

THE CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL
CYNGOR DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 May 2015

DRAFT EARLY HELP STRATEGY

Purpose of Report

1. To enable Members to aid in the development of the proposed Early Help Strategy, developed by the Early Intervention and Prevention Steering Group of the Cardiff Partnership, copy attached at **Appendix 1** and implementation plan at **Appendix 2**.

Background

2. The Early Intervention & Prevention Steering Group and the Team Around the Family (TAF) Interface Sub-group has developed this guidance to promote and facilitate intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families, or with a population most at risk of developing problems. The work of the two groups aimed to ensure that families receive the most appropriate support to meet their needs at the earliest opportunity, in order to secure better outcomes and the cost effective delivery of services.
3. The work of the Steering Group has built upon work previously undertaken within the context of the Family Support Strategy (FSS), taking account of the key priorities of the FSS whilst addressing current requirements arising from Welsh Government initiatives such as Communities First, Flying Start, Families First and IFSS.
4. The Early Help Strategy seeks to develop an approach that supports the effective co-ordinated delivery of early intervention and prevention family support services that addresses the interface issues between Flying Start, Families First, Children's Services (including IFSS) and the wider provision

of support to families in Cardiff. This is a multi-agency approach underpinned by the following principles:

- Wherever possible all children's and families' needs will be met within universal settings (e.g. early years, health visiting, schools, GPs etc).
 - As soon as any practitioner is aware that a child has any additional needs he/she will talk to that child and their family and offer advice and support to meet that need.
 - Families will be empowered to identify their own problems, needs and solutions. In most cases, outcomes for children will only be improved by supporting and assisting parents/carers to make the changes identified by them with practitioners.
 - We will work restoratively with families (working with them, not for and not to them) and offer support and services that help families find their own sustainable solutions.
 - Effective interventions are dependent on doing the following steps: **See, assess, plan, do and review.**
 - Once improvement is made, services will reduce or end so as not to create dependence.
 - Our aim is always to build resilience in children and families and the capacity to overcome their own difficulties for the remainder of their lives.
5. The Strategy focuses on two strategic objectives and on thereby achieving two strategic outcomes, namely:

Strategic Objective 1

Ensure that children & young people receive help at the lowest level of intervention that is safe and effective in promoting good outcomes.

Strategic Objective 2

Maximise the impact of Children's (Social) Services by strengthening the effectiveness of social work intervention and specialist / targeted family support.

Actions that address the requirements set out in the two key objectives above are detailed in the proposed summary work plan located in the Appendix of the Strategy. It is expected that these actions will contribute to achieving the following strategic outcomes:

Strategic Outcome 1

To reduce the number of children, young people and their families requiring support at the “remedial” end of the Cardiff continuum of support to families (See **Appendix D** – *Spectrum of Need and Services* for details).

Strategic Outcome 2

To narrow the gaps for children and young people in Cardiff who are at risk of poor outcomes, and their peers.

6. Details of the research undertaken, feedback from stakeholders, parents and carers are attached at **Appendix 1**.

Scope of Scrutiny

7. The scope of this scrutiny is to consider at the proposed Early Help Strategy and to pass on any observations, comments or recommendations to the Director of Children’s Services to help inform the final Plan.

Way Forward

8. The Committee now has the opportunity to consider the proposed Early Help Strategy. The following witnesses have been invited to give evidence to the Committee and answer Members’ questions:
 - i. Councillor Sue Lent (Deputy Leader. Early Years, Children & Families)
 - ii. Tony Young (Director of Children’s Services)
 - iii. Angela Bourge (Operational Manager, Strategy, Commissioning and Resources).

Legal Implications

9. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications.

Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

10. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- I. consider the information provided in the report, appendices and presentation;
- II. consider whether they have any observations, comments or recommendations they wish to make; and
- III. consider a way forward with regard to any future scrutiny of the issues raised.

MARIE ROSENTHAL

County Clerk and Monitoring Officer

5 May 2015