

# CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE: *The Effectiveness of Early Help to Promote Positive Outcomes for Families*

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor David Simmonds CBE
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Education and Children's Services
<b>Officer Contact(s)</b>	Jon Pitt, Administration Directorate
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix A - Policy Overview Committee review - final report

## **1. HEADLINE INFORMATION**

<b>Summary</b>	<p>To receive the Committee's review into The Effectiveness of Early Help to Promote Positive Outcomes for Families.</p> <p>The Committee's report identifies a number of measures that it is anticipated will help to strengthen the Council's Early Intervention and Prevention provision.</p> <p>The Early Intervention and Prevention Service was fully established in September 2015. Bearing this and the ongoing development of the Service in mind, the Committee is recommending that it undertakes ongoing monitoring of progress made in relation to the recommendations contained within the report and the development of the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy.</p> <p>Cabinet is requested to consider the Committee's findings.</p>
<b>Putting our Residents First</b>	This report supports the following Council objective of: <i>Our People</i> .
<b>Financial Cost</b>	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Where resources have been identified these are already within existing service budgets.
<b>Relevant Policy Overview Committee</b>	Children, Young People and Learning.
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	All.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That Cabinet:**

- 1. Welcomes the report from the Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee on their review into The Effectiveness of Early Help to Promote Positive Outcomes for Families.**
- 2. Agrees the recommendations of the review, along with their implementation, as set out below:**
  - 1. That Cabinet endorses the work undertaken by the Council to support families through the provision of Early Intervention and Prevention.**
  - 2. That the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services considers the following recommendations in light of the Committee's review:**
    - a. That officers further develop partnership working in order to ensure effective delivery of early intervention and prevention services to promote positive outcomes for families. In particular, this would be achieved through:**
      - i. Developing the use and sharing of data and intelligence required for effective service delivery, so that individuals, families and communities in need of early support are identified and supported.**
      - ii. Identifying how the effectiveness of partnership and collaborative working can be enhanced.**
    - b. That officers further investigate how the early help offer can be effectively promoted to families and professionals, with a particular focus on digital promotion.**
    - c. Within existing resources, consideration be given as to whether funding that Children's Centres and the Key Working Service receive should be dependent on local levels of need or whether funding should be allocated universally.**
    - d. That officers seek to ensure that principles and best practice in relation to the provision of early help are embedded through the provision of training and development to early intervention staff and practitioners.**
    - e. That an assessment of the development and implementation of the new services be undertaken once the changes have become embedded, with consideration given to a progress report to the Cabinet Member and the Policy Overview Committee's meeting towards the end of 2016. If considered appropriate, this could be followed by regular progress reports to the Committee.**

**3. That the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services recommends that the following areas be investigated further in light of the Committee's review:**

- a. That a review be undertaken of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) at the earliest possible opportunity during 2016/17. It is further proposed that this be a joint review to involve the Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee, the External Services Scrutiny Committee and other bodies, if appropriate.**
- b. That the concerns raised during the review in relation to levels of child obesity in Hillingdon be passed to the relevant Council Committee(s) and officers for them to consider whether further investigation or review would be appropriate.**
- c. That concerns raised during the review in relation to child dental health be passed to the relevant Committee and officers, while noting that a review of child oral health in Hillingdon was undertaken by the Social Services, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee earlier in 2015, with an update due to be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board in 2016.**

### **Reasons for recommendation**

To consider the report of the Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee and propose ways in which the Council, working with its partners, can enhance Early Help provision to contribute to the achievement of positive outcomes for families.

### **Alternative options considered and rejected**

The Cabinet could decide to reject some or all of the Committee's recommendations, or pursue alternative routes in which to progress the objectives of the review.

### **Background to the review**

Early Intervention and Prevention are particularly important as it is generally acknowledged that it is best to prevent problems from developing in the first place and to provide help early when problems are first recognised, in order to prevent them from escalating. The consequences of not doing this are increasing demands on more complex services, greater use of resources and most worrying of all, children and young people suffering harm, due to difficulties which might have been preventable.

Independent reviews and research have long championed approaches that provide early help for these children and their families. As Professor Eileen Munro highlighted in her review of child protection, "preventative services can do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services". Local authorities and their partners are focusing increasingly on early help and prevention services for families. Many, including Hillingdon are now establishing a more coordinated and structured approach to this crucial role.

The Committee identified 'The Effectiveness of Early Help to Promote Positive Outcomes for Families' as a review topic due to the infancy of the Council's Early Intervention and Prevention Service, in its current form. The service was in the process of being established when the topic was selected for review and was subsequently fully established in September 2015.

The identification of the review topic followed the development of an initial Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy in 2014-15, which was itself informed by review work undertaken as part of the Children's Pathway Transformation Programme. The transformation programme undertook a range of 'discovery' activities in relation to services and processes which support children, young people and families. The review identified a number of areas of concern (Appendix A, page 10).

This review provided an opportunity to consider how the concerns raised during the Transformation Programme were being addressed and to consider whether there were other areas of Early Intervention and Prevention where improvements could be delivered.

A simple structure was utilized for the undertaking of the review, with the first witness session setting the context of the review. The second witness session enabled understanding of how the need for early help is identified and responded to. The role that early intervention plays in enabling emergent problems to be resolved, without the need for social care intervention, was considered as part of the evidence presented to the Committee.

The third witness session aimed to demonstrate how services provide early support in ways which lead to the resolution of emergent problems, ensuring that the problems did not become more entrenched or escalate. Consideration was given as to how significant and sustainable change is achieved through the provision of early help.

It was clear to the Committee that the newly formed Early Intervention and Prevention Service was already making progress and that many of the services provided were being well received. However, a number of areas have been identified where it is recommended that improvements are considered.

The recommendations put forward by the Committee include the strengthening of partnership working and development of the use and sharing of data and intelligence in support of partnership working and of wider service provision.

The need for staff to be provided with high quality training was raised. Although work to address this is already well underway, steps need to be taken to ensure that training provision reflects and continues to reflect the development of the Early Intervention and Prevention Plan.

Promotion of services to families and professionals is another area that requires attention in order to ensure that resources are allocated effectively and that the benefit to families is maximised. The way in which funding is allocated to Children's Centres has been raised. There is no clear consensus on this issue, but it is one that the Committee feels to be worthy of further consideration.

Given that the Early Intervention and Prevention Service was only fully established in September 2015 and given the ongoing development of the Service, the Committee recommends that an update report is brought to the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services and to the Committee, before the end of 2016. It is also proposed that this will be followed by regular progress reports.

A number of issues were raised during the course of the review that do not directly relate to the work of the Early Intervention and Prevention Service or to areas covered by the Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee's Terms of Reference. The Committee considers that it is important that these issues are not overlooked and has, therefore, made

recommendations that these concerns are referred to the relevant Council Committees for them to further investigate what action they consider to be appropriate. In particular, the Committee wishes to draw Cabinet's attention to the concerns raised in relation to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Bearing these and previously raised issues in mind, the Committee is recommending that a review of CAMHS be undertaken at the earliest possible opportunity during 2016/17.

### Cabinet Members' response

The Cabinet Member has considered the recommendations of the review and supports their implementation on the basis set out below.

Recommendation	Response
(1) That Cabinet endorses the work undertaken by the Council to support families through the provision of Early Intervention and Prevention.	<b>Support</b> - There are already a wide range of services in place that offer early intervention and prevention. The significant work undertaken to date is acknowledged and appreciated.
(2) (a) That officers further develop partnership working in order to ensure effective delivery of early intervention and prevention services to promote positive outcomes for families. In particular, this would be achieved through:  i) Developing the use and sharing of data and intelligence required for effective service delivery, so that individuals, families and communities in need of early support are identified and supported. ii) Identifying how the effectiveness of partnership and collaborative working can be enhanced.	<b>Support</b> - As for other areas of Council activity, the importance of ensuring accurate data collection and sharing of information is critical to good service delivery and service improvement. The work of the Early Intervention and Strategy Group will be key to strengthening data collection and sharing.  Taking the opportunity to enhance partnership working is also important, particularly in view of the conclusions of the Children's Pathway Transformation Programme that 'Some families' problems escalate because agencies do not collectively and effectively respond to their needs early enough.'
(2) (b) That officers further investigate how the early help offer can be effectively promoted to families and professionals, with a particular focus on digital promotion.	<b>Support</b> - Early Intervention and Prevention services can only deliver the maximum benefit for families if the local community is aware of their existence and if the range of professionals delivering services, whether Council officers or external partners, have a good knowledge of what is available. This work needs to recognise the importance of new media. It is worth emphasising that this should not be at the expense of more traditional promotional work. It is noted that this recommendation links to 2) a) as targeted promotion of services requires detailed knowledge and data in relation to service users and potential service users.

<p>(2) (c) Within existing resources, consideration be given as to whether funding that Children's Centres and the Key Working Service receive should be dependent on local levels of need or whether funding should be allocated universally.</p>	<p><b>Partially Support</b> - The Cabinet Member notes the concerns of some witnesses in relation to certain aspects of the current arrangements. However, these were implemented after careful consideration and it is important to allow time for them to fully embed before any alternatives are considered. It is also noted that the review recommendation is only requesting that further work is undertaken rather than committing the Council to a particular course of action.</p>
<p>(2) (d) That officers seek to ensure that principles and best practice in relation to the provision of early help are embedded through the provision of training and development to early intervention staff and practitioners.</p>	<p><b>Support</b> - The Cabinet Member concurs that the provision of effective, ongoing training is key to help ensure that Council officers and staff from partner organisations are able to provide services to the best of their ability. As noted in the report, this needs to include embedding Early Help Assessment processes, supporting partners to take on the Lead Professional role and generally ensuring that staff are fully able to deliver the activities set out in the Early Intervention and Prevention Plan.</p>
<p>(2) (e) That an assessment of the development and implementation of the new services be undertaken once the changes have become embedded, with consideration given to a progress report to the Cabinet Member and the Policy Overview Committee's meeting towards the end of 2016. If considered appropriate, this could be followed by regular progress reports to the Committee.</p>	<p><b>Support</b> - Subject to agreement by Cabinet, The Cabinet Member sees the POC as performing an important role in monitoring the development and implementation of the new services and looks forward to receiving an update later in 2016.</p>
<p>(3) (a) That a review be undertaken of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) at the earliest possible opportunity during 2016/17. It is further proposed that this be a joint review to involve the Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee, the External Services Scrutiny Committee and other bodies, if appropriate.</p>	<p><b>Support</b> - The Committee has previously identified issues in relation to CAMHS, with this review having identified difficulties in making referrals. It is noted that the Committee previously considered the possibility of undertaking a review of CAMHS. Bearing this in mind, there is no objection to a review being undertaken in the new municipal year, subject to the Committee being in a position to fully assess the ongoing changes being made to the CAMHS Strategy.</p>
<p>(3) (b) That the concerns raised during the review in relation to levels of child obesity in</p>	<p><b>Support</b> - Levels of childhood obesity in the Borough are indeed a cause for concern and</p>

<p>Hillingdon be passed to the relevant Council Committee(s) and officers for them to consider whether further investigation or review would be appropriate.</p>	<p>the Cabinet Member agrees that this should be referred to other Committees for further consideration, while taking care to ensure that this compliments the Council's Obesity Strategy.</p>
<p>(3) (c) That concerns raised during the review in relation to child dental health be passed to the relevant Committee and officers, while noting that a review of child oral health in Hillingdon was undertaken by the Social Services, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee earlier in 2015, with an update due to be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board in 2016.</p>	<p><b>Support</b> - As noted by the recommendation, a review has previously been undertaken on child oral health by another Committee. It is important that the concerns raised as part of the <i>Early Help</i> review are fed back to the relevant parties to ensure that Members and officers have as comprehensive a picture as possible when monitoring progress made in relation to child oral health.</p>

### **Financial Implications**

The recommendations set out in this report do not have any direct financial implications. Any additional work undertaken after agreement by the Cabinet would be met from within the existing resources available.

The recommendations do not create any additional budgetary pressures and primarily seek to ensure that the necessary policies, processes and procedures are effectively developed and embedded in order to maximise the effectiveness of delivery of Early Intervention and Prevention Services.

### **EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES**

These recommendations, if approved by Cabinet, will help to strengthen the Council's Early Intervention and Prevention provision.

The Committee is requesting that it is provided with an update report before the end of 2016, with a view to this leading to regular progress reports. This will help to monitor and steer delivery of the Early Intervention and Prevention Services Plan, thereby helping to ensure that the benefit is maximised to families using Early Intervention and Prevention Services.

### **Consultation Carried Out or Required**

The Committee sought a range of expert witness testimony as set out in Appendix B of its report.

### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Corporate Finance**

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial implications above, noting that there are no direct budgetary implications from the recommendations to Cabinet. In addition to the service benefits of early intervention activity discussed in this report, the favourable on-going financial benefit of investment in early intervention will contribute towards the Council's broader financial strategy.

## **Legal**

There are no legal issues arising out of the recommendations proposed at the outset of this report. The Council has a statutory obligation to make arrangements to promote cooperation with its relevant partners, with a view to improving the well-being of all children in its area. The Council should have a range of effective services in place to address needs early. The early help on offer should draw upon the local assessment of need and the latest evidence of effectiveness of early help and early intervention programmes.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.