

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Early Help and Innovation

*Promoting children's welfare,
safeguard children and strengthening
families*



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Wokingham Early Help

- Early Help in the early years of a child or young person's life (including pre-natal interventions)
- Anticipating where need may arise in priority groups, often by an understanding of wider family and community risks;
- Providing early response services at the right time to meet family's needs and to keep them in control of resolving their issues and problems.
- Stepping in to prevent escalation of children, young people and families needing any sort of specialist service.



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Our context

- Vulnerable families & those in need can be disempowered and isolated from their neighbours
- Internal processes can sometimes work to reinforce divisions, creating barriers
- Quality and method of our collective practice
- Engaging and supporting families with lower level needs, rather than focusing resources on the highest priority needs



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Building Blocks

- Our commitment: a Learning Organisation
- Restorative practice with families
- Signs of Safety workforce investment
- Integrated multi agency triage
- Redesigned targeted support through children's centres and targeted youth support

Our Proposal for Change

- Radical service redesign across the children's partnership to enable changed practice with families
- Ambitious workforce development, building and retaining the skills and confidence to sustain new working practice
- To integrate interventions and pathways, developing a single 'Operating Model'

Support for resilience & achievement

Confident intervention and prevention of escalation

Targeted support to priority and hidden groups

Specialist Support for earlier intervention

44,950 children within Universal Offer

... of which 2600 children are within Early Help

.. and 500 Specialist and Statutory services



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A common language in understanding need and common tools using
Signs of Safety

Enabling different dialogue with families through
Restorative Practice

Consistent understanding of desired outcomes and review of progress using
Family Star

A clearer shared understanding of the causal factors of behaviour through
Attachment Theory



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Creating the right change

- Focus on the child's welfare: is the child safe?
- Honest and open questioning;
- No jargon, common language;
- Involved and informed; children, family, community, agencies;
- Modelling desired behaviours and values

Making the change happen

- Part of the national innovation programme led by Prof Munro
- Implementation led by managers close to front line:
Managers leading change
- Political and Senior management support to staff to work differently
- Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Children's Partnership scrutinise
- Parent reference group



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Workstreams

- **Front door**
- **Family Group Conferencing in Child Protection Conferences**
- **Workforce Development and Training**
- Governance; Communication; Evaluation and Impact

- **Front door**

Collaboration across the partners for all referrals for Child Protection, Early Help and our Protected and Restricted Information Sharing Hub

- **Transitions – journey of the child**

Makes sense to children and families as they move between and are supported across services



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How will we know it has worked

- More confident practitioners, particularly in universal services and Early Help Services
- Children and Families will have a positive experience of our effectiveness, where their views are respected
- We have established Parent Reference Groups and are asking children & families for their views
- Working with MTM and Kings College on the evaluation model

