

SCRUTINY ADVISORY BOARD – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Meeting date: 4th December 2020

From: Executive Director - People

Cumbria Early Help Strategy

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide an overview of the development of the Early Help Strategy and the Children's Trust Board locality partnership groups.

2.0 Issues for Scrutiny

2.1 To note the development of the Early Help Strategy and consider Early Help when scrutinising wider activity within the Children's System.

3.0 Background

3.1 In 2019 Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership held a series of consultation events around the County entitled 'Developing Excellent Early Help' to inform the development of the strategy. The events were well attended (276 professionals) Participants were asked what excellent Early Help is, some of the responses were;

- A Joined up collaborative approach of working with transparency and honesty
- Easily accessible and promoted well so people know about it and how to access it
- The right help at the right time with timely interventions following a quality assessment
- Practical support available which develops resilience in families
- Children are at the centre of the family not the centre of the services

3.2 The strategy aims to create a system in which vulnerable children and families are identified and engaged at the earliest point, so that their needs do not escalate to requiring a statutory intervention. It also sets out;

- The support to be provided to ensure that services are working together effectively
 - How we will keep children & families at the centre of our services
 - How we will deliver Early Help and support at the earliest opportunity
 - How we will know that the Early Help is working
- 3.3 The strategy compliments a range of other Cumbria plans and strategies so that there is a continuity of proportionate and effective arrangements at all levels of need.
- 3.4 The vision for the strategy is: 'In Cumbria all children will be a part of a strong family network living in a thriving community being happy and healthy and able to succeed with a sense of pride'.
- 3.5 Our shared approach throughout all our priorities is 'Think Family'. Our strategic priorities are;
- Thriving communities and families
 - Give children the best start in life
 - The right help at the right time
 - Earlier identification and intervention with families to prevent their needs from increasing

Governance arrangements

- 3.6 Governance sits with The Childrens Trust Board and Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership. Delivery of this strategy will be through the six CTB Locality Children's Partnership Groups. Membership of each of these Boards is broad and involves statutory, voluntary and community sector partners.

CTB Locality Children's Partnership Groups.

- 3.7 The Locality Children and Families Partnerships are partnerships between statutory, voluntary and community organisations that are working with and for children, young people and families at a local geography. The partnerships will focus on early intervention, building preventative places and ultimately improving outcomes for children and young people and families.
- 3.8 The aim of the groups is to build a commitment to early intervention. Reducing the barriers to effective multi-agency working, improving joined up working and identifying opportunities to improve outcomes for children, young people and families by working together better.
- 3.9 Each of the groups has a Chair and Vice Chair and is working with the County Council's Local Committees to ensure alignment in the local area. The Chairs for each of the partnerships are set out below:

- Allerdale – Andrew Seekings, Chief Exec, Allerdale BC
 - Copeland- Pat Graham, Chief Exec, Copeland BC
 - Barrow – Sam Plum, Chief Exec, Barrow BC
 - Eden – Deborah Royston, Chief Officer, Cumbria Family Support
 - South lakes – Jonathon Taylor, Senior Manager, Children and Families, CCC.
 - Carlisle – Jason Gooding, Chief officer Carlisle City Council
- 3.10 The groups have identified their local priorities and some of which include; Domestic Abuse, healthy weight, under 5's, youth unemployment.
- 3.11 In most areas task or working groups have also been established which feed into the locality groups.
- 3.12 The groups are meeting monthly or every 6 to 8 weeks. Each of the groups has specific action plans to enable them to monitor progress.
- 3.13 The groups are very well attended and feedback has been positive. The groups are linked to each area local committee, and members are represented on the locality groups.

Think family

- 3.14 The Think Family agenda recognises and promotes the importance of a whole-family approach which is built on the principles of 'Reaching out: think family'. Working with families and not doing to them. Moving from transactional to relational approaches;
- No wrong door – contact with any service offers an open door into a system of joined-up support. This is based on more coordination between adult focussed services and children's services.
 - Looking at the whole family – services working with both adults and children taking into account family circumstances and responsibilities. For example, an alcohol treatment service combines treatment with parenting classes while supervised childcare is provided for the children.
 - Providing support tailored to need – working with families to agree a package of support best suited to their particular situation.
 - Building on family strengths – practitioners work in partnerships with families recognising and promoting resilience and helping them to build their capabilities. For example, family group conferencing is used to empower a family to negotiate their own solution to a problem.
- 3.15 The strength- based model adapted from Signs of safety; 'signs of wellbeing and signs of success' where the family are at the heart of all decision making

and are empowered to make positive choices about their own lives is embedded within the strategy.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 Members note the Early Help Strategy is now in place and been signed off by the Children Trust Board. The Board has oversight of the Strategy and the work of the locality partnerships groups to ensure that the strategy has the expected impact for children and families within our communities.

Lesley Sanczuk
Senior Manager

Please ensure that every part of this section where there is an asterisk is completed in accordance with the instructions before sending the report to Member Services, following which please delete this sentence.*

Appendices

No appendices.

Previous Relevant Council or Executive Decisions [including Local Committees]

No previous relevant decisions.

Background Papers

No background papers.

Contact: Sue Hodkin, sue.hodkin@cumbria.gov.uk