

PEOPLE (CHILDREN) SCRUTINY PANEL

13 February 2014

EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION PROGRESS UPDATE

Report of the Director for People

STRATEGIC AIM:	Creating a Brighter Future for All
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the progress made within early intervention services since the Ofsted Inspection for the *Protection of Children* in January 2013. The Ofsted report had a key focus on the role of early intervention services and the need for them to have a robust offer and interface with social care.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 **That Scrutiny Panel note the contents of the report**

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 Early Intervention is when services intervene early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families most at risk of developing problems. It may occur at any point in a child or young person's life. Effective early intervention and prevention together with universal services play an important role in supporting and developing children, young people and families; recognising that these are central to helping families boost children and young people's resilience and improve outcomes for all, particularly the most vulnerable.

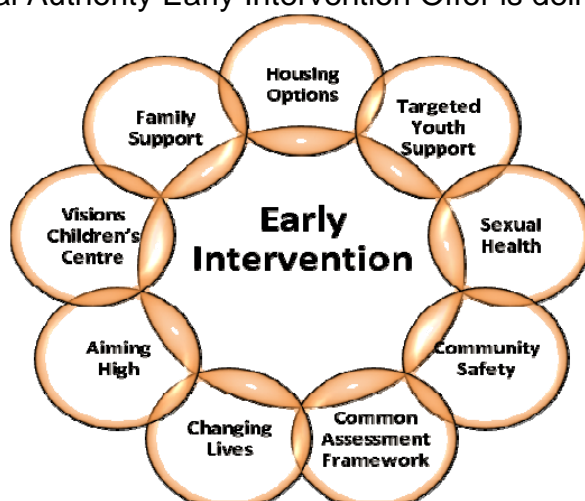
3.2 Early Intervention services delivered by the Council report to the Families First Board which has a strategy that has been implemented with staff and partners since 2009.

The Strategy which is available on the Council's website provides a framework for the delivery of our early intervention and intensive family support services. This involves identifying appropriate support at different levels of need, and is based on the presumption that services need to be evaluated against achieving identifiable outcomes for children, young people and families. Participation of children, young people and families is paramount and this is achieved through the team around family and lead practitioner approach.

The strategy also supports the development of joint commissioning arrangements to strengthen service delivery. The Families First Board is a

sub group of the Children's Trust providing quarterly reports on progress, achievements and areas of risk.

- 3.3 The Department for Education published a guide: *Working Together to Safeguard Children* in March 2013. This is an inter agency guide with a strong focus on the role of early intervention in providing targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.
- 3.4 Section 10 of the *Children Act 2004* requires each local authority to make arrangements to promote cooperation between the authority, each of the authority's relevant partners and such other persons or bodies working with children in the local authority's area as the authority considers appropriate. The arrangements are to be made with a view to improving the wellbeing of all children in the authority's area, which includes protection from harm and neglect. This is supported by the new Ofsted inspection framework for safeguarding where it is explicit that there must be a clearly defined early intervention offer in place.
- 3.5 The Families First Board has a performance framework detailing key performance indicators for the Council and its partners. This is noted quarterly with actions to achieve indicators that are at risk of not being met.
- 3.6 There are a number of delivery plans detailing the work of early intervention services which are aligned with the priority areas within the Children, Young People's and Families Plan. All of these plans are reviewed on a monthly or quarterly basis and on track for completion in March 14.
- 3.7 The Local Authority Early Intervention Offer is delivered across 9 key areas:



These service areas are delivered across the 0 – 19 age range (up to 25 if there is a disability) with the exception of Community Safety and Housing Options which is an all age service. All of the services are located within teams 1 and 2 in the Stronger Communities Service.

Early Intervention Processes

- 3.8 Within children and young people's services, there are three key areas:

a) Single Agency – One agency where some universal but mainly targeted early intervention services delivered as highlighted in the model within 3.6. These services are delivered to children, young people and families where there are two unmet needs or less which they as a single agency can address. An example of this could be where a young person is not in education, training or employment but also is a teenage parent needing support to attend college and access parenting support.

b) Common Assessment Framework (CAF) - A standardised tool for an early holistic assessment of a child and/or family's additional needs, developing and agreeing a process through which agencies work together with the family to meet those needs. As such it acts as a bridge for communication between the family and professionals. In Rutland, where there are more than two unmet needs, the CAF process which is co-ordinated by one Senior Early Intervention Officer for the Council adopts a team around the family approach to ensure services are co-ordinated and provided at an earlier stage. This then avoids escalation to social care and achieves positive outcomes.

c) Social Care – Where a child meets the statutory threshold of Child in Need (a disabled child or where a child's health/ development is likely to be further impaired without intensive services), Child Protection (at risk of significant harm) or Looked After (children and young people for whom the Local Authority has a responsibility to care for)

A lot of work has been undertaken to strengthen the relationship between frontline practitioners and managers of services within early intervention and social care which has resulted in the development of the following:

- a) Early Intervention Model – A visual model highlighting services at a universal and targeted level within early intervention. (Refer to Appendix A) This model shows how services can provide supports across all levels of need.
- b) Step Up Step Down Approach – A localised model based on a national process to ensure that there are robust arrangements in place between CAF and Social Care to ensure that where cases are transferred to either social care or CAF that they are timely and effective. This ensures that cases do not drift and that thresholds are managed appropriately in relation to the services families require.
- c) Early Intervention Practitioners Forum – A forum where both internal and external frontline practitioners meet on a regular basis to share information and practice on common issues, trends or joint caseloads.
- d) Multi Agency Support Panel – A multi agency meeting where both external and internal managers meet on a regular basis to discuss cases open to early intervention or social care meeting a set of strict criteria. The aim is to provide managerial oversight where key decisions can be made such as pooling budgets and resources to achieve a better outcome for those more complex families.

- e) **Manager Development Sessions** – A monthly session where all managers from the Council’s early intervention or social care teams meet to undertake joint training to ensure consistent approaches, agreeing methodology and sharing practice.

Participation and Engagement

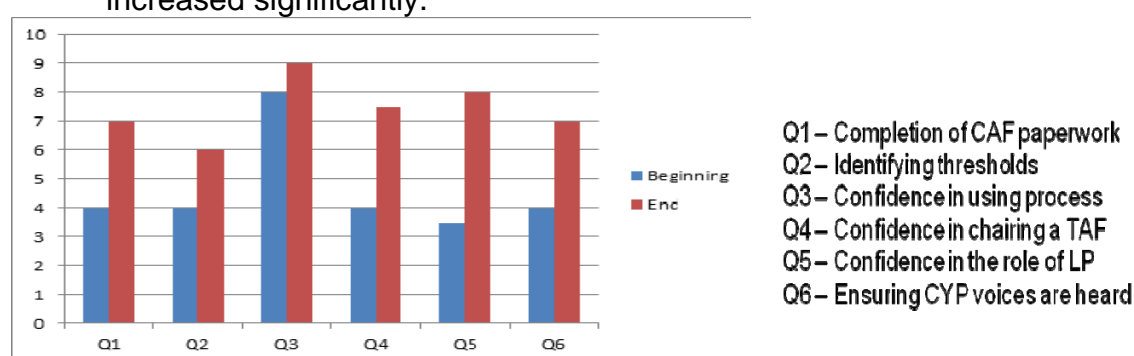
- 3.9 The engagement of service users is essential and paramount to the success of achieving outcomes at an earlier stage. As services within early intervention are predominantly of voluntary engagement (as opposed to statutory services where it is compulsory for a family to engage with services), there is a higher success rate of engaging with children, young people and families through the whole process. People feel more in control in defining what their needs are and what needs to happen to improve their circumstances. Where engagement is refused on this basis, practitioners are persistent in working with the family to see the benefits of receiving support at an earlier stage.
- 3.10 A key tool that has been adopted as a method for assessment and evaluation across the People directorate is the “Rickter Scale”. This tool has been crucial in enabling families to engage fully with services and take ownership to take action and create change. All staff within early intervention and social care have been trained in the use of this tool.
- 3.11 There are a number of local and regional groups where service users voice influence the shaping services and key decision making. This has been evident within early intervention services where user consultation shaped the Families First Strategies amongst other pieces of work. These groups include the following:
 - a) East Midland Regional Participation Group – Nine local authority areas develop shared standards for pieces of work to ensure consistent approaches. Most recently shared standards have been developed to support looked after young people to make a complaint.
 - b) Young Inspectors – Trained group of local young people that can be utilised for mystery shopper visits, peer consultations. A most recent example is where they undertook a consultation on behalf of the council to examine all of the ways young people are consulted with. These were reviewed with exceptional practice highlighted and recommendations for improvement.
 - c) SUSO (Stand Up Speak Out) – Children in Care Council influencing local processes such as developing a charter and pledge on how the Council will be responsible for the young people they look after. They are also represented on the Council’s Corporate Parenting Board.
 - d) Rutland Youth Council – A formal body where peers have been elected through a democratic process. Members are represented on Children’s Scrutiny and other various panels ensuring young people’s views are shared. A recent piece of work includes leading the FAST (Fairer and Safe Transport) campaign with the aim to have fairer charging and increased safety on buses.

Evidencing the impact of Early Intervention

3.12 Since the *Protection of Children* inspection by Ofsted in January 2013, a lot of work has been undertaken to ensure the relationship between early intervention and social care was clearly defined and strengthened. The most significant piece of work completed focused on demonstrating and evidencing the impact early intervention has, in particular on social care services that are of high cost to the authority. This was done in a number of ways looking at key aspects of quality assurance and performance as detailed below.

3.13 CAF Training

A one day training course has been designed for practitioners working with the CAF process. To date this year, there have been 140 attendees from across a range of partners with particular good representation from schools, police and health. An evaluation pre and post the training evidenced below that practitioner's confidence in the CAF process and how to apply it has increased significantly.



3.14 CAF Audit

Using a nationally accredited tool, an audit was completed in October 2013 on 100% of all closed cases to CAF within the last 6 months which equated to four. The purpose of the audit was as follows:

- Review the current procedures
- Ensure the current paperwork is fit for purpose
- Safeguard against bad practice
- Ensure compliance with safeguarding expectations
- Identify the current strengths in the CAF process and to find ways in which we can improve

The audit concentrated on four key areas with the following gradings applied.

CAF Audit Results

Section/Description	Grade awarded for each case			
	1	2	3	2
Judgement grade on CAF assessment	1	2	3	2
Judgement grade on effectiveness of work	3	2	2	2
Judgement grade on monitoring, evaluation and review	2	2	3	2
Judgement grade on recording	2	3	3	2
Overall judgement grade	2	2	3	2

Outstanding = 1 Good = 2
Adequate = 3 Inadequate = 4

Overall the audit found the following improvements since the last audit completed in February 2013:

- a) The new CAF audit tool proved to be more effective in conducting the audit as it required analysis and scrutiny of the CAF process and not just the CAF initial assessment form.
- b) The sample of CAF assessments completed showed that there is an improvement on the content included on the assessment with a focus on the child/young person.
- c) The initial CAF assessments were mostly good.
- d) The CAFs audited were better at drawing out both the positives and negatives associated with the families. Previously there has been more of a focus on the negatives
- e) In all cases the closure procedure was followed
- f) Actions agreed at the TAF meetings are SMARTER (*Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Time bound and Realistic*) and child focused.

Any piece of work that is audited is subject to scrutiny by the Council's Quality Assurance and Performance Group who are responsible for ensuring that performance of services are scrutinised. An action plan was developed and approved by the group in October 2014 with a deadline of 3 months for completion.

3.15 CAF and Social Care Data

The Council has a robust step and step down procedure to ensure that any case that is open to Early Intervention Services (CAF) or Social Care is supported properly. This procedure is supported by an internal tracker where all cases open are monitored on a monthly basis to assure that objectives for the family are on track, outcomes are being achieved and that there is no drift. Latest data showed that there were a total of 78 cases open to CAF with 29 closed in the last 12 months.

The table below provides a breakdown of cases open to CAF and Social Care over a 12 month period compared year to date.

Cases open to CAF and Social Care

Oct 2012	Oct 2013
196 cases open to social care	201 cases open to social care
6 of those stepped down to CAF	19 of those stepped down to CAF
18 cases stepped up from CAF	6 cases stepped up from CAF
9.3% of all social care referrals resulted in a CAF	16.4% of all referrals resulted in a CAF

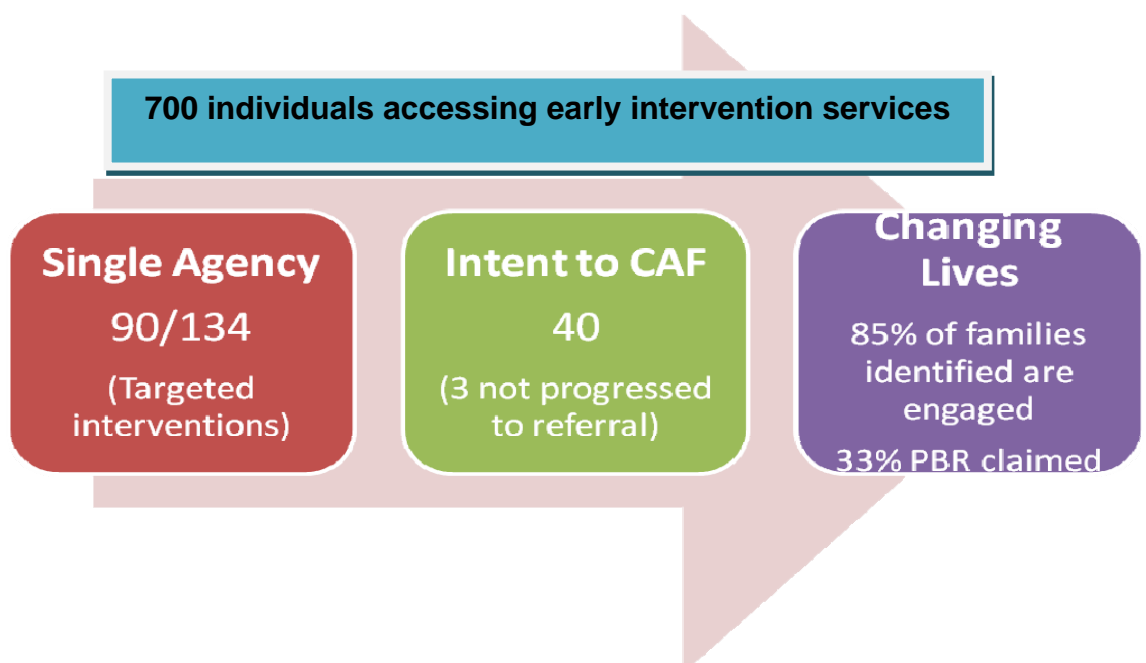
The comparator data above demonstrates that the step up step down procedure is working effectively with confidence in the process. Although overall cases open to social care have had a small increase which is reflected nationally, cases are being stepped down from child in need and child protection status to CAF which is what we would expect to see. In addition, fewer cases are being stepped up to social care due to the CAF process working more effectively with the family.

3.16 Single Agency Model

Within the Council's early intervention offer, there is recognition that a lot of work takes place at an earlier stage with a child, young person or family to address issues before they become worse, potentially requiring CAF or Social Care involvement.

To evidence this, internal processes have been set up to record the targeted work undertaken by a single service with a child, young person or family where there were two unmet needs or less. This work could be in the form of parenting support, mentoring or supporting with employment and housing need delivered by a range of staff within early intervention such as a Family Support Worker, Community Safety Officer or Youth Worker. When a third need is identified, it automatically triggers a referral to CAF to ensure that joined up working is in place with one co-ordinated approach.

This has worked extremely well within the Council and a model we hope to adopt with external partners. The model below demonstrates four things:



- 700 children, young people and families are engaged with either universal or targeted early intervention services for more than 3 sessions or 9 hours.
- As a single agency, 134 individuals are receiving targeted support from early intervention services. Of the 134, 90 are receiving services with no

involvement from CAF or social care. The remaining 44 are cases are open to social care but have early intervention services working alongside them to support de-escalation of issues. We believe that if support was not provided by a single agency route, this could increase the number of referrals to CAF and social care requesting high cost intervention.

- c) Intent to CAF - 40 referrals that came into social care did not meet threshold and were signposted to CAF. From this a trigger was raised on the shared IT system (RAISE) of an intention to CAF which was chased by the Senior Early Intervention Officer for CAF to ensure a full referral was made. 37 of these intents became a full referral enabling the families to access the support required.
- d) With the Council's Changing Lives programme, (national Troubled Families programme working with families who are a high cost to local authorities) there is a target to work with 30 families by March 2015. To Date 26 families have been identified with 17 families fully engaged with the programme and progressing towards positive outcomes. Payments by results have been claimed for 5 families where the Council has received income for achieving a positive result such as reducing offending behaviour or gaining employment.

3.17 To provide further evidence of the role early intervention services play, a case study has been attached in Appendix B.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Recent years have seen increasing emphasis, in policy and practice, on prevention and early intervention. This is true locally, nationally and internationally. There is growing evidence demonstrating its importance with Ofsted supporting the view that a robust early intervention offer will ensure services are provided in a more timely and effective way. In addition to the social and personal benefits generated, the economic argument is significant: lower costs of service provision and avoidance of the significant costs of unaddressed problems in later years.

4.2 At a recent "Getting to Good" seminar organised by Ofsted, the following table was highlighted as what would be required in order for a local authority to be judged good with regards to services for children and young people. Based on the work to date and in a time where the standards have been raised nationally for services, we believe that the Council is making good progress in all areas.

CYP and families are offered effective help when needs and or concerns are first identified

The interface between early help and statutory child protection work is clearly and effectively differentiated

For cyp who need help and protection. Assessments including common or early help assessments are timely and result in direct work with families

Leadership, management and governance arrangements deliver strong, strategic local leadership that measurable improves outcomes for vulnerable children

The LA works with partners to plan and deliver early help, to protect children and young people, to improve educational attainment and narrow the gap for the most disadvantaged

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK	IMPACT	COMMENTS
Time	M	It is crucial that we ensure our processes and services for both early intervention and social care are robust and working well together. Although it is not expected that we will have an Ofsted inspection within the next 6 months, we must be prepared.
Viability	M	Services are in place and working well. However there is a review of the People Directorate which may impact on service provision in the near future.
Finance	M	There is a budget for existing services to provide the model as described within the paper. However there is a review of the People Directorate which may impact on service provision in the near future.
Profile	L	Early Intervention has a high profile currently which is reflected in all communication with Ofsted regarding good services for children and young people.
Equality and Diversity	N/A	

6. REASONS WHY THE REPORT IS MARKED “NOT FOR PUBLICATION”

6.1 This report is marked “Not For Publication” because it contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 - information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

Background Papers

Appendix A – Early Intervention Model
Appendix B – Case Study (EXEMPT)

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A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.