

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Set up an Early Help Hub linked to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in Children and Families Directorate.
Date of decision:	9 June 2020
Decision maker:	Director for Children & Families
Authority for delegated decision:	Within the Children and Families Scheme of Delegation (row 142) states that the local authority has a statutory duty under the Children Act 1989, Section 17 (and related duties in Schedule 2 to the Act) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area who are in need. And, so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of early help or edge of care services appropriate to those children's needs.
Ward:	All wards
Consultation:	The cabinet member children and families is supportive of the proposal. The Section 151 officer also supports the proposal.
Decision made:	An Early Help Hub is set up and linked to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub in Children and Families Directorate to ensure children and families receive the right support, at the right time, in the right place and reduce the amount of families requiring statutory interventions from Children's social care. This is a reorganisation of current service provision and integration of front line resource within the MASH. The cost of the running hub will be up to £209,650 per annum. Initial set up costs for IT and Smart phones is £6,000 plus DBS costs of £420. There is a budget transfer of £82,700 from the Safeguarding Family Support team making the additional budget needed for the annual running costs £126,950. This is within the overall revenue budget identified for the children and families directorate and specifically fulfils the getting to good and preventative services agendas set out in the budget setting process.
Reasons for decision:	<p>Herefordshire has the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for safeguarding concerns and the Early Help telephone line and email address for non-safeguarding enquiries.</p> <p>Even though there are 1316 Early Help Assessments (March 2020) MASH still has a large number of contacts (March 2020) 727 of which only 92 (13%) converted into referrals i.e. level 4 (Herefordshire Levels of Need Pathway) safeguarding concerns. The vast majority did not need statutory services.</p> <p>Therefore the solution is to set up an Early Help Hub; contacts will continue to come in by secure means. Contacts include Multi Agency Referral Forms (MARFs) at level 3 or 4.</p> <p>The Early Help Hub (EHH) will respond to any Multi Agency Referral Forms which have been identified at level 3, and screened cases received from MASH at level 3 or below.</p> <p>The Early Help hub will ensure that the following outcomes are met where ever possible:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Families receive the right support, from the right service, at the right time. Signposting, advice and guidance and support offered at an earlier stage will reduce the risk of escalation. 2. MASH receive fewer cases to investigate and therefore more time to assess need and risk of Level 4 MARFs 3. Fewer families' case are passed through to Assessment Team and this could have a positive impact on future CIN, CP and LAC figures. 4. Partners are upskilled on the levels of need, the correct pathways to get support for families and on the support directly available to families.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<p>There are no health and safety implications or other risks in taking this decision.</p> <p>Finance has been identified to meet the requirements of setting up an Early Help Hub within the revenue budget for 2020/2021. Finance have confirmed this and the proposal is supported by the Section 151 officer.</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<p>The only alternative to carry on without an Early Help Hub and families will therefore not receive the right support in the right place at the right time and have statutory intervention when it could have been prevented.</p> <p>Contact timescales for the MASH will continue to be challenging and are currently not complying with target standards.</p>
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None

Signed

Date: 9 June 2020

Chris Baird
Director for children and families