

Agenda Item 7.

TITLE	Delivering Effective Safeguarding Services for Children - Early Help and Innovations Programme Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 July 2015
WARD	Non Specific
DIRECTOR	Judith Ramsden, Director Children's Services

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Our vision is centred on empowering staff, children and families and is articulated in our sponsored vision to be a learning organisation.

Participation in the Early Help and Innovations programme will give us added energy and impetus through the capacity resources bring and the participation in a national debate on future models for child welfare and safeguarding work. It also provides us with the tools and processes to create a common language and a coherent understanding of the context for our children and families to enable the most consistent and effective response, to deliver the best possible outcomes for Wokingham children.

RECOMMENDATION

The attached is to update on the progress of the Early Help and Innovations Programme and to identify Multi-Agency support at the front door through the Early Help Hub. This report is to be noted.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report contains an update on the Early Help and Innovations Programme in relation to Phase 1 updates and continued focus for Phase 2.

The report also gives a brief summary of the Early Help Hub and multi-agency involvement.

Early Help and Innovations Programme Update

The programme started in Wokingham in December 2014. From December 2014 to May 2015 we have been working to lay foundations to prepare for embedding the Signs of Safety model across our workforce and partnership working, we have mapped our 'as is' processes in order to think about business cases to seek exemptions to participate in a national debate on future models for child welfare and safeguarding work.

Phase 1 has achieved a supportive senior leadership team that represent a steering group for programme governance. Representatives from CSLT have also attended the 5 day practice leader training to ensure consistency within the programme and supervision oversight.

A clear practice framework has been developed supported by the following training strands of Family Star, Restorative Practice, Signs of Safety and Attachment Theory. This practice framework enables practitioners to work with families in coherent way using common language.

A strategy has been completed to engage families to feed back their experiences to support practitioners to look at how we can embed the model of Signs of Safety to ensure that we are working with families, understanding needs and where change needs to happen. This is as well as the innovations element of the project which acts to support what is working well, and look to creative ways to find solutions using the SoS model and existing research with support from Department for Education, Senior Managers and MTM.

Partners have been engaged through 3 hour introduction training on Signs of Safety. This introduction looks at what the model is what are our long terms aims, how can we work together and how some of our processes may feel different. We have also introduced a multi-agency induction pack made up of elements of our practice framework in shorter sessions to ensure that we are working with partners to support learning.

As part of the programme our supervision policy has been updated and implemented. The supervision policy will continued to be worked on throughout the programme to ensure consistency for staff and families throughout the programme and beyond.

Three work streams have been developed looking at the following areas:

Front Door – this work stream have mapped the 'as is' and gained partner, staff and family feedback from Early Help through to Childrens Social Care and are working towards developing a business case to share with DFE in relation to support and exemptions.

Child Protection, Public Law Outline and Permanency – this work stream have mapped the 'as is' and are looking at projects of engaging partners in relation to the worries and strengths in the current system. This work stream have also looked to visit other Local Authorities to understand how they have implemented the SoS model in their CP/PLO processes and how we may be able to embed in ours.

Supervision – this work stream is working towards consistent supervision to all staff using the model of Signs of Safety.

Managers Leading Change – Continuum work stream. This is where all work streams feed into the wider group to work together to look at the continuum of services. This is the golden thread throughout the project to support in the governance and communication.

Wokingham are now in Phase 2 of their programme which will run from June 2015 to December 2015. Phase 2 sees us put the building blocks for sustainability in place ensuring that the model is fully embedded into every day practice and therefore sustainable for staff and families. It will also see us submit business cases to the Department for Education to have the opportunity to pilot different processes.

Phase 2 sees an expansion of phase one, ensuring that there is a further commitment to the practice framework and continued training. Continued support in workforce development, recruitment and retention.

Services will write their own implementation plans based on how they will embed Signs of Safety in their service. This will be worked with as part of the overarching Implementation plan for the programme.

The Early Help Assessment Pilot has started with Children Centres and Family Resource Centre. The pilot looks at one assessment for Early Help which encompasses signs of safety language with the Early Help Hub processes. This in turn will also enable us to collate a more varied and clear range of data for Early Help.

Family engagement will continue with a strategy to understand the feedback and use it to change the way that we are working to promote confidence in our work force and families.

Multi-Agency Involvement

As part of the Early Help Initiative in Wokingham we have introduced an Early Help Hub as part of our 'front door initiative' The Early Help Hub is made up of a multi-agency group that includes a representative from Thames Valley Police namely the anti-social behaviour officer, Education welfare, Youth Offending and Prevention, Targeted Youth Support, PCAMHS, BHFT, SMART drug and alcohol services, Family Workers from Family Resource Centre and Children Centres, including a tier 2 social worker and any other relevant service, this may include housing, CMHT or schools.

The Early Help Hub is a consent based model that works with families to signpost to the relevant service whereby tier 2 targeted intervention support is needed. The model used in the meeting is based on Signs of Safety Model whereby the families strengths/safety, worries/danger/risk and their requested next steps are noted. This forms part of a multi-agency discussion whereby any additional information and potential next steps are discussed. This process is a monitored process whereby the impact and outcomes are monitored every 6 weeks to ensure consistency for the family.

Impact of the Programme

Kings College are working independently with the 10 Local Authorities involved in the Early Help and Innovations Programme to look at evaluation and impact of the programme.

Locally we are seeing the programme supporting existing strengths and positive work with families and enabling practitioners to work in an open, strength and solution focussed model.

We will be completing a study on what impact may look like for the programme, how we will evaluate the impact and collate to support National research.

Our aim in relation to impact of the project is:

A radical partnership rethinking of service design and practice with families
An ambitious programme of workforce development to recruit, retain and develop the skills and confidence available for working with our families

Promote children's welfare, safeguard children and empower families

The impact that we have seen from the Early Help Hub is families are being asked for consent before being signposted, therefore the interventions and support packages are more relevant to need and the family are engaged from the offset.

The Signs of Safety model is used and therefore promotes consistent language to all services.

There is less drift with families being signposted to the relevant services

It offers a better multi-professional understanding of the family's needs and continued support or action plan.