

Title of report: **Early Help**

Meeting: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Tuesday 26 September 2023

Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

This report shares information with the Committee regarding the nature of both targeted and universal early help services in Herefordshire, along with additional information regarding the service offer made by the Council.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The Committee notes the report, and**
- b) **The Committee scrutinises how partners work together to identify and support children and families who need early help.**

Alternative options

1. None identified.

Key considerations

2. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.
3. Early help can also prevent further problems arising; for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care, or in families where there are emerging parental mental health issues or drug and alcohol misuse.
4. Effective early help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help.
 - Undertake an assessment of the need for early help.
 - Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child.
5. Local authorities, under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, have a responsibility to promote inter-agency co-operation to improve the welfare of all children.
- In Herefordshire this means keeping the child or young person at the centre of decision making and offering the right help, at the right time, at the right level of need.
 - Early help targeted services work with children and their families who are level 3 on the continuum of need
 - Early help is offered in partnership with children, young people and families.

Community impact

9. The Early Help and Prevention Strategy has a direct and indirect effect on the lives of both current and future children and families in Herefordshire.
10. The County Plan 2020–2024 includes the ambition to ‘strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together’ and more specifically, the council aims to:
- a) Ensure all children are healthy, safe and inspired to achieve;
 - b) Ensure that children in care, and moving on from care, are well supported and make good life choices.

Environmental Impact

11. There are no specific environmental impacts arising from this report.

Equality duty

12. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the ‘general duty’ on public authorities is set out as follows:
- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
13. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are

paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

14. As a committee report this will not have an impact on our equality duty.

Resource implications

15. There are no resource implications associated with providing this report to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Legal implications

16. There are no explicit legal implications in respect of this report.

Risk management

17. The Council will consider risks and opportunities and manage these through relevant partnership governance structures.

Consultees

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Scrutiny presentation 7th September 23
- Appendix 2 - Early Help and Prevention Strategy Final
- Appendix 3 - Right Help Right Time Levels of Need Framework 2020

Background papers

- None

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.