

## PEOPLE (CHILDREN) SCRUTINY PANEL

19 November 2015

### Early Help Strategy

Report of the Director for People

Strategic Aim:	Creating a Brighter Future for All	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr R Foster	
Contact Officer(s):	Bernadette Caffrey, Head of Service Early Intervention	01572 720943 BCaffrey@rutland .gov.uk
Ward Councillors	Not applicable	

#### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel:

1. Note the content of the Early Help Strategy document (Appendix A).

#### 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Rutland County Council is working with partners, stakeholders and users of services to further develop its approach to early help and targeted intervention. Rutland County Council and its partners have agreed an Early Help Strategy.
- 1.2 This report is intended to provide members with information on the Early Help Strategy for Rutland that has been approved by the Children's Trust in July 2015 and which outlines Rutland County Council's Early Help Offer and informs the approach the Council is taking with partners in working with children and families and the design of future services.

#### 2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 Early intervention is crucial to ensure children, young people and families in Rutland have the chance to make the most of their lives. This is a critical role for children's services across the Children's Trust and the geographical area of Rutland.
- 2.2 Whilst the Early Intervention Service in the People's Directorate of the Council has

a key role in the provision of early help services by taking a lead in the delivery and commissioning of services, it also has a role as a partner working collaboratively and co-operatively within a system of services from the statutory, voluntary and community sector. It is also a facilitator: helping to strengthen the partnership and build capacity and confidence across the partnerships

- 2.3 Rutland's 'early help' offer takes into account national research and guidance, with regards to the importance of the early years, the impact of growing up in poverty on a child's outcomes and the responsibility of all agencies to safeguard children and young people.

### **3 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Rutland County Council and its partners have finite resources to support children and families whilst needing to support the most vulnerable, therefore agencies must get better at early intervention to prevent the sorts of outcomes that demand high levels of investment. The council and its partners must target early help where the likelihood is that problems will spiral and become more damaging for children and more expensive for public services to address. The requirement is to reduce demand through effective earlier identification which in turn will deliver better outcomes for children and families as well as reducing expenditure.
- 3.2 It is important that children's services staff have a shared understanding of the model of how the children's services workforce supports children, young people and families, so that each understand their role and that of the whole organisation and how they need to work with other services in order to support families with additional or complex needs.
- 3.3 A key element to providing effective early help is the consistent use across the children's workforce of procedures and processes to identify and address the risks and needs of children, young people and their families. This will support high quality professional practice that ensures the interests of the child and young person are central and that children's welfare is safeguarded. All agencies and individuals that work with children and young people will be expected to take responsibility for identifying and addressing the needs of children and families in accordance with the agreed local processes.
- 3.4 Rutland's 'Early Help Offer' is targeted at achieving outcomes for children and families as set out in the Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2012 - 2015 and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Business Plan 2015 - 2016.
- 3.5 The Children's Trust has identified key actions that will help to achieve these outcomes. These include:
- 3.5.1 Identify when children and families need help at the earliest opportunity through robust partnership working and shared intelligence. This will include developing robust front door arrangements.
- 3.5.2 Utilise our Changing Lives programme to create sustainable improvements by tackling the root causes of problems and the factors we know correlate toward negative outcomes for children and families.
- 3.5.3 Provide a range of integrated services across early years and in to adulthood. These services will support prospective parents, children in early years, in teenage

life and through into early adulthood.

- 3.5.4 Support children with additional needs and their parents and carers in a way that enables them to engage in positives activities in their community.
- 3.5.5 Work across children and adult services to adopt a whole family approach when working with families, ensuring our support recognises all the influencing factors on a child or young person's life.

## **4 CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The early help offer across the partnership in Rutland requires further development and there is now a greater need for ensuring that an early help offer is co-ordinated and clearly understood by practitioners and managers in the Council and across the partnership and for these activities to be robustly driven forward by the Children's Trust which means that early help development should be a focus of attention within the partnership.

## **5 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 5.1 'Families First – Rutland's Strategy for Early Help' document.

## **6 APPENDICES**

- 6.1 Appendix A – Rutland Early Help Strategy

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