

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 19 October 2022

Early Help Strategy 2022-2027



Cllr Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People said,

“As a county council we are committed to working with partners across Staffordshire to ensure that the welfare of children and young people is a top priority.

“This strategy out our joint approach to help ensure that young residents and their families get the right help at the right time and in the right place.”

Report Summary:

As a local authority we have responsibility to promote interagency working and co-operation to improve the welfare of all children and the first step in doing this is developing an Early Help partnership strategy.

Staffordshire’s Early Help Strategy needs reviewing and updating. This is the proposed new version, which has been developed as a partnership to reflect our shared principles and commitment to Staffordshire children and families.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Endorse the partnership’s Early Help Strategy; and
- b. Advocates at every opportunity for the promotion of and implementation of Early Help.

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Early Help Strategy 2022-2027

Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Endorse the partnership's Early Help Strategy; and
- b. Advocates at every opportunity for the promotion of and implementation of Early Help.

Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of the Director for Children and Families

Reasons for Recommendations:

Background

1. We have had an Early Help Strategy in place since 2015 and have delivered much needed early help to Staffordshire children, young people, and families, supporting them to achieve better outcomes. This has been evidenced through our commitment to the Supporting Families Programme known locally as Building Resilient Families and Communities (BRFC).
2. However, it is time now to refresh the strategy to reflect local and national change. There is an even greater need for early help since the first strategy was produced the Covid-19 pandemic has seen a widening of existing inequalities across society and now more than ever we need a coordinated partnership response to support offers for families.

Participation and Engagement

3. The strategy has been refreshed through our Early Help and Place-Based Approach Group, underpinning our joint commitment to delivering the Strategy. Each partner has a statutory responsibility to respond to as Early Help as everyone's responsibility. This Group are also developing the linked Delivery Plan to ensure that the Strategy is fully realised.

4. We engaged with children, young people and families which informed the development of this strategy. They have told us:
 - a. They like working with us when they are treated as individual with high challenge, high support.
 - b. They want more information that is clear on where to go and who to talk to when they are in need.
 - c. Parents/Carers want us to use more face to face as we emerge from the impact of COVID-19 to ensure that parents feel they are being well supported.
 - d. The language we use is important. Make sure it is user friendly with no jargon or abbreviations.
 - e. Access for all parents requesting help and support could be easier.
 - f. Families want to repeat their stories less.
 - g. They want support when they ask for it and often find they wait too long for the help and support that they need.
5. This feedback has informed the Early Help Strategy we have prepared and will continue to inform the Delivery Plan.

Link to the Family Strategic Partnership Board Strategy

6. The Early Help Strategy contributes to all three outcomes of Happy and Healthy, Feel Safe and Belong and Achieve and Contribute. The measurable priorities built into the strategy have been aligned to three outcomes to help reinforce the connectivity to the strategic plan and retain the focus of our partnership intentions.
7. Delivery of the strategy will be overseen by the Early Help and Place-Based Approach Group through a shared Delivery Plan.
8. The strategy aligns with the national development of Early Help as recommended by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) through the Supporting Families Programme, (known locally as the Building Resilient Families and Communities programme).
9. Oversight by these boards supports active partnership contribution and ownership of the strategy.

Community Impact Assessment

10. It is envisaged that this strategy will have a positive impact on the community. Through an inclusive and whole family approach being shared across Early Help partners, children and family's needs can be met earlier on. Thereby, reducing the chance of children and families

experiencing greater exposure to harm. A full CIA is included as an Appendix to this report.

Legal Implications

11. After review by the legal team, there are no legal implications identified.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

12. There is no specific funding relating to this report or strategy. By working in an inclusive way, listening to families and considering the family as a whole, we can identify their support needs early on. This will work towards rebalancing the system safely and appropriately away from statutory and specialist services to working with children and families early in the life of a problem. This approach is crucial in improving outcomes for children and young people as well as managing demand and cost pressures.

Climate Change Implications

13. In our revised strategic plan 2022-26 climate change has been elevated to a priority; tackle climate change, enhance our environment, and make Staffordshire more sustainable. Through services working in a coordinated and inclusive way, at a local level, this may contribute to reduced travel arrangements to access services.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

[Supporting Families: Early Help System Guide](#)

Department for Education/Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Published 2 April 2022

[Working Together 2018](#)

Department for Education
Published 26 March 2015 and updated 9 December 2020

Appendix 1 – Early Help Strategy
Community Impact Assessment

Contact Details

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