

Meeting: Children's Trust
Date: 5 October 2009
Report Title: Family Support Strategy
Report of: Jan Doust, Head of Children's Networks

Purpose

For members of the Children's Trust to review progress on the development of Haringey's Family Support Strategy and to provide input and direction to the process of agreeing priorities.

Summary

This paper sets out why a Family Support Strategy is needed, the approach taken to its development, and the current state of progress. It asks the Children's Trust to consider the areas of need the strategy needs to address and how support can be targeted at those who most need it.

Recommendations

That the Children's Trust:

- Endorses the approach taken by the Family Support Task Group
- Considers the discussion questions within this paper

Financial/Legal Comments

Not applicable at this stage.

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Why we need a strategy and what we want it to achieve

Haringey's Family Support Strategy will set out how all partners in Haringey will ensure that parenting and family support services contribute to positive outcomes for children, young people and their families. There has been increasing recognition of the need to pull together all of the work being done across the partnership to support families to ensure that there is a shared

vision, a common understanding of need, and provision which is appropriate, co-ordinated, well-targeted to need, and evidence-based.

Above all, we want to ensure that family support is accessed by those families who need it most. In Haringey, we have identified the safeguarding of all children and young people as our top priority. Effective early intervention and prevention are the keys to achieving this, and access to appropriate family support services at the right time can make a real difference in ensuring that the needs of vulnerable children and their families are met and in preventing poor outcomes.

Our approach

The Family Support Task Group was set up as a time-limited group specifically to complete the Family Support Strategy. It includes representation from the council, police, health (NHS Haringey, GOSH and BEH-MHT) and the voluntary sector (HAVCO, Community Link Forum and HARTS). The approach taken to the development of the strategy has been as follows:

- (1) The task group agrees some basic definitions, principles and a vision for Family Support.
- (2) Information is gathered via:
 - a. Consultation with families and other stakeholders
 - b. A needs assessment – looking at what the data tells us
 - c. Consideration of best practice and research evidence of ‘what works’
 - d. Mapping of existing provision
- (3) The task group draws together the conclusions and findings from (2) to determine what the needs are, what current provision is, and where the gaps are – and from this to agree priority areas. The priorities will be supported by an implementation plan setting out the actions we will take to drive improvement in each area.

In addition to setting priorities for action, the Family Support Strategy will also clearly set out what support will be available at each level of need, in accordance with the agreed Haringey thresholds for intervention (currently in draft).

Questions for consideration

We are currently at stage 2 in the process described in the previous section – the needs assessment and the process for mapping existing provision are being finalised and we are planning consultation events. At this stage, the Task Group seeks the views of the Children’s Trust on two key questions:

1. What areas of need does the Family Support Strategy need to address?
2. How can the strategy ensure that appropriate support gets to those families who most need it?