



**Haringey** Council

**Agenda Item**

**6**

**Report Status**

For information/note   
For consultation & views  
For decision

**Report to Haringey Schools Forum – 23rd October 2014**

**Report Title: Update on Early Help and proposals for related expenditure**

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**Purpose:** To provide Schools Forum members with proposals with regard to Early Help which link with the Family Support and LAC Residential Placement budgets.

**Recommendation:**

1. That Schools Forum note the proposals
2. That Schools Forum note that further detail on the Early Help pathway, model and offer can be provided to future meetings as appropriate

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.2 This paper is intended to give the Forum a brief overview of the Early Help programme to date and a proposal for expenditure for the financial years 2015 – 2018. This will be explored further in the Dedicated Schools Budget Strategy Report to the December meeting when we will request the continued retention of funding for LAC Placements and Family Support.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Schools Forum has previously agreed to allocate £1m to the LAC Residential Placement budget and £1.35m to Family Support, both budgets being held within the Council.
- 2.2 Over recent months, there has been considerable activity to develop and implement the early help model for Haringey in line with the draft early Help strategy to be presented on this agenda. Early Help is broadly defined as the information, advice, guidance, support and interventions that enable children and families to remain safely in their communities, improve their outcomes, and reduce the need for more specialist support by preventing needs arising, intervening early to tackle emerging problems or targeting support on families most at risk of becoming vulnerable. There is a strong focus on the family and early help interventions are designed to enable sustainable family cohesion and to equip families to deal better with future need on their own. This emphasis on building capacity is critical and involves professionals and practitioners working alongside families to develop their self-reliance and to give them the tools to become more resilient in the future.
- 2.3 In Haringey, the scope of early help is the full age range from conception to 25 years and does not, for example, treat Early Years or Youth as separate from Early Help. There is, however, a specific focus on Early Years, as the period from conception to 5 years old is widely acknowledged as offering the best opportunity to affect long term outcomes and there is evidence that intervening successfully in the early years can have the maximum impact on children and their parents.
- 2.4 There have been various attempts to shift the service model for children and young people's services in Haringey towards an early help model and away from a focus on safeguarding and specialist provision. These attempts, however, have not been entirely successful and several elements of the whole system of provision for children and young people are geared towards specialist services including health visiting, CAMHS and school nursing as well as services within the direct control of the local authority including social care.
- 2.5 We are anticipating that successful implementation of early help, with the full engagement and cooperation of partners, will lead to fewer families becoming in need of social care provision and fewer children becoming looked after in Haringey. We are anticipating that successful implementation will lead to better outcomes for children and families in Haringey, working alongside them to achieve their potential including for improved educational attainment and greater sustainability of employment and training in the future. We are

anticipating that successful implementation of early help will lead to stronger partnerships delivering high quality integrated services.

### **3. Progress to date**

- 3.1 Significant progress has been made over recent months, although there is considerably more to be done.
- 3.2 The following activity which will be particularly relevant to the Forum has been carried out:
  - 3.2.1 The Early Help Partnership Board has been established, with strategic level membership of key partners, including members of this Forum. The Partnership Board has taken ownership of the draft Strategy and has developed its outcomes and priorities.
  - 3.2.2 The Early Help Pathway is being developed and all relevant paperwork and documentation is in draft format for agreement at Project Board level. Six Early Help Co-ordinators have been recruited to deliver advice and guidance to agencies across the pathway and to ensure better access to co-ordinated support for those children and families who need it. These co-ordinators are all social workers and therefore able to assess whether the thresholds for social care have been reached in individual circumstances. They will work with agencies to support them to support families to become more self-reliant and able to deal with need themselves.
  - 3.2.3 Family support services across the Council have been integrated into a single Early Help team. This enables a single point of access to a full range of dedicated family support. This support is currently accessible through agencies such as schools and early years educational settings but not directly accessible by individual families. By bringing family support services together into a single structure, it has been possible to offer a wide range of family support and importantly there is an opportunity to offer greater continuity of care to families over time. There is a clear point of access for agencies and the Early Help team sits as part of the wider Early Help model with clear processes for drawing in additional multi-agency support and for escalating in to social care as appropriate.
  - 3.2.4 Four out of the six Early Help Forums, based in the Network Learning Community localities, are in operation with the remaining two to be established in November 2014. These Forums engage with a range of stakeholders and facilitate multi-agency work around those children and families with more complex needs who do not reach the threshold for social care.
  - 3.2.5 A provider has been commissioned to develop and deliver early help training across all partner agencies in Haringey. This will include a module to train the trainer across partner agencies to enable better implementation of the approach and model.
  - 3.2.6 The Early Help Performance Management Framework has been developed to enable tracking of impact and performance.

3.2.4 The Early Help Needs Assessment has been concluded and mapping of all early help commissioned services across the borough has been carried out and a draft Early Help offer developed.

#### **4. Proposals for Schools Forum**

4.1 In December we will be requesting that Schools Forum continues to agree to the combined allocation of £1.35m from the Schools and High Needs Blocks to support the Early Help team, which offers access to a range of dedicated family support. Schools are at the heart of the early help model as a universal service accessible to all children and families in the borough. The single borough wide family support service, which achieves greater economies of scale as a single service and which will enable greater continuity of care for families, is supported both by General Fund contributions and by the funding from the DSG. The team will be able to offer dedicated support which will focus on ensuring that families with needs are able to continue within mainstream provision wherever possible.

4.2 We will also be requesting that the Schools Forum continues to agree to the allocation of £1m to the LAC Residential Placements Budget. As a snapshot of recent data, we had 18 children attending residential school provision in May 2014 and 15 in September 2014. Of these children, 12 had a statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan in May and 11 in September. Since March 2014 the Virtual School has been undertaking an evaluation of the residential education provisions attended by Haringey LAC looking at curriculum delivery, systems and outcomes for LAC. A final report will be available at the end of the financial year.

4.3 Over the coming months, we will see similar numbers of children looked after as recently but over time one of the core aims of implementing early help is to refocus the whole system away from a focus on specialist care at Tier 4 and to offer support earlier through services such as family support. Our proposal is to maintain the allocation to the LAC residential placements budgets to continue to support improved educational outcomes for looked after children but over time to shift this funding into the early help model which will equally see improved educational outcomes by reducing the number of children who become looked after and who experience disruption to their education, poorer educational outcomes and lack of attachment to their family, networks and community. This funding, therefore, will remain dedicated to supporting improved educational outcomes for those children and families with more complex needs but ideally this will be delivered through community based early help rather than through children becoming looked after.

#### **5. Conclusion**

5.1 These proposals to Schools Forum set out how the DSG and the General Fund can support a new model of early help offering better outcomes to children and families and enabling schools and early years educational settings to offer earlier interventions from within mainstream services.