, some key enablers to the outcomes above have also been identified, which could also be seen as outcomes in their own right:

1. There are improvements to parenting;
2. Family relationships have improved;
3. Families see positive change;
4. There are positive changes to families' home environments (including house moves);
5. There are improvements to families financial situation;
6. There are sanctions and orders imposed which are perceived as positive;
7. Families receive health diagnosis;
8. Parental changes are made to the child/young person's home environment which is perceived as positive e.g. child moves in with a different parent or family member; and
9. Children move schools or become home educated (because their needs weren't being met at their original provision)

Further work is required to understand why families feel home schooling is their only option as this could be seen as system failure.

Further work is required locally to obtain hard administrative data such as health, housing provider and police data to better evidence outcomes across the system.

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5.3 Barriers to Families Making Progress

There are a wide range of needs and issues which act as barriers to families making progress most notably intergenerational issues, life events, set-backs, unsupportive communities and community environments.

One of the key barriers to progress is that families do not receive help early enough, often because they do not seek or accept help for themselves (often due to fear such as fear of sex abuse and domestic abuse perpetrators and fear of children being removed by social care) or because services miss opportunities to identify and provide earlier help. This leads to issues escalating and becoming more complex to address and behaviours becoming more entrenched.

5.4 Enablers of Families Making Progress

Families make progress when they acknowledge that they need help, they accept support and follow advice being given and when they have a wider support network, which can include family, their wider community and other services.

On the whole families have a very positive experience with the Early Help Service. The support is often intense but led by family need. The flexible, practical and emotional support directly provided by a dedicated worker to the whole family through home and school visits, groups, courses, activities and other appointments (alongside Early Help multi-agency working and wider support in the system) helps support families to address their needs and where needed, helps families to make sustainable changes.

Early Help staff have high levels of confidence around a number of key areas which affect change for families, and families often have positive experiences with other multi-agencies.

5.5 Progress Made with Families is Not Equal

Four high-level groups of families were identified based around their combination of needs which break down further to make a total of nine groups as below:

Table 1a – A breakdown of different family groups by needs

Family group	1. Adults requiring support		2. Domestic abuse families		3. Lower needs families		4. SEND families		
Group and level of need	A LOW	B HIGH	C LOW	D HIGH	E LOW	F HIGH	G LOW	H MID	I HIGH

In addition to different combinations of needs, families are also referred into the service with a wide range of different starting points and whilst progress is made across all nine groups, relative to each other, some groups make more or less progress, have different end points at the close of their case, some are more likely to receive social care involvement after the intervention, some require different lengths of involvement and some are less likely to be re-referred than others.

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5.6 Areas for Improvement

There are a number of areas that need addressing to improve outcomes for families, often related to the wider system. These include:

- Multi-agency development which may include better communication and strategic and structural development of services with partners
- Investment in Early Help and preventative services
- Better support relating to:
    - Family mental health
    - Domestic abuse
    - SEND, development and learning disability
    - Single parent families and families with limited support networks
- Addressing poverty, issues with social housing and providing better support around financial difficulties
- Addressing specific issues raised by families, staff and partners in relation to the Early Help service provided by the council
- Looking at wider opportunities – for example with universal services
- Improvements to whole family working, data quality and collection

The detail contained in the Early Help evaluation reports identify issues which may help more effective targeting of Early Help Services in the future including those families more likely to have social care involvement after the Early Help intervention. It also identifies which groups of families are most likely to be at risk of not receiving support in the future in the current model should thresholds rise under the current service delivery model, which includes lower-needs families presenting financial difficulties and where black and minority ethnic groups are present.

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More Information

For more specific detail of the outcomes identified using each methodology see

APPENDIX 1C – MANDY'S JOURNEY MAP

- Parent voice (journey map)

APENDIX 1D – SUPPORTING INFORMATION AROUND KEY FINDINGS

- Identifying need
- Family Star[9]
- Cluster analysis (need)
- Cluster analysis (progress)
- CHAID analysis (progress)
- Analysis of stuck cases

REPORT 2 – WHAT FAMILIES SAY

- Parent voice
- Children and young people's voice
- Most Significant Change (staff) and worker observation

REPORT 3 – KEY WORKER CONFIDENCE SURVEY

- Staff survey
- Most Significant Change (staff)

REPORT 4 – MULTI-AGENCY AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS

- Most Significant Change (partners)
- Parent voice
- Children and young people's voice
- Most Significant Change (staff) and worker observations
- Case Studies

REPORT 5 – UNDERSTANDING DEMAND BETTER

- Family Star Plus
- Identifying need
- Cluster analysis (need)
- Cluster analysis (progress)
- CHAID analysis (progress)
- Parent voice (journey maps)

REPORT 6 – THEORY OF CHANGE AND THEORY OF ACTION

- Theory of Change and Theory of Action
- Family Star
- Cluster analysis (progress)
- CHAID analysis (progress)
- Most Significant Change (staff)

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[9] Burns, S & MacKeith, J. (2013) The Family Star Plus User Guide and The Family Star Plus: Organisation Guide, Brighton: Triangle Consulting

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6. What Are the Barriers to Families Making Progress

In summary, families have a wide range of (often) complex issues and un-met needs, support is not being provided early enough and families do not seek help early enough, services miss opportunities to identify and provide help earlier and there are some specific issues with the Early Help service being provided and wider service provision across multi-agencies.

6.1 Issues and Needs

Intergenerational issues, life events, set-backs, unsupportive communities and community environments

The analysis identified the following key barriers to change:

- Life events and set-backs;
- Poor mental health and isolation;
- Negative upbringing;
- Negative relationships;
- A lack of family, peer and community support;
- Lack of knowledge and experience around parenting issues;
- Negative family qualities such as denial, motivation to change, trust of services, fear;
- Other parent issues such as stresses about housing, money or family disabilities; and
- Cultural issues

> **Recommendation**
> Develop an updated evidence base/literature review of what works in Early Help and early intervention alongside emerging evidence of the importance of recognising and developing interventions to address Adverse Childhood Experiences

6.2 Support is not provided to Families Early Enough

For the majority of families receiving support from Early Help, their needs are more complex than they might have been because they did not receive help when they needed it at the earliest opportunity. As those needs did not get met in the wider system, families' issues and needs changed, became increasingly complex, more costly to deal with, behaviours more entrenched[10] and more difficult (although not impossible) to effect sustainable change.

> **Recommendation**
> That the Early Help Partnership take a collective response to the detailed findings in the evaluation reports and ownership of the recommendations

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[10] Evidenced by 33% re-referral rates in Leicestershire

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6.3 Families Do Not Seek or Accept Help Early Enough

Earlier acknowledgement and 'hand raising' by families themselves is often lacking because of fear, for example, fear of child sex abuse and domestic abuse perpetrators and fear of children being taken away by social services.

Early help can also be inhibited by parents' own gaps in knowledge and resistance to support, for some, due to their own upbringing.

6.4 Services Miss Opportunities to Identify and Address Help Earlier

Many universal services 'miss' opportunities to identify and address help earlier. There are also other service gaps, including those relating to thresholds and waiting lists, as well as a lack of skills and knowledge across services to meet the multiple needs of these families.

6.5 There are Specific Issues Identified with the Early Help Service

6.5.1 From Families Perspective

Whilst on the whole the family experiences are positive there are areas that could be different. Areas specifically identified by families included:

- Earlier support;
- A better understanding around mental health issues;
- Some specific feedback in relation to groups, courses and activities;
- Some specific feedback with regards to families' relationships with workers;
- Improvements around whole family working;
- More time with workers;
- Worker's providing more feedback around their family's progress

Whilst many families feel self-sufficient at the end of the intervention, for some there are some key issues that remain unresolved, some of which sits outside of the Early Help Service remit.

6.5.2 From Staff Perspective

Whilst on the whole staff had high levels of confidence across a number of key areas, they had relatively lower average levels of confidence around specific areas such as:

- Sourcing and accessing items which help around transport issues e.g. bikes
- Supporting, advising and encouraging families to deal with:
  - Negative friendships
  - Substance misuse
  - Getting referrals (and subsequent diagnosis) by health professionals
  - Criminal behaviour
  - E-safety

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- o Risky sexual behaviours and sexual health issues*[11]
- o Child sex exploitation*
- o Resolving transport issues*
- o Understanding the financial benefits of working*
- o Issues in families existing work and jobs*
- o Families mental health issues
- o Bullying and harassment
- Post 16 plans*
- Capturing pre-verbal and non-verbal children's voice
- Accessing courses around family learning and e-safety
- Working up plans and strategies when children moved and visited another parent
- Improving relationships with family members and other people in their network
- Changing schools or looking at alternative education provision if appropriate
- Moving house

Staff had the lowest average level of confidence providing support, advice and encouragement around Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP)*and getting respite for carers (including young carers)*.

6.5.3 From Partner's Perspective

Whilst on the whole, partners were positive about the Early Help Service they identified a number of issues with workers and the service mostly relating to communication.

Partners' main suggestions for improving Early Help were:

- Improving communication
- Looking at case needs more closely
- Development of multi-agency working
- Quicker response times when families require Early Help (including thresholds and expanding the service to take in more families)

Recommendations
1. That the positive feedback from families is noted and the management team look at the family feedback report in more detail to identify areas for more targeted training and development
2. That the high levels of confidence staff have in affecting change with families is noted and the management team look at the staff feedback report and dashboards in more detail to identify areas for more targeted training and development, which may also include specific training to staff less confident in challenging families and other professionals
3. That the positive feedback from partners is noted and the management team look at the multi-agency feedback report in more detail to identify areas for development

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[11] 50% of the responses fell below 70% level of confidence

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More Information

For more detailed information on areas identified by families that could be different see

REPORT 2 – WHAT FAMILIES SAY

For more detailed information on areas where staff felt relatively less confident see

REPORT 3 – KEY WORKER CONFIDENCE SURVEY

For more detailed information on areas identified by multi-agencies that could be different see

REPORT 4 – MULTI-AGENCY AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS

6.6 There Are Specific Issues Identified across Multi-Agencies

6.6.1. In Summary

Families have mixed experiences with multi-agencies across the system. Some families have very good experiences and some have less positive experiences.

Overall Recommendation Across Multi-Agencies

1. That the Early Help partnership working continues and is developed further with organisations and communities using key insights from this evaluation. This includes improving communication with partners and a specific recommendation from the national Troubled Families evaluation for Leicestershire to develop more support for families from the Third Sector
2. That the insight gathered for this evaluation informs service delivery and the wider system transformation (including where families might be more appropriately supported by other services)
3. That the Early Help Partnership take a collective response to the detailed findings in the evaluation reports and ownership of the recommendations

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The key areas where families have less positive experiences include:

6.6.2 Social Care

- Families' negative perception of social care including a lack of whole family working and keeping children safe
- Families' fear being honest about their issues, particularly fear of children being removed
- Families' previous negative experiences with social care
- Issues with thresholds, caseloads and referrals and wider support to adults

6.6.3 Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing

Many families have negative experiences with pregnancy, labour and post-labour including postnatal depression, some of which isn't picked up at the time.

Across a range of health issues, families want:

- Earlier diagnosis

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- Shorter waiting and referral times
- Lower thresholds for some health services

Families also cite specific issues with the provision of some services including CAMHS, counselling, GPs and paediatricians. Families also cite particular issues with attitudes and understanding from some health professionals and issues around prescribed medication.

Recommendation

That the Early Help service is developed further to better support parent and child mental health. In particular, where thresholds are too low to meet health service thresholds and where waiting times are lengthy or there are gaps in mental health service provision

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6.6.4 Education and SEND

There are a wide range of areas families feel could be improved. These primarily relate to:

- General support around SEND including SEND provision and getting diagnosis
- SEND transport
- Issues where families are threatened with attendance sanctions whilst undergoing diagnosis

There is a lack of adequate educational placements and often families feel that home schooling or alternative provision is their only option. In general families identify issues including:

- Children feeling bullied and isolated
- Attitudes and understanding in some areas
- Communication with schools

Parent's own negative experiences with education and parent's mental health can also impact on relationships with school.

Recommendation

That the Early Help service is developed further to support families where SEND is present. In particular, understanding:
- Why some SEND families make significantly lower progress than others;
- Where there are staff gaps in skill or knowledge;
- Where thresholds are too low to meet SEND service thresholds;
- Where waiting times are lengthy or there are gaps in SEND provision; and
- Where short term support around particular SEND issues, including undiagnosed SEND would be helpful to families (including courses)

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6.6.5 Finance and Employment

Many families have access to credit that isn't affordable or they get quickly into debt due to changes in their benefit situations and delays in resolving these. Families also experience inadequate support around their debt and finances.

Families have barriers that stop them obtaining jobs including the affordability of work e.g. childcare, their health, mental health and SEND related issues, issues with employers and other practical reasons.

> **Recommendation**
> That the evidence also found in the DWP Improving Lives report is noted and actions taken forward. *A multi-agency development may include making debt advice and welfare rights more accessible*

6.6.6 Criminal Justice System

Some families have negative experiences with certain areas of the Criminal Justice System however this feedback was limited which may be due to relatively lower levels of need in these areas compared to others.

6.6.7 Housing

There are a large proportion of families supported by Early Help in social housing and families experience unsuitable or unstable housing environments. Families identify some issues with the approaches taken by housing services including understanding, speed of moves and issues with priority bandings, and families also get into large rent and council tax arrears.

6.6.8 Domestic Abuse Services

Very few families spoke about support being given to their children in relation to the domestic abuse they had witnessed, despite their children showing aggressive and violent behaviours themselves. There were also specific issues raised by families in relation to domestic abuse support.

> **Recommendation**
> That the Early Help service is developed further to support families where domestic abuse is present, particularly in relation to supporting children, young people and teenage parents who have been exposed to domestic abuse. Additional preventative work targeting young people and people most at risk of unhealthy relationships should also be considered

6.6.9 Third Sector Services

There were a few examples raised in relation to awareness and limitations of third sector service provision.

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6.6.10 Other

There was limited feedback from families around substance misuse, fire and rescue services and other specific services which may be due to relatively lower levels of need in these areas compared to others.

Whilst many families feel self -sufficient at the end of the intervention, for some their issues remain unresolved, often around other multi-agencies remit such as education and SEND or around their family relationships and mental health.

Partners also identified other multi-agency barriers to change including social care thresholds, families not being provided with help at an earlier opportunity and other service gaps and issues within the wider system.

More Information
For more detailed information on multi-agency areas identified by families that could be different see
REPORT 4 – MULTI-AGENCY AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS

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7. What Enables Families to Make Progress

7.1 When Families Acknowledge Issues and Have Good Support

For families and communities, things work well when they acknowledge their issues; accept support and when they have a wider support network which can include family, friends, other community and multi-agency support. Multi-agency understanding and attitudes improve when families are engaged.

7.2 Families Have a Positive Experience with the Council's Early Help Service

On the whole, families have a very positive experience of the Early Help service and recognise whole family working. Families mostly recognised support from their Early Help key worker but many also recognise support from multi-agencies. Families' value:

- Having good relationships with their key worker;
- Time;
- Whole family and multi-agency working;
- Family voice;
- Visits to home and school;
- Getting children and adults involved in groups, courses and activities (in welcoming buildings and environments);
- Helping them with relationships;
- Pointing them in the right direction, generally and in relation to parenting, finance and debt, employment, housing and their housing environment;
- Support around education and SEND, health, mental health and wellbeing, substance misuse, domestic abuse;
- With appointments e.g. health appointments and school meetings;
- Obtaining items e.g. household goods;
- With reassurance, praise, encouragement and helping them to see change happen;
- Flexibility;
- Persistence and challenge;
- Helping keep them and their families safe;
- Support with sanctions and other practical and emotional support

Many families feel self-sufficient at the end of the intervention. Whilst some families aren't ready or don't want the support to end, having support available after the intervention is particularly welcomed, for example in groups, being able to contact their worker should an issue arise or support through other agencies, some of which is set up or identified by their worker before closing their case.

> **Recommendation**
> That the positive feedback from families is noted and the management team look at the family feedback report in more detail to identify areas for more targeted training and development

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More Information

For more detailed information on family experience with the council's Early Help service where things could be different, see
REPORT 2 – WHAT FAMILIES SAY

7.3 Staff Confidence to Affect Change

On the whole, staff had an average high level of confidence in being able to effect change with families across a wide range of areas including:

- Gaining trust and building relationships with families
- Persevering with families
- Having the ability to question and challenge families
- Advocating on behalf of families
- Acknowledging and praising family's progress
- Observing families
- Being flexible with families
- Working with the whole family
- Understanding the order in which things need to happen
- Challenging other professionals
- Providing support, advice and encouragement to families to do things
- Working up plans and strategies
- Undertaking one to one and joint visits with other professionals and other people
- Family voice meetings
- Practical help
  - Sourcing and obtaining items for families
  - Helping families do things

Recommendation

That the high levels of confidence staff have in affecting change with families is noted and the management team look at the staff feedback report and dashboards in more detail to identify areas for more targeted training and development

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More Information

For more detailed information on levels of staff confidence across a number of key areas including where things could be different, see
REPORT 3 – KEY WORKER CONFIDENCE SURVEY

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7.4 Families Have Positive Experiences with Multi-Agencies

7.4.1 Social Care

Families valued support from Adult social care (Care services), the Disability Team, an Inclusion support worker, Social workers and Strengthening Families workers. Families also valued support from Early Help to keep them safe and avert social care involvement.

7.4.2 Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing

Families have a very positive experience with **midwives, health visitors, GPs** and **hospitals**. Diagnosis from specialist health professionals is highly valued as is support from specific services including:

- A mother and baby mental health hospital (outside of Leicestershire)
- Mental health workers and other adult mental health services (including psychiatry and counselling)
- CAMHS and children's mental health services
- Paediatricians
- Dentists
- Speech and language therapists
- Occupational therapy
- Intensive care
- Disability team

Families also receive wider support around their mental health from other services outside of the health service.

7.4.3 Education and SEND

Families valued support from: ASBA; ADHD Solutions; Autism special nurse; CAMHS; Care Navigators; Colleges; Disability Team (special nurse); Educational Psychologists; First Class Solutions/Education; Menphys; Mental health and education practitioner; Mental health children's home; Nurseries; Paediatricians; Psychologist (at Westcotes); SENDIASS; SIBS (Siblings of autism group); Specialist Teaching Service (STS); Speech and language therapists; Toy library; and VISTA.

Areas particularly cited as helpful from families and staff included Educational Psychologist and Paediatric referrals (which led to diagnosis) and other support to families such as reduced timetables.

As well as supporting families around their SEND needs, education and SEND services are supporting families around behaviour and providing wider support to adults including removal of sanctions. Families identify examples of good communication with education services and there is positive feedback around alternative education provision including the tutoring service and special schools.

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7.4.4 Finance and Employment

Families valued support from Adult learning courses, Charity Link, Child Support Agency, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Family Fund, Food banks, Job Centre, Jobs, Toy Appeal and Volunteering opportunities.

7.4.5 Criminal Justice System

Families valued support from CAFCASS, Child Support Agency (CSA), Court, Mental institution, Police and Prison.

7.4.6 Housing

Families valued support from District Councils, Housing Associations, HomeStart and The Bridge.

7.4.7 Domestic Abuse Services

Families valued support from Domestic abuse workers (general), NSPCC, Refuges (and mother and baby units/hostels), UAVA and Women's Aid.

7.4.8 Third Sector Services
Families valued support from Adult youth workers (church group), Barnardo's, Counselling (New Dawn Counselling, Family Therapy, Living Without Abuse, Bereavement), Family Fund, Food banks, HomeStart, NSPCC, Rape Crisis Charity, The Bridge, Toy Appeal, Twenty Twenty and Volunteer drivers.

7.4.9 Other
There was limited feedback from families around substance misuse, fire and rescue services and other specific services which may be due to relatively lower levels of need in these areas compared to others.

Recommendation
1. That the Early Help partnership working continues and is developed further with organisations and communities using key insights from this evaluation. This includes improving communication with partners and a specific recommendation from the national Troubled Families evaluation for Leicestershire to develop more support for families from the Third Sector
2. That the insight gathered for this evaluation informs service delivery and the wider system transformation (including where families might be more appropriately supported by other services)

More Information
For more detailed information on positive family experiences with multi-agencies and other agencies supporting families, see
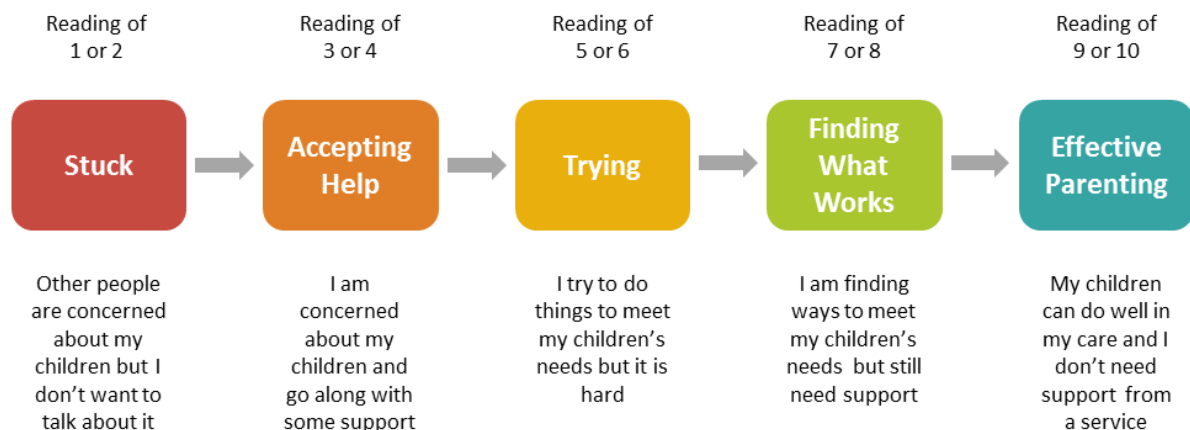**REPORT 4 – MULTI-AGENCY AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS**

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8. Results – Families Progress

Family Star Plus[12]

Family Star Plus is a practitioner-based tool which enables conversation and family plans to be developed whereby workers and families agree a reading of between 1 and 10 against ten key domains at regular intervals to determine where families' progress is. The ten key domains of Family Star Plus are:

1. Positive experiences with **Home and Money**
2. **Keeping Children Safe**
3. Positive **Boundaries and Behaviours**
4. Positive **Family Routines**
5. Good or improved **Physical Health**
6. Positive **Adult Wellbeing**
7. Positive and supportive **Social Networks**
8. **Meeting Children's Emotional Needs**
9. Positive and appropriate **Education and Learning**
10. Achieving **Progress to Work**

A family's reading for each of the ten key domains are recorded by the worker when both assessing and reviewing each case, capturing a Journey of Change for each family. This Journey of Change can comprise of 5 stages, outlined below:

Reading of 1 or 2	Reading of 3 or 4	Reading of 5 or 6	Reading of 7 or 8	Reading of 9 or 10
Stuck	**Accepting Help**	**Trying**	**Finding What Works**	**Effective Parenting**
Other people are concerned about my children but I don't want to talk about it	I am concerned about my children and go along with some support	I try to do things to meet my children's needs but it is hard	I am finding ways to meet my children's needs but still need support	My children can do well in my care and I don't need support from a service

Early Help (casework) impacts positively on the majority of families with 72% of families referred and engaging[13] with the service making positive progress in one or more of the ten key domains (detailed on the left hand side of the dashboard below). This progress is based on worker readings at the start and end of their intervention.

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[12] Burns, S & MacKeith, J. (2013) The Family Star Plus User Guide and The Family Star Plus: Organisation Guide, Brighton: Triangle Consulting

[13] Accepting help from the Early Help Service around one or more of the Family Star domains

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Dashboard 1a: Extract From Family Star[14] Summary Dashboard
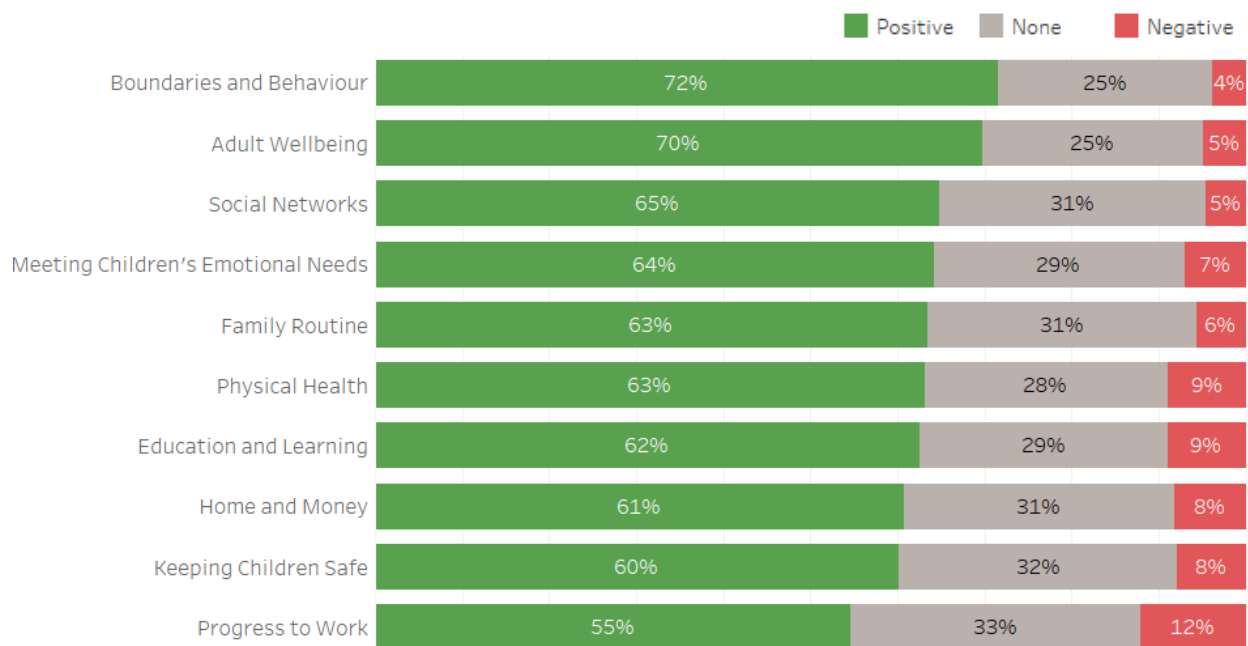
The areas where progress is made (i.e. a move from one stage to the next, in order) are:

- Positive **Boundaries and Behaviours** (72%)
- Positive **Adult Wellbeing**[15] (70%)
- Positive and supportive **Social Networks** (65%)
- Meeting **Children's Emotional Needs** (64%)
- Good or improved **Physical Health** (63%)
- Positive **Family Routines** (63%)
- Positive and appropriate **Education and Learning** (62%)
- Positive experiences with **Home and Money** (61%)
- **Keeping Children Safe** (60%)
- Achieving **Progress to Work** (55%)[16]

As well as a family not progressing to a higher stage, a family may make no progress because they may enter the service for a particular domain at a high stage already and then sustain that level during the period they are worked with.

Recommendation

That the positive progress that is made across a wide range of families (with mostly complex and multiple issues) is noted

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[14] Burns, S & MacKeith, J. (2013) The Family Star Plus User Guide and The Family Star Plus: Organisation Guide, Brighton: Triangle Consulting
[15] Which includes mental health
[16] Family Star Plus Outcomes Tool used by practitioners

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More Information

For further information on which groups of families make more or less progress against specific domains, see

REPORT 5 – UNDERSTANDING DEMAND BETTER

REPORT 6 – THEORY OF CHANGE AND THEORY OF ACTION

For more detailed information around progress including families making no or negative progress, see
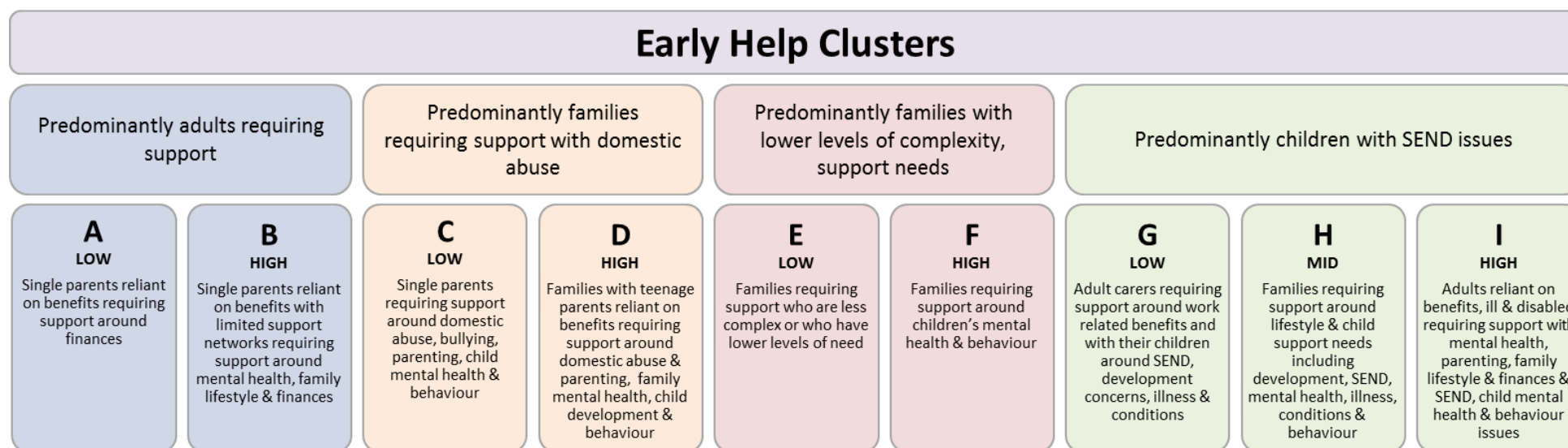
APPENDIX 1D – SUPPORTING INFORMATION AROUND KEY FINDINGS

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9. Which Families Make the Most and the Least Progress

9.1 Grouping Families around Need (Clustering – Need)

Of the 787 families included in the need cluster analysis, 84% (662) were from the Supporting Leicestershire Families service and 16% (125 were from Children's Centres.   The cluster analysis (around need) identified nine clusters of families. These nine clusters group to four high-level areas of need, as shown below:

Table 1b: Clusters and High Levels of Need

Early Help Clusters

Predominantly adults requiring support		Predominantly families requiring support with domestic abuse		Predominantly families with lower levels of complexity, support needs		Predominantly children with SEND issues		
A LOW	**B** HIGH	**C** LOW	**D** HIGH	**E** LOW	**F** HIGH	**G** LOW	**H** MID	**I** HIGH
Single parents reliant on benefits requiring support around finances	Single parents reliant on benefits with limited support networks requiring support around mental health, family lifestyle & finances	Single parents requiring support around domestic abuse, bullying, parenting, child mental health & behaviour	Families with teenage parents reliant on benefits requiring support around domestic abuse & parenting, family mental health, child development & behaviour	Families requiring support who are less complex or who have lower levels of need	Families requiring support around children's mental health & behaviour	Adult carers requiring support around work related benefits and with their children around SEND, development concerns, illness & conditions	Families requiring support around lifestyle & child support needs including development, SEND, mental health, illness, conditions & behaviour	Adults reliant on benefits, ill & disabled requiring support with mental health, parenting, family lifestyle & finances & SEND, child mental health & behaviour issues

Table 1c - Number of Families in this Evaluation Featuring in Each Cluster

Family group	Adults requiring support		Domestic abuse families		Lower needs families		SEND families		
Group	**A** LOW	**B** HIGH	**C** LOW	**D** HIGH	**E** LOW	**F** HIGH	**G** LOW	**H** MID	**I** HIGH
Number	134	141	104	42	107	73	68	65	53

More Information

For further information on needs and characteristics within each cluster including:

- Which service is more likely to be working with which families
- Which needs are statistically significant in each group
- How needs interrelate
- Social care involvement
- Length of intervention
- Re-referral rates, see

APPENDIX 1D – SUPPORTING INFORMATION AROUND KEY FINDINGS
REPORT 5 – UNDERSTANDING DEMAND BETTER

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9.2 Identifying Key Differences around Progress (Clustering – Progress)

In order to illustrate key differences in progress across clusters, families were grouped by their comparative start and end readings using the Family Star[17] outcomes tool across **all** ten Family Star domains. The matrix below illustrates how families were segmented further:

Dashboard 1b: Overall Progress Matrix - Extracted from The Family Star Summary dashboard

	End Readings Lower	End Readings Middle	End Readings Higher	Total
Start Readings Lower	11%	13%	6%	30%
Start Readings Middle	4%	24%	15%	43%
Start Readings Higher	1%	4%	21%	26%
Total	16%	42%	42%	100%

Families were segmented according to their 10 Start Readings
(3x rows of the Matrix : Start Readings Lower, Middle, Higher)

Families were also segmented according to their 10 End Readings
(3x columns of the Matrix : End Readings Lower, Middle, Higher)

The matrix then identifies enable the identification of:

Families that made higher than average progress (34%) including;
- Cluster I   (SEND families – High need) 48%
- Cluster B   (Adults requiring support – High need) 41%
- Cluster C   (Domestic abuse families - Low) 40%
- Cluster A   (Adults requiring support - Low) 37%
- Cluster G   (SEND families - Low) 36%

Families that made lower than average progress (9%) including;
- Cluster I   (SEND families - High) (20%),
- Cluster H   (SEND families - Mid) (16%),
- Cluster C   (Domestic abuse families - Low) (13%)
- Cluster D   (Domestic abuse families - High) (10%)

Cluster	Lower	Middle	Higher
All Clusters	9%	56%	34%
Cluster A	7%	56%	37%
Cluster B	5%	55%	41%
Cluster C	13%	46%	40%
Cluster D	10%	61%	29%
Cluster E	9%	71%	21%
Cluster F	8%	65%	27%
Cluster G	4%	60%	36%
Cluster H	16%	57%	26%
Cluster I	20%	32%	48%

Further exploration is required to understand why certain families in Cluster I (SEND - High) families are making both the most and least progress.

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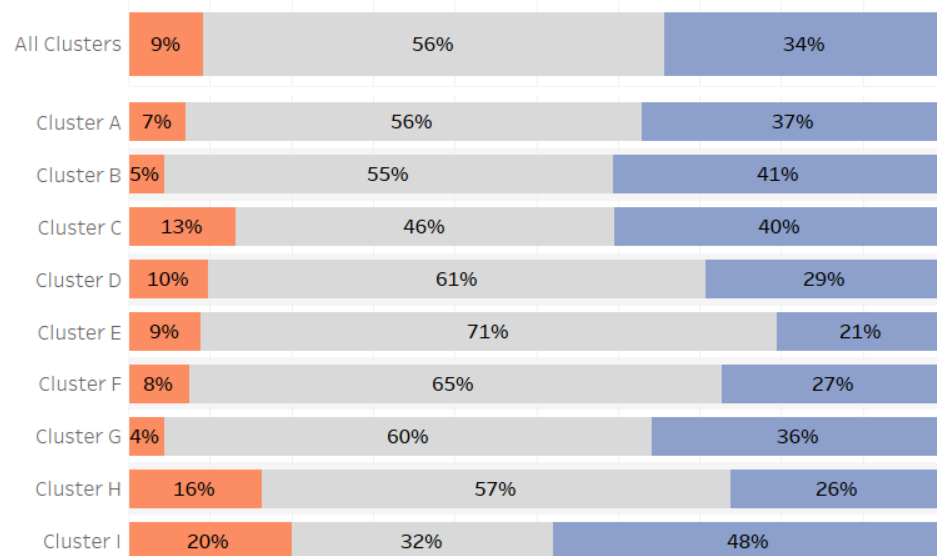
[17] Burns, S & MacKeith, J. (2013) The Family Star Plus User Guide and The Family Star Plus: Organisation Guide, Brighton: Triangle Consulting

9.3 Identifying Key Differences around Progress (CHAID)

When the data from the nine groups of 'need' and nine groups of 'progress' were analysed together using a tool called CHAID, the statistically significant findings below emerged:

Table 1d – Key Findings by Cluster

Cluster	Significant Finding
B (Adults requiring support – High) & D (Domestic abuse families – High)	Half of these families made more progress than the overall. However the other half of these families made the least progress overall and this half were also significantly more likely to have children's social care involvement after the Early Help intervention.
A (Adults requiring support – Low), C (Domestic abuse families – High), G (SEND families – Low) & H (SEND families – Mid)	Whilst progress for these families was similar to the overall, length of involvement may be an indicator as to whether social care involvement will happen after the Early Help intervention. For families in these groups where the intervention length was more than six months, these families were significantly more likely to have social care involvement. Families with three or more female adults living in the household for these groups of families may warrant further Early Help attention as they made significantly lower progress than the overall. Negative child lifestyle issues at the start of the intervention was a key indicator for significantly lower progress in these groups of families. Good adult mental health and good support networks at the start of the intervention was an important factor for families in these groups making good progress even if other factors such as lower level adult mental health e.g. anxiety and being an adult carer.
I (SEND families – High)	This group of families was unusual, possibly related to the specific SEND conditions and high complex needs. This group had some of the families who made both the least and most progress.
E (Lower needs families – Low) & F (Lower needs families – High)	Whilst these groups of families made lower progress than the overall due to their relatively higher starting point, where financial difficulties featured at the start of the intervention, significant progress was made with these families.

More Information
For more detailed information on progress see
APPENDIX 1D - SUPPORTING INFORMATION AROUND KEY FINDINGS
REPORT 5 – UNDERSTANDING DEMAND BETTER
REPORT 6 – THEORY OF CHANGE AND THEORY OF ACTION

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10. Conclusions

10.1 Understanding Need to Break the Cycle

10.1.1 Mental Health
Poor mental health is a high area of need for both adults and children, and has the biggest impact on other positive or negative outcomes for families, such as parenting, domestic abuse, substance misuse, education and employment. Early Help currently undertake limited training for staff around mental health and they commission a limited range of mental health support for families. Many families do not meet the high thresholds for mental health support through the NHS which may reflect an area of unmet need in the Early Help population.

> **Recommendation**
> That the Early Help service is developed further to better support parent and child mental health. In particular, where thresholds are too low to meet health service thresholds and where waiting times are lengthy or there are gaps in mental health service provision

10.1.2 Domestic Abuse
There is evidence of the need to provide more support around domestic abuse, with 52% of adults and 36% of young people and children being victims of this type of abuse. There is a strong correlation between families who have suffered domestic abuse, and poor adult mental health, parenting difficulties, and behaviour issues amongst children and young people. The latter including; unstable and disruptive relationships, behaviour issues at school, violence/aggressive behaviours, bullying and child mental health.

Providing families with domestic abuse support contributes to improved mental health. Furthermore, many children and young people - including teenage parents - do not receive targeted support for domestic abuse. Early Help currently do little training for staff or commissioning of children and young people's domestic abuse services (including preventative work).

> **Recommendation**
> That the Early Help service is developed further to support families where domestic abuse is present, particularly in relation to supporting children, young people and teenage parents who have been exposed to domestic abuse. Additional preventative work targeting young people and people most at risk of unhealthy relationships should also be considered.

10.1.3 SEND, Development Concerns and Learning Disabilities
There is also a high need to support families with child development concerns (44%), learning disabilities (32%) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND, 23%). Some SEND families make better progress than others, and it is important to understand the underlying reasons for this and to identify what additional Early Help SEND support might include. This may include support to families not yet in receipt of a formal diagnosis and therefore awaiting subsequent referrals which may meet their SEND needs. It may involve meeting the high and increasing thresholds for support and at key transition stages, for example, between primary and secondary school where needs change.

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> **Recommendation**
>
> That the Early Help service is developed further to support families where SEND is present. In particular, understanding;
> - Why some SEND families make significantly lower progress than others;
> - Where there are staff gaps in skill or knowledge;
> - Where thresholds are too low to meet SEND service thresholds;
> - Where waiting times are lengthy or there are gaps in SEND provision; and Where short term support around particular SEND issues, including undiagnosed SEND would be helpful to families (including courses)

10.1.4 Single Parent Families and Families with Limited Support Networks

There is a high prevalence of single parent families (60%) compared to the Leicestershire average of 6.2%[18], with 47% of families having limited support networks. Domestic abuse plays a key role in contributing to relationship breakdowns and isolation and we have seen that for some families, having strong support networks and getting families out of their house contributes significantly to progress.

10.1.5 Ethnicity

There is a higher prevalence of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) families being supported by Early Help (13%) compared to the Leicestershire average (9%) with one cluster as high as 17%. However, whilst there are no other statistically significant findings relating to ethnicity compared to these families' overall needs and progress, these families have additional barriers to overcome such as English not being their first language, the impact of racism and discrimination and, for some, cultural issues, limited support networks and more complex issues relating to domestic abuse. As these families feature significantly higher in lower needs groups, should thresholds rise, these are most at risk of not receiving support in the future.

10.1.6 Poverty, Social Housing and Financial Difficulties

Whilst poverty does not always apply to families requiring Early Help support, a reliance on benefits (65%), financial difficulties (including debt) (56%) and social housing features disproportionately to the average Leicestershire family compared to families requiring Early Help support. Many Early Help families get into debt and rent arrears at a young age, are also in low paid jobs or move from previously being employed to workless-ness as a result of a wide range of factors including mental health, family disability and illness, domestic abuse and relationship breakdowns and substance misuse.

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[18] The estimated number of lone parent families in Leicestershire in 2015 - 41,700 (Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), Office for National Statistics). 2015 population - 675,309.

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Whilst employment helps take families out of poverty, for many families improving employment outcomes can only be sustained when other issues such as mental health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, housing and supporting illness and disability (including SEND) have been adequately addressed. Financial difficulties, including debt and rent arrears is often one of the first presenting factors when families are facing multiple needs and those families potentially most at risk of not receiving Early Help support in the future (as thresholds rise) may lose the opportunity Early Help offers in getting support around their financial difficulties and related issues.

> **Recommendation**
> That the evidence also found in the DWP Improving Lives report is noted and actions taken forward. *A multi-agency development may include making debt advice and welfare rights more accessible*

10.1.7 Social care

Prior to Early Help intervention, 68% of families had some form of social care involvement. During the intervention this dropped to 25%. Following the intervention, 38% of Early Help cases had some form of social care involvement. Therefore there is an overall reduction of social care involvement of 51% of cases following Early Help intervention. However, there are groups of families who are significantly more likely to have some form of children's social care involvement, or have a child protection plan after the Early Help intervention. Understanding these factors in more detail is critical to ensure Early Help resources are targeted effectively.

> **Consideration**
> To analyse reductions of involvement for social care families who do not receive Early Help support compared with those that do

> **More Information**
> For more detailed on multi-agencies see
> **REPORT 4 – MULTI-AGENCY AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS**

10.2 Multi-Agency Development is Essential

Strong and positive multi-agency partnerships are essential to supporting families and there is scope to develop Early Help partnerships further.

In addition, whilst on the whole, partners have a positive experience with the council's Early Help service there are some issues around their expectations of the service and what the actual Early Help service offer is. **Communication** with partners is the area that needs the biggest improvement. Partners also suggest that Early Help:

- Look at case needs more closely
- Multi-agency working is developed further
- Have quicker response times when families require the support of Early Help services, including expanding the service to take in more families and looking at thresholds.

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Recommendation
1. That the positive feedback from partners is noted and the management team look at the multi-agency feedback report in more detail to identify areas for development
2. That the insight gathered for this evaluation, in particular the in-depth journey maps are made available and used for staff and partner training

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10.3 There are Areas of Staff Training and Development Required

Whilst the analysis found that Early Help staff have a high level of confidence in affecting change across a number of key areas, there are areas that could be developed further.

Recommendation
1. That the high levels of confidence staff have in affecting change with families is noted and the management team look at the staff feedback report and dashboards in more detail to identify areas for more targeted training and development
2. That the insight gathered for this evaluation, in particular the in-depth journey maps are made available and used for staff and partner training

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10.4 Investment in Early Help and Prevention is Needed

The evidence suggests that cutting relatively cheaper preventative and Early Help services across the system or not addressing the gaps identified will create additional reactive cost to the system further down the line. As Leicestershire services continue to face budgetary pressures and make changes without understanding the implications to other services, it is unclear where those costs will fall. However, the evidence suggests these costs will be higher than they might otherwise have been if preventative and early interventions are not invested in across the system.

Recommendation
That the longer term cost implications to the system of cutting preventative and Early Help services is noted

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10.5 Targeting Limited Resources in the Future

10.5.1 Social Care Involvement
Above we have identified groups of families who receive Early Help support where they are more likely to have social care involvement in the future. We also know that for some groups, their combination of needs and Family Star[19] start readings gives an indication as to whether they are more likely to have social care involvement during or after the Early Help intervention, whether they will require longer lengths of intervention and which service in Early Help might support families with different needs.

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[19] Burns, S & MacKeith, J. (2013) The Family Star Plus User Guide and The Family Star Plus: Organisation Guide, Brighton: Triangle Consulting

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That understanding along with other more detailed evidence contained within other reports supporting this evaluation will provide the Early Help service with evidence to target limited resources in the future, potentially identifying areas to have further discussions with social care.

> **Recommendation**
> That the insight gathered for this evaluation informs service delivery and the wider system transformation (including where families might be more appropriately supported by other services)

10.5.2 Families with Lower Needs Most at Risk of Receiving Support in the Future

We have also identified groups of families being supported by Early Help who have lower levels of need or who are less complex. As budgets become tighter and thresholds are raised, this Early Help group (and arguably the closest to *true* Early Help) are likely to be those most at risk of not being offered support by Early Help services in the future.

That said, good progress can be made with those families (with relatively simpler needs). Three quarters of these families compared to half of families overall either made positive progress or started and ended relatively higher than other families. In particular- progress is maximised for these families where financial difficulties are present which are relatively cheaper to address and which help prevent needs from changing and escalating further down the line.

Providing these families with support early, illustrates a significantly lower level of re-referral than other families.

> **Recommendation**
> 1. That the insight gathered for this evaluation informs service delivery and the wider system transformation (including where families might be more appropriately supported by other services)
> 2. That the Early Help partnership working continues and is developed further with organisations and communities using key insights from this evaluation. This includes improving communication with partners and a specific recommendation from the national Troubled Families evaluation for Leicestershire to develop more support for families from the Third Sector

> **More Information**
> For more detailed information supporting the case for multi-agency development see
> **REPORT 4 – MULTI-AGENCY AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS**

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10.6 Opportunities

There are opportunities to reach children and young people through continued and increased support and education in schools and colleges around domestic abuse, healthy relationships (including teenage pregnancy), child sexual exploitation, substance misuse, bullying, budgeting and other life skills.

There is an opportunity to create a culture where families seek and accept much earlier support before issues escalate or become much more complex. This can be supported through education and removing the fear of seeking support itself. Areas where this approach could be applied include domestic abuse, sexual abuse, mental health and depression (including post-natal depression) and SEND. The role of universal services such as GPs, health visitors and schools is key as they have regular contact with families, and as such are ideally positioned to identify and act on issues.

There are also opportunities to create more welcoming and supportive communities and housing environments - particularly for newly-arrived families - where isolation may be an issue, (often as a result of domestic abuse and other issues) or where they have a more limited support network.

Recommendation
1. That the insight gathered for this evaluation informs service delivery and the wider system transformation (including where families might be more appropriately supported by other services)
2. That the Early Help partnership working continues and is developed further with organisations and communities using key insights from this evaluation. This includes improving communication with partners and a specific recommendation from the national Troubled Families evaluation for Leicestershire to develop more support for families from the Third Sector

10.7 Whole Family Working and Issues with Data Quality

The Early Help casework service was designed around evidence-based practice to optimise outcomes for families and future generations based on whole family working. There is some evidence to suggest that whole family working is not being applied across all areas of the Early Help service or that there are issues with the recording of whole family data.

Overall, more work is needed to improve the quality of data collected by Early Help workers. There is a strong case to rationalise and review the data being collected in order to ensure it is fit for purpose going forward. For example, improvements could include more systematic recording of neglect, and where Early Help intervention is supporting the aversion of social care and other partner costs.

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Recommendations
1. To review the high level findings in an independent report on developing work around costs to better drive decision making. In addition, to consider if there is appetite, capacity and budget to take cost analysis work forward including obtaining hard administrative data locally such as health, housing provider and police data to better evidence outcomes
2. That the issue suggesting the absence of whole family working in some areas of the Early Help service is explored in more detail and addressed. Where this is a result of a data recording issue, it is resolved and measures are put in place to monitor going forward
3. That general data quality issues are noted and work continues to improve Mosaic[20] data quality, including regular reporting of data quality for operational managers to action with teams and improved system validation
4. To significantly rationalise and review the assessment and review questions so they are fit for purpose going forward
5. To identify and progress the systematic recording of data on cost aversion, neglect, and lack of family engagement

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More Information
For more detailed information around developing work around costs see
APPENDIX 1E – INDEPENDENT REPORT
For more detailed information around data quality issues see
REPORT 5 – UNDERSTANDING DEMAND BETTER

10.8 Gaps and Future Improvements to Evidence

10.8.1 Gaps
Whilst every effort was taken to gather evidence to inform this evaluation, there were some areas where little or no information emerged. Further research could be commissioned on areas such as:

- Gang-related Child Sex Exploitation;
- Repeat child protection plans;
- Cases that have stepped up from Early Help;
- Other causes of significant debt (e.g. loan sharks);
- Families who feel home schooling is their only choice;
- Evidence-based health and wellbeing interventions;
- The experiences of influential adults who aren't living in the family home (including perpetrators of domestic abuse);
- Substance misuse, youth offending and probation service users

10.8.2 Future Improvements to Evidence
There is also an opportunity for deeper analysis using new and existing data, particularly around clusters, progress and outcomes contained within the Family Star Plus[21] tool and to develop better understanding of costs, and cost benefits in order to inform decision making.

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[20] The Early Help casework recording system

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10.8.3 Reference to Other Evidence-Based Practice

There is already a wide range of evidence-based practice that exists to support and complement the existing model of the Early Help service which also feature as key Troubled Families Programme five intervention factors of:

1. A worker, dedicated to family;
2. Practical 'hands-on' support;
3. A persistent, assertive and challenging approach;
4. Considering the family as a whole – gathering the intelligence; and
5. Common purpose and agreed action.

This evaluation supports these key factors.

The qualitative research has also referenced other service knowledge of what works and other evidence based interventions that support change in families such as:

- Solihull parenting programme
- Signs of safety
- Theraplay
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Feeling Safe
- Freedom programme
- Other Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse programmes
- Other medical interventions

If individuals want to and are able to sustain them.

This Early Help evaluation may provide a foundation on which to test further evidence based practices, particularly around areas that families themselves value.

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[21] Burns, S & MacKeith, J. (2013) The Family Star Plus User Guide and The Family Star Plus: Organisation Guide, Brighton: Triangle Consulting

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Recommendations

1. Use the detailed findings of this evaluation to identify areas for further research and analysis to support a process of continual Early Help evaluation and improvement
2. Consider whether areas lacking qualitative evidence (some areas noted above) should be targeted for further research
3. To explore embedding the cluster approach to insight, dashboards and reports going forward in order to better understand changing demand, outcomes for different groups of families, and the targeting of future resources
4. As key metrics to measure progress, develop and embed Family Star reporting and analysis to potentially include further analysis of the number of stages people move from and to. Audit the quality of readings and provide more detail on the reasons behind readings. In particular, where negative progress appears to be being made and address any training needs in relation to Family Star reporting
5. To share Leicestershire's Early Help learnings and evaluation approaches more widely (e.g. with other authorities and the national Troubled Families Team)
6. To consider the value in rollout of evaluating other Early Help services not covered by this evaluation (e.g. non-casework)
7. To review the high level findings in an independent report on developing work around costs to better drive decision making. In addition, to consider if there is appetite, capacity and budget to take cost analysis work forward including obtaining hard administrative data locally such as health, housing provider and police data to better evidence outcomes

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More Information

For more detailed information around developing work around costs see
APPENDIX 1E – INDEPENDENT REPORT

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11. Summary of Recommendations

The evaluation makes the following recommendations, based on the assembled analysis in the seven detailed reports referred to in this publication:

11.1 Strategic and Partnership Issues

1. That the Early Help Partnership take a collective response to the detailed findings in the evaluation reports and ownership of the recommendations below
2. That the longer term cost implications to the system of cutting preventative and Early Help services is noted;
3. That the positive progress that is made across a wide range of families (with mostly complex, diverse and multiple issues) is noted;
4. That the positive feedback from partners is noted and the management team look at the multi-agency feedback report in more detail to identify areas for development
5. That the Early Help partnership working continues and is developed further with organisations and communities using key insights from this evaluation. This includes strategic and structural development alongside improving communication with partners and a specific recommendation from the national Troubled Families evaluation for Leicestershire to develop more support for families from the Third Sector;
6. That the insight gathered for this evaluation informs service delivery and the wider system transformation (including where families might be more appropriately supported by other services);
7. That the evidence also found in the DWP Improving Lives report is noted and actions taken forward;[22]
8. That the Early Help service is developed further to better support parent and child mental health. In particular, where thresholds are too low to meet health service thresholds and where waiting times are lengthy or there are gaps in mental health service provision;
9. That the Early Help service is developed further to support families where SEND is present. In particular, understanding:
   - Why some SEND families make significantly lower progress than others;
   - Where there are staff gaps in skill or knowledge;
   - Where thresholds are too low to meet SEND service thresholds;
   - Where waiting times are lengthy or there are gaps in SEND provision; and
   - Where short term support around particular SEND issues, including undiagnosed SEND would be helpful to families (including courses).
10. That the Early Help service is developed further to support families where domestic abuse is present, particularly in relation to supporting children, young people and teenage parents who have been exposed to domestic abuse. Additional preventative work targeting young people and people most at risk of unhealthy relationships should also be considered;
11. To share Leicestershire's Early Help learnings and evaluation approaches more widely (e.g. with partners, other authorities and the national Troubled Families Team);

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[22] Available online: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-lives-helping-workless-families

Early Help Evaluation – Final Report

11.2 Early Help and Practice Development

12. That the positive feedback from families is noted and the management team look at the family feedback report in more detail to identify areas for more targeted training and development;

13. That the high levels of confidence staff have in affecting change with families is noted and the management team look at the staff feedback report and dashboards in more detail to identify areas for more targeted training and development;

14. That the insight gathered for this evaluation, in particular the in-depth journey maps are made available and used for staff and partner training;

11.3 System, Processes and Data Collection

15. That the issue suggesting the absence of whole family working in some areas of the Early Help service is explored in more detail and addressed. Where this is a result of a data recording issue, it is resolved and measures are put in place to monitor going forward;

16. That general data quality issues are noted and work continues to improve Mosaic[23] data quality, including regular reporting of data quality for operational managers to action with teams and improved system validation;

17. To significantly rationalise and review the assessment and review questions so they are fit for purpose going forward;

18. To identify and progress the systematic recording of data on cost aversion, neglect, and lack of family engagement;

19. Use the detailed findings of this evaluation to identify areas for further research and analysis to support a process of continual Early Help evaluation and improvement;

20. Consider whether areas lacking qualitative evidence (some areas noted above) should be targeted for further research;

21. Develop an updated evidence base/literature review of what works in Early Help and early intervention alongside emerging evidence of the importance of recognising and developing interventions to address Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)

22. To explore embedding the cluster approach to insight, dashboards and reports going forward in order to better understand changing demand, outcomes for different groups of families, and the targeting of future resources;

23. As key metrics to measure progress, develop and embed Family Star[24] reporting and analysis to potentially include further analysis of the number of stages people move from and to. Audit the quality of readings and provide more detail on the reasons behind readings. In particular, where negative progress appears to be being made and address any training needs in relation to Family Star reporting;

24. To consider the value in rollout of evaluating other Early Help services not covered by this evaluation (e.g. non-casework);

25. To review the high level findings in an independent report on developing work around costs to better drive decision making. In addition, to consider if there is appetite, capacity and budget to take cost analysis work forward including obtaining hard administrative data locally such as health, housing provider and police data to better evidence outcomes

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[23] The Early Help casework recording system
[24] Burns, S & MacKeith, J. (2013) The Family Star Plus User Guide and The Family Star Plus: Organisation Guide, Brighton: Triangle Consulting

Early Help Evaluation – Final Report

More Information
For more detailed information around developing work around costs see
APPENDIX 1E – INDEPENDENT REPORT

Acknowledgements

Leicestershire County Council would like to thank the following for their support and participation in producing this evaluation report

- Over 100 families consisting of almost 500 individuals who have contributed their voice towards this evaluation
- Over 100 staff within the Early Help Service
- Over 50 partners who have contributed to the Most Significant Change and other activities
- Dr Adrian Nelson and Dr Alan Boyd from Manchester Business School, Manchester University who provided a critical mentoring role in the development of the evaluation design
- S. Burns and J. MackKeith from Triangle Consulting for the development of the outcomes tool Family Star Plus[25] used in this report
- Robyn Wilford and Anna Good from Triangle Consulting for peer support around the use of the outcomes tool Family Star Plus in this report
- Mark Roberts, Rob Melling, Claire Hazeldine, Teresa Spilsbury – Leicestershire Partnership Trust who played a key critical friend role in the development of the evaluation design
- Staff within the Business Intelligence team at Leicestershire County Council who have applied a wide range of techniques, support and analysis to the evaluation
- Jenni Inglis from Vie Consulting for the independent report identifying a way forward around cost benefit analysis

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[25] Burns, S & MacKeith, J. (2013) The Family Star Plus User Guide and The Family Star Plus: Organisation Guide, Brighton: Triangle Consulting

Early Help Evaluation – Final Report

Leicestershire County Council

If you require information contained in this leaflet in another version e.g. large print, Braille, tape or alternative language please telephone: 0116 305 6803, Fax: 0116 305 7271 or Minicom: 0116 305 6160.

જો આપ આ માહિતી આપની ભાષામાં સમજવામાં થોડી મદદ ઇચ્છતાં હો તો 0116 305 6803 નંબર પર ફોન કરશો અને અમે આપને મદદ કરવા વ્યવસ્થા કરીશું.

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਮਦਦ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0116 305 6803 ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਦਵਾਂਗੇ।

এই তথ্য নিজের ভাষায় বুঝার জন্য আপনার যদি কোন সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয়, তবে 0116 305 6803 এই নম্বরে ফোন করলে আমরা উপযুক্ত ব্যক্তির ব্যবস্থা করবো।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات سمجھنے میں کچھ مدد درکار ہے تو براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر کال کریں 0116 305 6803 اور ہم آپ کی مدد کے لئے کسی کا انتظام کر دیں گے۔

假如閣下需要幫助, 用你的語言去明白這些資訊, 請致電 0116 305 6803, 我們會安排有關人員為你提供幫助。

Jeżeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tej informacji w Twoim języku, zadzwoń pod numer 0116 305 6803, a my Ci dopomożemy.

Leicestershire County Council

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 5th March 2019

LEICESTERSHIRE'S NEW SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS 2019

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to set out the proposals for the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, which are required by The Children and Social Work Act 2017 and statutory Working Together 2018, to replace the current Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board (LRLSCB) by September 2019.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out specific duties for local authorities, working with partner organisations and agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area: section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the local authority to provide services to children in need in their area, regardless of where they are found; section 47 of the same Act requires local authorities to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.

3. These duties placed on the local authority can only be discharged with the full co-operation of other partners, many of whom have individual duties when carrying out their functions under section 11 of the Children Act 2004. The responsibility for this join-up locally rests with the three safeguarding partners who have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.

4. The Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, strengthens this already important relationship by placing new duties on key agencies in a local area. Specifically the police, clinical commissioning groups and the local authority are under a duty to make arrangements to work together, with other partners locally, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

5. Working Together 2018 sets out the purpose of the new arrangements and the requirements to be met by the new arrangements.

Background

6. Working Together 2018 guidance covers the legislative requirements placed on individual services and sets out a framework for the three local safeguarding partners to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children including identifying and responding to their needs.

7. A *safeguarding partner* in relation to a local authority area in England is defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) as:
    (a) the local authority
    (b) a clinical commissioning group for an area, any part of which falls within the local authority area
    (c) the chief officer of police for an area, any part of which falls within the local authority area

8. To fulfil this role, the three safeguarding partners must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies. Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children with regard to local need.

9. Once agreed, local safeguarding arrangements must be published and implemented by September 2019. The safeguarding partners must also publish a report at least once in every 12-month period that sets out what they have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.

10. The purpose of these local arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:
    - children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
    - partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
    - organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
    - there is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
    - learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
    - information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

Leicestershire and Rutland Arrangements

Accountability and Governance

11. Strong leadership is critical for the new arrangements to be effective in bringing together the various organisations and agencies. It is important therefore that the lead representative from each of the three safeguarding partners plays an

active role. A desired objective of the new arrangements is for a leaner system that avoids duplication, has a multi-agency focus, reduces meeting time and ensures a focus on quality and impact on multi-agency practice in frontline services.
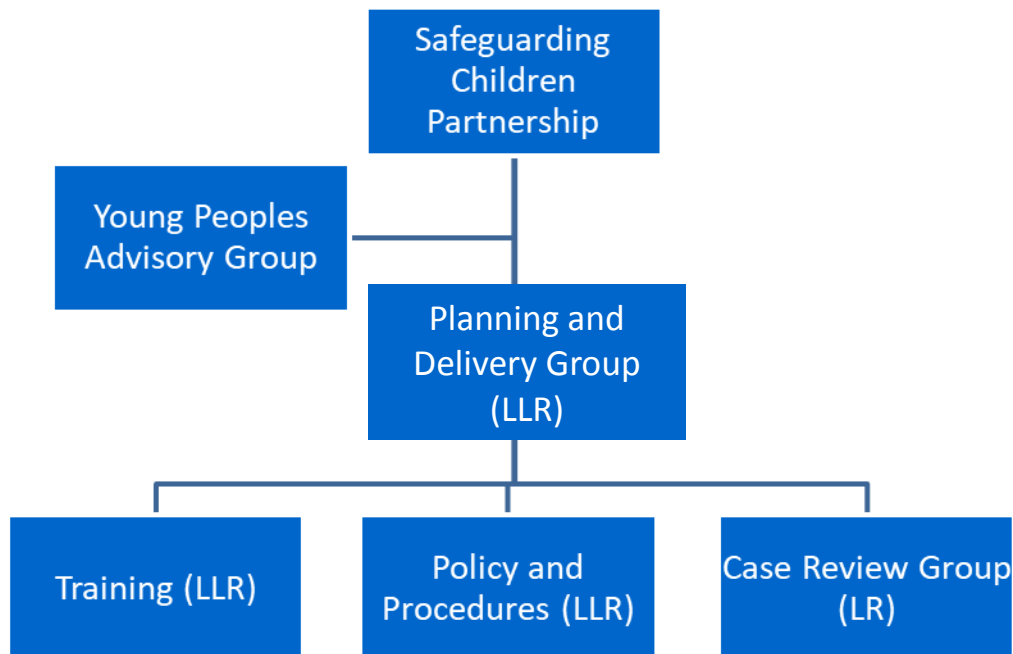
12. Clear governance is essential, ensuring that where other Boards or bodies have lead accountability for key areas of work, the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements do not duplicate that work, but offer a critical friend role, advocating the safeguarding needs of children.

13. To be effective, these arrangements should link to other strategic partnership work happening locally to support children and families.

14. The LRLSCB was judged to be 'Good' by Ofsted in the 2017 inspection and therefore any changes should enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the arrangements.

Principles

15. The following key principles underpin the proposals for the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. There should be:

- clear governance and leadership - the lead representatives for safeguarding partners named in Working Together 2018 are the local authority chief executive, the accountable officer of a clinical commissioning group, and a chief officer of police. All three safeguarding partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements

- a sharpened focus on a small number of critical identified priorities that maximise the effectiveness of the partnership arrangements

- appropriate scrutiny of multi-agency frontline practice and evidence of the impact of lessons learned from audits and reviews

- clarity of accountability and expected contributions of agencies to the arrangements

- effective processes to ensure statutory requirements for the consideration of serious incident notifications, rapid reviews and case reviews, including arrangements for funding of these

- improved efficiency – a reduction in the duplication of reporting and demand for meeting time

- clearly defined business support functions with capacity to adequately support the arrangements

- transparent budget agreements between the statutory partners

- a published description of how independent scrutiny of the arrangements will be ensured

- consistency and alignment across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland where possible

- links to other structures across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Proposed multi agency safeguarding arrangements partnership structure from September 2019

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │  Safeguarding   │
                    │    Children     │
                    │   Partnership   │
                    └────────┬────────┘
┌──────────────────┐        │
│  Young Peoples   ├────────┤
│  Advisory Group  │  ┌─────┴──────────┐
└──────────────────┘  │  Planning and  │
                      │ Delivery Group │
                      │     (LLR)      │
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┌───────┴────────┐   ┌────────┴────────┐   ┌─────────┴────────┐
│ Training (LLR) │   │   Policy and    │   │ Case Review Group│
│                │   │ Procedures (LLR)│   │       (LR)       │
└────────────────┘   └─────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘
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Proposed groups in the new safeguarding arrangements

16. The Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LRSCP) will replace the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children's Board and will:

- Drive the safeguarding children agenda forward and facilitate links with other strategic groups.

- Set the strategic direction for multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across the partnership.

- Approve the business plan and annual report

- Set the budget

- Commission annual oversight and independent scrutiny of safeguarding children arrangements.

- Receive assurance reports from the Planning and Delivery group *by exception*.

- Determine the need for involvement of relevant agencies in the arrangements as set out in the regulations.

17. The Partnership will act as a strategic leadership group, as set out in Chapter 3, paragraph 6 of Working Together 2018 and paragraph 12, which states "all three partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements". The Partnership will also ensure that other local area leaders, including Lead Members for Children's Services and the Police and Crime Commissioner, promote these arrangements. (Working Together 2018 Chapter 1, paragraph 18.)

18. The Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS) in local authorities has key political accountability for ensuring that the needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable and their families and carers, are addressed. In doing so, the LMCS will work closely with other local partners to improve the outcomes and well-being of children and young people. The Lead Members for Children's Services for Leicestershire and Rutland will therefore attend the Partnership, as in the former arrangements, in a participating observer role. This will enable them to maintain their independence as well as having oversight.

19. Membership of the Partnership will be Director level representatives of the five statutory safeguarding partner organisations covering Leicestershire and Rutland (Leicestershire County Council, Rutland County Council, Leicestershire Police, West Leicestershire CCG and East Leicestershire and Rutland CCG), supported by their nominated operational leads, who will also provide the link to the Planning and Delivery Group as core members of that group. Others will be invited to attend when appropriate.

20. The Partnership will meet quarterly and the chair will be the Independent Advisor.

21. The Planning and Delivery Group will replace the current joint executive across LLR and will:

    - Co-ordinate the business of the LRSCP and ensure the delivery of the business plan.

    - Operate across LLR where possible

    - Commission and manage the business of the sub-groups.

    - Receive and scrutinise performance assurance reports from the local authorities, Police and CCGs to the Partnership on an exception basis and recommend action to address these. It will receive assurance reports from the statutory partners that explain the performance management systems in use and update any changes annually. This will require statutory partners to be transparent in sharing their self-assessed areas for improvement.

    - Receive qualitative information and commission action to respond to areas for improvement arising from multi agency case audits, organisational audits and any audits of safeguarding standards.

- Scrutinise and sign off new guidance, policies and protocols on behalf of the Partnership and refer to the Partnership any continuing areas where agreement cannot be reached.

- Support and meet with the Young People's Advisory Group to ensure the views of young people are considered when identifying priorities, business planning and needs analysis and that young people are influencing the broader work of the Partnership.

- Commission and receive advice and information from reference groups.

- Oversee developments in the LRSCP Learning and Development needs analysis and offer.

- Set the agenda for the LRSCP meetings.

22. Membership of the Planning and Delivery Group will be based on the current Executive Group but must include Assistant Director level roles and Heads of Safeguarding or Safeguarding leads of statutory partners, plus any sub-group chairs not already attending. Other partner agency representatives relevant to the safeguarding children agenda will be invited when appropriate. The Group will meet five times a year and be chaired by the Independent Advisor or a Senior Statutory Partner.

23. Where required, task and finish groups on specific themes will be commissioned in line with the in-year priorities of the Safeguarding Children Partnership.   These will be commissioned and managed through the Planning and Delivery Group, and where possible will be undertaken on an LLR basis.

Safeguarding Assurance

24. In addition to seeking safeguarding assurance from the safeguarding partners, the Partnership will also seek assurance of safeguarding arrangements and practice from a range of named relevant agencies including:-

- District Councils

- Early years settings, schools and other education providers

- Voluntary Sector

- Health Providers

- Private sector children's services providers

- Youth custody and residential homes

25. Further work will be undertaken, led by the current Independent Chair of the LRLSCB to develop a process and model of how assurance will be sought and how it will be collated and reported.

Partnership arrangements

26. The Safeguarding Children Partnership will have key links with and provide information through the following partnership boards:-

- Strategic Partnership Board and associated sub groups (including the Vulnerability Executive that leads the strategic overview and delivery of the LLR response to the exploitation of children)
- Leicestershire Health and Wellbeing Board
- Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board
- Leicestershire Children and Family Partnership
- Rutland Children's Trust
- Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board
- Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board
- Rutland Community Safety Partnership
- Child Death Review Panel (LLR)

Independent Scrutiny

27. Working Together 2018 requires that there is independent scrutiny of the arrangements that provides assurance in judging the effectiveness of the multi-agency arrangements, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases.

28. From September 2019, the new arrangements propose that the current Independent Chair model will be adapted to become an Independent Advisor and this will provide part of the independent scrutiny function.

29. Between April and September 2019, the Independent Chair will engage with partners to clearly define the elements of independent scrutiny in the new arrangements.

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

30. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee currently receives an annual business plan for the LRLSCB as well as reports on a range of issues relating to safeguarding. As part of the new arrangements, the Committee will receive an annual report that sets out what has been done as a result of the arrangements and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.

Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Board Priorities to September 2019

31. The LRLSCB normally sets an annual business plan incorporating priority areas for safeguarding development and improvement. The LSCBs priorities for 2018-19 are:
    - Partnership Transition
    - Multiple Risk Factors
    - Safeguarding Children – Access to Services
    - Child Exploitation - (Child Sexual Exploitation, Trafficking, Missing and Gangs)
    - Safeguarding Children with Disabilities

32. The LSCB has identified that there is further work to carry out on some of its current priorities beyond the end of March 2019. As the new Safeguarding Children Partnership will be in place from September 2019 the LSCB will continue work on its current priorities, rather than develop a new business plan for the period April-September 2019. Priorities for safeguarding children for September 2019 onwards will be identified as part of the development of the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

33. Specific actions for the current LSCB priorities for the period April to September 2019 are being finalised and will be agreed at the LRLSCB meeting on 26th March 2019. These will include:
   - Launch of updated partnership thresholds for safeguarding children;
   - Finalising procedures and training updates regarding Children with Disabilities and;
   - Development and monitoring of the pathway to multi agency services in response to Child Criminal Exploitation.

Resource Implications

34. The safeguarding partners will need to agree the level of funding secured from each partner, and this should be equitable and proportionate, and any contributions from each relevant agency should support the local arrangements. The funding should be transparent to children and families in the area, and sufficient to cover all elements of the arrangements, including the cost of local child safeguarding practice reviews.

35. The budget to support the arrangements for 2019/20 has still to be agreed. The development of the budget will be in two parts. Firstly, the core budget to support the arrangements and secondly a formal agreement between the statutory partners on funding future case reviews.

36. The 2020/21 budget onward will be agreed by partners as part of the development of the operational arrangements to support the Board.

Timetable for Decisions

37. The Department for Education requires that local authorities publish their multi-agency safeguarding arrangements by 29 June 2019 with full implementation by 29 September 2019. The following timeline is proposed for Leicestershire and Rutland:

   - March- May 2019 - development of governance and processes for the new safeguarding arrangements
   - June 2019 - arrangements published
   - September 2019 - arrangements commence
   - September/December 2019 - first meeting of the Safeguarding Children Partnership

Conclusions

38. The Committee is asked to note the current position with the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for Leicestershire and Rutland

Background Papers

Working Together 2018
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None

Relevant Impact Assessments

Equality and Human Rights Implications

39. The new safeguarding arrangements will support vulnerable children and young people from across all communities in Leicestershire. The new arrangements are responsible for ensuring that service responses are fair, equitable to all and that children are safe. This report does not highlight any specific equal opportunities implications.

Officers to contact

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Leicestershire
County Council

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
5TH MARCH 2019

UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS HANDLING WITHIN CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on complaints received and responded to within the Children and Family Services department during 2018-19.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 sets out the policy framework against which children's social care complaints should be considered.

3. Local authorities must, each financial year, publish an Annual Report (Regulation 13(3)). The Annual report for 2017-18 was presented to the Committee on 10 September 2018, where it noted the increase in complaints volumes and asked for an update to be provided in six months.

Background

4. The Complaints Team, which sits within the Corporate Resources Department of the County Council, manages and co-ordinates complaints relating to three separate complaints systems:

    a) Adult Social Care - a statutory process
    b) Children's Social Care – a statutory process
    c) Corporate Complaints – a non-statutory process, which considers complaints relating to other services provided by the Council and where there is no other form of redress.

5. The Children and Family Services Department is contacted on a daily basis by service users, carers and other parties with concerns or requests for information. These queries are dealt with at a local level within care teams or through the Director's office without recourse to the formal complaints process.

6.   The complaints team do, on occasion, also receive queries and concerns that suggest a child or young person may require immediate support or which raise safeguarding concerns. Such reports are best handled outside of the formal complaints procedure and are referred into the First Response team or allocated workers for urgent consideration as appropriate.

7.   This report provides a summary of the statistical information and headline issues emerging from the analysis of complaints activity for both statutory and corporate complaints relating to Children and Family Services received between 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018 (Quarters 1 to 3).

Complaints received and outcomes

8.   The number of all complaints received over the first three quarters is shown in the graph below with comparative data for the 2017-18 year:
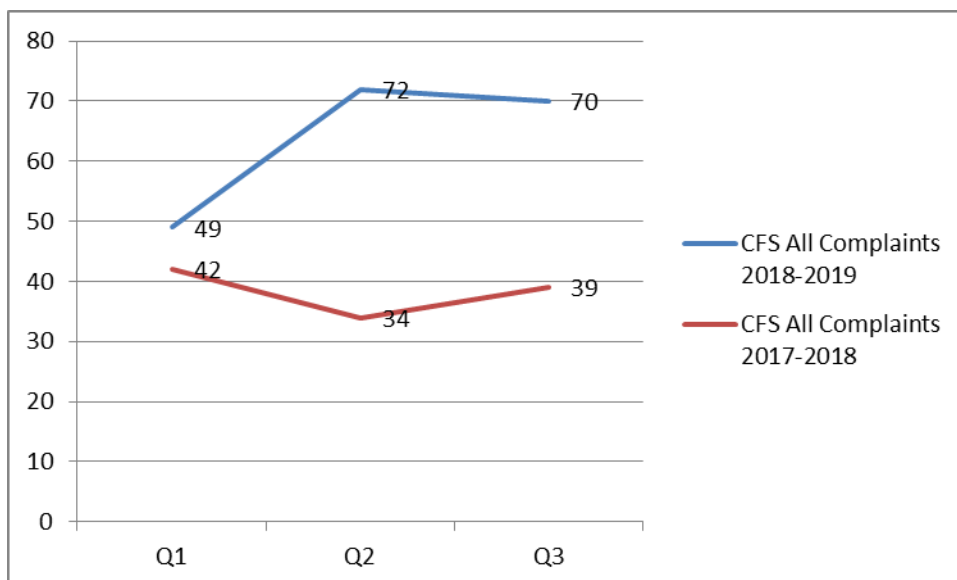
9.   A total of 191 complaints have been received within Children and Family Services during this period. This marks an increase of 66% on the equivalent reporting period for 2017-18.

10. Complaints can be further segmented to those considered as statutory social care complaints and corporate complaints regarding other children's services. The relative mix is shown below.

Complaint Type	Volume 2017-18	Volume 2018-19	% Increase
Social Care	72	109	51%
Corporate	43	82	90%

11. Corporate Complaints have seen the biggest increase this year. This is likely to be a combination of better recording as well as increased volumes.

12. It is important to note that complaint volumes themselves do not tell the whole picture. This can equally be indicative of improvements in the capturing of complaints. Of more importance is how those complaints are resolved and what learning can be taken.

Statutory Social Care complaints analysis

13. Despite the increased volume, there has been a sustained improvement in response timescales for social care complaints during 2018-19 with 62 (87%) resolved within the statutory maximum of 20 working days. This is a 10% improvement from 2017-18 and reflects both improved monitoring and tracking as well as cultural improvements in complaints handling. This includes greater willingness to engage in dialogue around the complaint and stronger focus on resolution.

14. The number of requests escalating from Stage 1 to Stage 2 has also slightly decreased this year. At the end of Q3, eight complaints had progressed to independent investigation at Stage 2 which marks an escalation rate of 7%. This represents a 4% reduction from 2017-18.

15. There has been a significant drive within the department to increase the level of personal contact with complainants. Complaints intelligence is clear that this is helping to reduce escalations and improve response timescales and should continue to be encouraged.

16. 30 (42%) of the complaints were upheld. This is a slight, but not significant increase on 2017-18 (37%).

Corporate complaint analysis

17. 57 (82%) of corporate complaints have been resolved within 20 working days. This is a slight improvement on previous year (+3%). This figure is impacted by Special Educational Needs (SEN) complaints which saw 12 complaints resolved outside of this timescale (50%).

18. SEN has been the predominant area of growth with 24 complaints received about this service and representing 35% of the overall volume.

19. To add context to the above figures, it is important to note that the local authority has around 4000 Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) in place, all reviewed annually. This therefore represents a complaint rate of just 0.6%.

20. The subject matter of SEN or Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) cases can equally be very complex and there is often overlap to the SEND Tribunal process. Complaints are most often disputes around placements or support provisions.

21. Although complaints around SEN have a low proportion of fault found, there is a recurring theme around contact difficulties with SEN Officers. It is

recommended this is an area of focus for the department to review any improvements that can be made to avoid further rises in complaint volumes.

22. In the annual review of Local Government Complaints in 2017-18, the Ombudsman reported that it was upholding 80% of complaints it had received about EHCPs. This was the highest category recorded. Leicestershire County Council received no such adverse decisions during this reporting period.

23. Whilst clear that there remain opportunities to improve the timescales for responding to complaints, it should also be flagged that in many cases meetings have been arranged to try to resolve matters. Inevitably, not all meetings can take place within the 20 working day period but this personal approach is both positive and likely to be a factor in preventing complaints escalating to the Ombudsman. This should be noted when considering resolution timescales.

Compliments

24. Seven compliments have been formally recorded for the Children and Family Services department. This marks a significant reduction from 2017-18 (33) but it is likely that there are compliments being collated locally and not passed to the Complaints team for central recording.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints

25. The Local Government Ombudsman has made enquiries on eight complaints during 2018-19. This is on track to be a significant reduction from the previous year (19).

26. In addition the Ombudsman has made Final decisions on 15 complaints during 2018-19. Fault has been found in three cases with the details set out below:

   I. A failure to adequately follow-up legitimate child protection concerns raised by a family member.
   A number of actions have been progressed to strengthen management oversight in such cases. These include the launch of revised practice standards within the Child Protection teams and strengthening how cases are tracked and overseen.

   The Ombudsman was satisfied with the remedial actions taken.

   II. A failure to record information from a safeguarding visit undertaken with a School

   The Council has issued reminders within the team of the importance of recording visits made. A number of other administrative improvements were also made to how the Council records and responds to Ofsted alerts regarding schools.

III.   A failure to follow Leicestershire's policy with regards to School Admissions arrangements

The Council accepted that inaccurate advice was given which the complainant relied on. This led to a preferred school place not being secured. The Council exercised its discretion to offer a place at the school and offered re-imbursement for uniforms purchased.

27.   The relatively low numbers of complaints upheld by the Ombudsman is further evidence that, on the whole, complaints are investigated appropriately and where necessary remedies provided locally.

Recurring themes emerging from complaints 2018-19

28.   The following are highlighted by the Complaints team as recurring themes:

- Lack of timely contact with parents

- Delays in dispatch of assessments and other requested information

- Difficulties contacting allocated workers

29.   There has been significant improvement around complaints relating to the quality or detail of single assessments. This was flagged as a priority area in the 2017-18 annual report and a clear reduction has been seen.

Learning and Service Improvements

30.   There have been improvements within the department which, whilst not solely driven by complaints data, provide clear evidence that learning is identified from complaints. These include by way of example:

a. A review of the working arrangements between Children's and Adults Occupational Therapy services to ensure more collaboration
b. Revised team structures within Child Protection services and to ensure greater continuity of case work.
c. Improved practice guidance for the fostering team in handling applications from applicants with protected characteristics
d. Improved access for social workers to senior management oversight and decision making through creation of Case Decision Meetings (CDM)

31.   The complaints team is also developing a framework for monitoring and ensuring that agreed actions have been carried out by investigating managers. This will be piloted during the final quarter of 2018-19 and will further add resilience to the process.

Resource Implications

32.   The complaints team has maintained the same level of resources this year. Additional cost increases depend on the number of social care complaints

escalating to Stages 2 and 3 and where Independent Investigations are required. It is projected that there will be a reduction on costs incurred this year.

Conclusions

33. Although there continues to be a significant increase in the volume of complaints, there is evidence of improvement in how the department is responding. Particularly within social care, there is clear evidence of more personal contact with complainants and this is translating to quicker response times and less escalation.

34. This report highlights a significant rise in complaints regarding SEN and EHCPs and, notwithstanding the relatively low proportion of families that do complain, it is recommended that further analysis is undertaken of the complaints data to help inform service delivery.

35. The low level of complaints upheld by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman gives good re-assurance that complaints are addressed appropriately through the complaints procedure, and where applicable appropriate remedies are provided.

36. Further work is required to ensure that all compliments are being recorded.

Background Papers

37. None

Circulation under the Local Alert Issues Procedure

38. None

Equality and Human Rights Implications

39. The Children and Family Services Department supports vulnerable children and young people from across all communities in Leicestershire. Complaints and compliments are a way of ensuring that service responses are fair and equitable to all. This report does not highlight any specific equal opportunities implications.

List of Appendices

40. None

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