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**Children, Education and Communities Policy  
and Scrutiny Committee meeting**

**04 January 2022**

Report of Rose Howley, Head of Service Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub  
(MASH) Assessment and Targeted Intervention

**Early Help and the Child and Family Targeted Intervention Service**

**Summary**

1. This report provides an overview of 'Early Help' in the City of York and the Child and Family Targeted Intervention Service

**Background**

2. Everyone in the City of York who works with children, young people and families, has a responsibility to support the delivery of Early Help and support children, young people and families in accessing appropriate services.
3. The City of York Council's Safeguarding Children's Partnership Early Help Strategy 2021/23 promotes the view that an effective Early Help model is one of collaboration and brings together families, communities, professionals and systems to work together in a joined up co-ordinated approach to 'ensure that children, young people and their families receive the right help at the right time'.
4. Families have interactions and relationships with numerous people and services (some which are trusted relationships). Often than not utilising these relationships means that more effective help and support to children and families avoids delay in the right support and reduces the need for escalation to the statutory services such as social work.
5. Effective support to families should involve a 'Team around the child' approach which includes healthy child services, schools, housing, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) etc. providing assessment of early help needs and a plan of support that is designed around the child and family's needs.
6. A family support provision should be available when there is a need for more targeted and outreach provision. Targeted Support can include specific work on increasing a parents capacity to manage a child's changing behaviours, or juggling the needs of multiple children within a

family, assisting with setting boundaries and helping families to celebrate their children through resetting some of the negative thoughts, reduce rejection and increase safety and prevent family breakdown.

7. Such targeted support does not intervene alone, such support is part of a wider team of intervention, where the aim is to step the family back down the levels of need.
8. This early help system is supported by the government Supporting Families' agenda and early help system guide 2020/ 2021.

### **The Child and Family Targeted Support Service**

9. As part of a service restructure colleagues in the Local Area Teams early help service, the Immediate Response / Edge of Care service and Child in Need Practitioners have merged together into a Child and Family Targeted Support Service. No redundancies have been made. All children within the service at an early help level have an allocated worker and at a child in need level are co-working with a social worker
10. For children, and families who face more challenges and may have multiple needs, the service will provide additional capacity and expertise to address their needs. This will include direct work and one to support with children and families from a Child and Family Support Practitioner.
11. This service provision will work alongside partners where there is a need for a team around the child and family to provide a more time critical targeted response to improving outcomes for children.
12. The Service will provide:
  - Targeted early help as part of a team around the child.
  - Immediate response and edge of care support
  - Outreach, direct work with children and families
  - Family Group Conference (FGC)
  - Specific group work and parenting support
13. The service will also work with children and families who are no longer needing a Children's Social Care response and need some extra support to reduce the likelihood of re-entering Children's Social Care in the future.
14. Child and Family Support Practitioners will work alongside partners as part of a team around the child and family to provide a targeted early help response.
15. The child and family targeted support service will also provide a targeted immediate response and edge of care service to children at a child in

need level by co-working and providing support alongside an allocated social worker.

### **The Service will work alongside a strong community offer that builds resilience**

16. The City of York Council have created a Customer and Communities Directorate with an emphasis on supporting customers, building resilient communities, recognising that local people are best placed to understand and find solutions to the particular needs of their communities.
17. There will be an increased focus on prevention, early help and asset-based community development working across all life stages. This approach also means creating a wide-reaching Early Help network within communities which will also involve working with those people who are already supported by services to connect them to their communities.
18. The Customer and Communities Directorate will promote early help for vulnerable families through the co-design of Family Hubs, linked to the Supporting Families agenda to meet the needs of local communities and bring universal and community services together and make them more accessible for children and families.

### **The Wider Partnership Early Help Offer**

19. The government directive from Working Together, Safeguarding in Education, The Early Help System Model and the Supporting Families Agenda is that support should be provided to families in the first instance from universal and community services.
20. Children and families should be able to tell their story once and support should be co-ordinated from people already working with the child and family. A whole family early help assessment should be completed and agencies should form a team around the child and family to co-ordinate support at the earliest possible opportunity and as soon as an agency identifies additional needs.
21. The City of York safeguarding children partnership (CYSCP) continues to promote a focus on improving the early help offer to children and families within the partnership.
22. Children and families need to be given the opportunity to engage in early help support at a lower level by universal services and community support.

23. There is a continued need to ensure children and families receive a timely response with co-produced robust multi-agency plans by including a team around the child and family approach at the earliest opportunity.
24. In January 2022 the CYSCP is to launch the revised partnership Early Help Strategy; revised documentation and practice guidance to support and increase the number of partner led early help assessments and increase the number of teams around the child support for children and families.
25. There is a need to improve the data within the partnership to ensure all agencies are sighted on supporting families and to ensure we understand how effective we are as a partnership at meeting children needs and reducing harm.
26. The following outcome indicators along with other partnership outcomes for children will demonstrate the effectiveness of the revised early help strategy and its implementation:
27. Key indicators for the measurement of an effective revised early help strategy include:
  - An increased number of partner agency led early help assessments and co-ordination of team around the child and family support meetings to progress early help plans.
  - Reduction of re-referrals to Childrens Social Care
  - Reduction in the number of children subject to a child protection plan.

## **Options**

28. There are no options for the Scrutiny Committee to consider. The Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report which provides an update regarding early help in the City of York.

## **Analysis**

29. There are no options for the Scrutiny Committee to consider, therefore this section is not applicable.

## **Council Plan**

30. Partnership early help, a multi-agency team around the child and family with a more targeted outreach service, supports the Council's corporate priorities in relation to Good Health and Well Being, A Better Start for Children and Young People and Safe Communities and Culture for All.

## Implications

31. There are no known implications to consider in the report.

## Risk Management

32. There are no risks for the Scrutiny Committee to consider.

## Recommendations

33. There are no recommendations being made and the report is for information purposes. The Early help strategy has already been approved by the CYSCP Executive, which is the statutory body of the Safeguarding Children Partnership. The approved restructure has increased targeted support capacity for children and families and is aligned to the Government Supporting families' agenda and current Early Help System Guidance 2020 and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

## Contact Details

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### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Anne Coyle  
Director of Children's Services (Interim)

**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 22/12/2021

### Wards Affected:

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

### Background Papers:

**[Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#)**

### Annexes

CYSCP Early Help Strategy 2021- 2023

### Abbreviations

CYSCP – City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership

MASH – Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub