

Cabinet (Performance Management) Panel

27 February 2017

Report title	Children's Services Transformation – Impact of Early Intervention	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Children & Young People	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	No	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Children & Young People	
Originating service	Early Intervention	
Accountable employee(s)	Andrew Wolverson Tel Email	Head of Early Intervention 01902 555043 Andrew.wolverson@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Transforming Children's Services Programme Board People Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board	14 November 2016 21 November 2016 29 November 2016

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Performance Management) Panel is recommended to:

1. Acknowledge the impact of the transformation programme on the 2078 children that Early Intervention have supported April to September 2016.
2. Endorse the ongoing work to maintain families at an early intervention level which has led to only 5% of cases within the first six months requiring escalation to social care, achieving the aim of delivering the right services at the right level and right time.
3. Recognise the importance of the wider impact of early intervention services in supporting people back into employment through the successful implementation of the youth employment initiative within early intervention.
4. Celebrate the recruitment of 21 parent champions and the positive impact this has had, particularly for 5 who have moved into employment or are actively seeking jobs.

5. Endorse the work undertaken by universal service practitioners in supporting the council improve its take-up of 2-year nursery places to 75%.
6. Acknowledge the work undertaken with partners through the recent successful locality conferences which saw 276 partners across the city engage in dialogue about early intervention.
7. Endorse the pathways that are being developed with key stakeholders, in relation to domestic abuse and housing to secure the best outcomes for families.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report seeks to set out the emerging impact Early Intervention is having on the system transformation works overarching aim of keeping children safely at home. It will consider the progress made under the four key principles which underpinned the transformation work.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A paper outlining plans for a whole system transformation within Children's Services was initially presented to Cabinet in November 2015 and subsequently approved in February 2016 following consultation with the public and stakeholders. The transformation was built against four key objectives:

- Work with families to achieve positive and sustainable outcomes, safely preventing family breakdown.
- Be a whole system approach, enabling close working with partners with clarity on roles and responsibilities.
- Build employees' confidence and skills, and empower and support them to work creatively and innovatively with families.
- Provide affordability and enable the financial sustainability of children's services in the future.

- 2.2 The re-structuring and re-shaping of Early Intervention took effect from April 2016 and has continued to be embedded. This has seen the merging of two Early Help services into one 0-18 Years service, delivered from eight Strengthening Families Hubs and the integration of an early intervention desk within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). A universal aspect also continues to be delivered and developed through the Early Years team which supports the continued delivery of a children's centre offer.
- 2.3 The number of looked after children (LAC) in Wolverhampton has reduced over the past two years, but not to the extent required. The reductions up until April 2016 were largely achieved through specific work streams under the Families R First programme which included the introduction of more robust scrutiny of all admissions into care and focussed reviews of the existing LAC population.
- 2.4 In June 2015 there was recognition that in order to continue on the journey of reducing the number of LAC, there was a need to develop additional support for families in crisis and on the edge of care.
- 2.5 Between June 2015 and April 2016, a significant amount of work was undertaken to develop a Specialist Support Service, aimed at supporting the most vulnerable families in the city at times when they are in crisis. This service was developed as part of the Early Help service redesign with the official launch being in April 2016. The impact of this work has already been seen to be contributing to reductions in LAC.
- 2.6 At its peak the LAC figure in Wolverhampton reached just over 800, and as of the beginning of November 2016 this is now 624. There has been a specific focus on

ensuring all cases on the edge of care receive additional support prior to admission, and support available is much more responsive to the family's needs and includes out of hours support.

2.7 As the Early Intervention service has been fully operational for more than six months, it is now possible to provide a more detailed overview of the progress achieved and impact each of the specific areas within the service.

3.0 Working with families to achieve positive and sustainable outcomes, safely preventing family breakdown

3.1 This aspect of the transformation has been a significant focus of development since April 2016 as it is critical to the success of safely keeping children at home.

3.2 The following paragraphs will outline some of the areas that have been subject to development or improvement and the impact this is having.

3.3 Having developed a more targeted approach to the work carried out by strengthening families' workers, there has been a shift towards whole family working. Between April 2016 and September 2016, the service has worked with 2078 children, with 944 of these being closed within the same period as result of the outcomes of the plan being achieved.

3.4 The table below sets out the presenting needs which are identified in the initial assessment or referral and is in line with the type of issues that it would be expected early intervention to be working with.

Referrals By Presenting Need	Number	Percentage
Keeping Your Child Safe	973	46.8%
Boundaries & Behaviour	467	22.5%
Home and Money	209	10.1%
Meeting Emotional Needs	181	8.7%
Family Routine	122	5.9%
Education & Learning	42	2.0%
Physical Health	39	1.9%
Your Well-Being	29	1.4%
Social Networks	16	0.8%
TOTAL	2078	

- 3.5 The presenting needs are determined in line with the outcomes star categories, a distance travelled tool that was introduced just before the transformation but continues to be embedded as part of practice. Data shows that on average families travel two scales on the ten-point scale. A review of the use of the star has recently been undertaken and adaptations made to the case management process to complete the star at an earlier point of engagement. It is hoped this will lead to an even greater overall distance travelled for families as we currently complete the star after four weeks of engagement, during which time some families have already made progress.
- 3.6 In respect of the level at which cases are being worked at, 13% of the overall caseload with early intervention is supporting plans held within social care, and currently workers are part of the team around the family for 17% of all child in needs plans and 42% of all child protection plans, supporting with the provision of interventions such as freedom programme, boundaries and routines and housing. This however means that 87% of cases held within early intervention are managed through an early help plan, tackling a range of issues but predominantly around behaviour support, housing and domestic violence as well as financial support.
- 3.7 A positive trend from the data between April 2016 and September 2016, shows that of the cases worked at early intervention level, 95% close with only 5% requiring escalation to social care. This indicates that support is being offered in the majority of cases at the right level and the right time, to prevent families bouncing into more acute services.
- 3.8 A key source of referral for support from early intervention is through the early help desk within the MASH. In the six-month period from April 2016, 1467 referrals have been flowed through the strengthening families' hubs for a response from a total of 4991 referrals into MASH. It is almost certain that a large majority of these referrals would have previously not received a response through the social care duty and assessment team. This again demonstrates that through appropriate triaging within the MASH, we can offer a service at an earlier stage rather than waiting for the family to return at a higher threshold.
- 3.9 One of the key objectives when working with families, as demonstrated through the presenting needs table, is ensuring the family have sufficient income and tackling worklessness. This also aligns to the outcomes of the Place Directorate and troubled families' outcomes framework. This is an area that continues to be difficult to achieve sustainable outcomes, however, early intervention has recently been successful in securing resources through the Youth Employment Initiative, which aims to get 16-29 year olds into training or employment. An impact worker has been allocated to work intensively with identified clients and is supported by eight champions within the Strengthening Families Hubs.
- 3.10 Over the two year period of the project, Early Intervention have a target of engaging 152 clients. To date 64 referrals (with a requirement of eight at this point in the project) have been received, of which 20 are on customised packages of support, 19 are awaiting assessment and 12 have been referred to Connexions as they are 16-18 years old. The remaining referrals have either declined, dropped out or were not eligible.

- 3.11 Another positive aspect of the project has been the ability to use funding to deliver three bespoke packages of support in each locality for those clients on income support, which it is hoped will support some of the clients for whom worklessness is entrenched, to move closer to the labour market. The youth employment initiative has given a tangible resource to strengthening families' workers in an area that traditionally was difficult to support families with. It is hoped that this will be reflected in the sustained outcomes secured by families going forward.
- 3.12 As outlined within paragraph 2.2, an ongoing aspect of the early intervention service is the ability to support families in accessing services which will support the best outcomes for the family at the earliest opportunity. The re-structuring created a central team of universal service practitioners who deliver a few interventions at both group level and on a one-to-one basis.
- 3.13 One of the key targets for the Universal Service practitioners is increasing take-up of the two-year-old nursery offer. Since the team formed, they have supported 110 families to access provision who did not engage through the usual channels. This represents an additional 6% of children taking up the offer that would not have accessed without support, and has supported in achieving the revised local target of 75% of eligible children taking up the offer, 5% above the Department for Education requirement of 70%.
- 3.14 Another successful aspect of the transformation has been the creation of parent champions, managed through the Early Years Team. To date 21 have been recruited, with eleven currently undertaking their induction. The induction training is delivered in partnership with Wolverhampton Adult Education Service.
- 3.15 Some of the real success for individuals has seen five parent champions move into permanent employment and three actively seeking employment, something they have all stated would have been difficult or not a priority if they have not become parent champions.
- 3.16 The parent champions engage in various streams of work, signposting parents to early intervention services such as the two year offer and groups within the community. They also act as advocates for early intervention. In addition to this, they actively recruit additional parent champions across the city.
- 3.17 In September 2016 the Early Intervention service commenced a weekend working rota. This has involved having two strengthening families' workers and a delivery manager providing support to 169 children over nine weekends to date. The focus of the visits has been a mixture of continuing identified targeted work as part of an early help plan, and responding to needs that have arisen during the preceding week, e.g. domestic violence issues, housing and potential family breakdown.

4.0 Being a whole system approach, enabling close working with partners with clarity on roles and responsibilities.

- 4.1 Work has commenced in the last three months to turn our attention to ensuring the transformation delivers a whole system approach and not just internal re-structuring. This is crucial to ensuring that the council can direct its resources at the families needing targeted support, whilst partners play their part in supporting families through early intervention.
- 4.2 One of the key engagements with partners has been through the recent locality conferences which were run across the eight localities during October, with 276 partners attending the events. The purpose of the conferences was to inform stakeholders and partners of the offer within the hubs. This consistent message ensured they were aware of processes, protocols and operational delivery available to professionals and families. The introduction of monthly locality surgeries will further strengthen relationships and provide an opportunity to share information and good practice, embedding the Corporate message and ethos. The feedback from partners was very positive and the transformation work was widely welcomed.
- 4.3 The locality conferences also enabled the engagement of stakeholders within future arrangements for involvement of partners. Strengthening families' partnership groups will meet three times a year from March 2017, and will be responsible for identifying needs within the area and ensuring delivery across the partnership is aligned to this.
- 4.4 Early Intervention has been a key stakeholder in developing the new domestic violence pathway. As part of this, eight strengthening families' workers have been identified as champions, with the key aim of being a single point of contact within the locality for domestic violence reporting from Barnardos screening; ensuring every family has a safety plan in place, including sharing information with schools, collating data to monitor impact and outcomes, and to identify gaps in support to inform future commissioning. Since September 2016, there have been 227 notifications of Domestic Abuse that have involved households with school aged children shared with the domestic abuse champions in localities and subsequently passed onto schools.
- 4.5 Key to partners being able to play their part in early intervention is an effective early help assessment tool. Whilst Wolverhampton introduced a system two years ago there have been ongoing issues with the system that has led to a lack of confidence in partners using it. Therefore, over the last twelve months, work has been undertaken with the supplier to develop a radically improved system. The system went live in July 2016 and following testing with internal services, was made public on 17 October 2016. Since this time, a series of Train the Trainer sessions have been delivered with 47 attendees. A further 75 attendees are booked onto dates up to 28 November. Initial feedback from new users suggest that the updated system is more reliable and easier to use.
- 4.6 An exciting development within the strengthening family hubs has been the integration of a dedicated police officer serving two locality areas. This has been developed in line with the Police 2020 vision, and a move towards early intervention as opposed to prosecution.

- 4.7 This has been piloted in Whitmore Reans and Dove strengthening families' hubs, and is being rolled out to the other localities between November and January 2017.
- 4.8 Tasking, Allocation and Priority Planning Meetings are held once a week, attended by Police, Early Intervention and Social Care. These meetings enable families to receive coordinated and effective support from Strengthening Families Workers, Social workers and Neighbourhood Police Units.
- 4.9 The key principles of the meeting are:
- To identify families needing support at the earliest opportunity.
 - To agree a team approach to engaging with and supporting these families.
 - To identify the key practitioner for engaging and working with each family.
 - To ensure that Early Intervention protocols are followed where appropriate and in line with case management procedure and The Charter for Early Intervention for Police developed by the Early Intervention Foundation.

To date 120 children have been discussed at these meetings, leading to a more coordinated and targeted approach to working with groups of children and young people with multiple risk factors.

- 4.10 9% of all cases within early intervention have housing as a presenting need. Whilst this is a small number, the impact of not getting this right is significant in terms of other outcomes for the child e.g. attendance at school. This has required joint working arrangements to be agreed with colleagues within housing support. A recent meeting has agreed a shared pathway that ensures parents are supported with housing issues at the earliest possible opportunity, and seeks to reduce the number families ending up in bed and breakfast accommodation. A protocol has also been developed with Wolverhampton Homes to notify early intervention at court entry stage, allowing work to be done with the family before the case escalates to eviction.
- 4.11 A growing area of significant need is the work with new communities and the myriad of differing and complex needs they have. The service has responded to this in a number of ways, including sitting on the city wide New Communities Forum, to share information and good practice which is disseminated to staff across the city. This has led to the development of a specific forum across Graiseley and Pennfields Localities, as this is where the largest numbers of new communities settle when first coming into the city.
- 4.12 This Forum, made up of Partners from primary and secondary Schools, the citizenship, language and learning team, public health and social care specifically looks at educational & family issues. The Forum has met four times so far and has resulted in some schools taking on a Roma Heritage worker to build stronger links with parents in order to encourage their children's engagement in education. Information on foodbanks was sent out to all schools and partners and the early intervention service is in the process of producing a range of health videos in a range of languages to encourage the uptake of maternity and post-natal services. A presentation has also been produced for use at the Refugee and Migrant Centre who hold 'Welcome to Wolverhampton' Days.

The service is also working with Public Health to introduce a tuberculosis (TB) clinic in Bingley to test families for latent TB starting in December 2016.

- 4.13 It has been recognised that the most effective early intervention is to get things right within the early years. Co-location of health visitors within strengthening families' hubs has been a significant achievement in moving towards integrated approaches. This will be further strengthened by the development of a new specification and tendering of a healthy child programme within Wolverhampton. The specification has been developed to ensure it is closely aligned with the principles of the transformation work and to further strengthen the working arrangement within the hubs.
- 4.14 In addition to this, an early years strategy has been developed that focuses on the following four strands:
- Workforce development
 - Good maternal mental health
 - Parental Engagement
 - Quality of the early years provision
- 4.15 The strategy will ensure that all children living in Wolverhampton have an equal chance to have a good start in life supporting them to have a good level of development when they start school. Part of the strategy is linked to the Children's Services transformation and seeks to address the following:
- Parenting, delivery of an evidence based model, reflecting the needs of parents.
 - Support for school readiness, supporting children and families with numeracy and literacy, as well as links to schools to enable provision of support to families at key transition points.
 - Stronger links to wider support offered within communities.
 - Child health support, including infant nutrition, breastfeeding and health visiting.
- 5.0 Build employees' confidence and skills, and empower and support them to work creatively and innovatively with families**
- 5.1 A key aspect of the transformation work is to ensure we have employees with the right skills and the right tools to provide the right support to families. A significant amount of input has taken place in this area and at all levels.
- 5.2 The re-structuring has seen the bringing together of a number of employees from different service areas and differing professional skills. Therefore, a number of training sessions have been developed to provide a base knowledge around key areas work within the early intervention service.
- 5.3 The range of development opportunities offered has been wide and varied but targeted at the presenting needs of workforce skills gaps. The development opportunities accessed are set out in the table below.

Development opportunity and purpose	Number of workers accessing training
<p>Working with new communities: A joint initiative with early intervention and Public Health to offer 4 training sessions which aimed to increase workers' confidence & skills in understanding different cultural needs and immigration law.</p>	47
<p>Neglect and large sibling groups: As an outcome of a serious case review workers have received training in neglect and large sibling groups. The training highlighted what to look for and the added complexity of working with large families it also provided tools to support workers in this area of work.</p>	68
<p>Child & Family training: The focus of the sessions was to improve assessment and outcomes based planning, leading to better, sustained outcomes for families.</p>	76
<p>Safe lives risk assessment: In line with the priority around domestic violence training the assessment provides a tool for identifying the level of risk where it is felt domestic violence is a feature of the case and appropriate referral to MARAC.</p>	All staff
<p>Systems: A number of in-house training sessions have been provided to support workers embed the use of systems and processes. This has included training in the use of eclipse (early help assessment), outcomes star, EIS (case management).</p>	All staff
<p>Processes: Embedding the consistent use of processes to manage casework is key to achieving timely successful outcomes. A development day has been delivered which focused on a range of processes and pathways which should be embedded within everyday practice.</p>	All staff

5.4 Effective management and oversight of casework is also critical to ensuring cases are delivering the right support at the right level. With this in mind, specific sessions have been delivered by Ingson consultants focussing on a range of subjects including supporting front line practitioners, managing conflict, coaching and assessment and analysis across ten sessions. Twelve of the sixteen frontline managers have completed this training. In addition to this, a number of managers have commenced their training in restorative practice, a strength based approach to support being rolled out across Children's Services.

5.5 In addition to the professional development opportunities offered to employees, a significant amount of development has been put into creating an online employee handbook to enable quick access for all employees to key information and processes that support people in their day to day work. The handbook also includes an online forum area where employees can share useful information and request information they would like to add to the handbook.

6.0 Financial implications

6.1 The total approved budget for 2016/17 for Early Intervention and Prevention is £4.5 million. The transformation work sought savings of £2.0 million which were achieved.

6.2 In addition to this for the financial year 2016/17 one off savings of £432,000 are projected predominantly due to delays in recruiting to vacancies within the new structure.
[JF/17022017/J]

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report [JB/17022017/J].

8.0 Equalities implications

8.1 The early intervention service has developed an Equalities Plan in line with corporate guidelines and to ensure that the service is identifying and targeting Priority and Excluded groups. The Plan identifies 7 key objectives; gathering and analysing data in each Locality to ensure effective targeting of groups; oversight of this by the Locality Partnership Board; Offering Maternity services in each hub; ensuring new community groups are accessing health & education services; ongoing training for staff; capturing the voice of the parent and child and evaluation of service delivery to those with the 9 protected characteristics and increasing the uptake of the Two Year Offer to the most hard to reach groups.

8.2 These objectives build on some of the current good practices within the Service for example, annual data packs have been used within the 0-5 Service for some time but moving forward the priority and excluded groups list will be reviewed. The Early Years team identified that the take up of the two-year offer was lower than expected amongst BME groups in high deprivation area's and set up an equalities task and finish group. Because of this an outreach and marketing plan was put into place including having materials translated into other languages, this resulted in an increased take up within the targeted communities from 58% to 71%.

9.0 Environmental implications

9.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

10.0 Human resources implications

10.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

11.1 The work to rationalise delivery of the service to eight strengthening families' hubs has been completed and all hubs are now operational with teams co-located together. Work has also taken place with facilities management to understand the implications of the transfer of some buildings to the corporate landlord.

12.0 Schedule of background papers

12.1 Cabinet, 5 November 2015
Cabinet, 24 February 2016