

**From:** Peter Oakford, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services

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**To:** Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee  
- 10 November 2016

**Subject:** **EARLY HELP AND PREVENTATIVE SERVICES**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Previous Pathway of Paper:** None

**Future Pathway of Paper:** None

**Electoral Division:** All

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**Summary:** Early Help and Preventative Services (EHPS) underwent a significant restructure in 2015. The 0-25 transformation has been fully implemented and significant improvements have already been seen in relation to case throughput and effectiveness as evidenced by the Early Help Dashboard and Scorecard.

The Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), Inclusion and Attendance Service has been developed to better support schools, children, young people and their families as evidenced by a reduction in the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions across the county.

The Youth Justice service is being reviewed and will move to a more evidence based integrated adolescent risk approach in line with Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons research into recidivism which indicates that a desistance model has a positive impact on reoffending rates.

The Troubled Families Team is progressing towards turning around the lives of 9200 children, young people and families under Phase 2 of the Programme.

The Open Access services within EHPS have been further developed to ensure that the right level of support is available at the right time to ensure that a more formalised approach to additional support is offered in Open Access settings.

The EHPS Strategy and Three Year Plan remains the vision, way of working and direction of travel for Kent's Early Help and Preventative Services. This was published in conjunction with the EHPS Manual which sets out in greater detail how the service is structured and organised across all elements of EHPS in Kent and provides a working document for staff within EHPS.

**Recommendation:** The Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** and **COMMENT ON** the progress to date and the proposed future direction

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## 1. **Early Help and Preventative Services (EHPS) overview**

- 1.1 EHPS was restructured as part of the 0-25 transformation programme, with the new structure being implemented between April and October 2015.
- 1.2 EHPS provides support to all children, young people and families through its universal offer in Children's Centres and Youth Hubs. It also provides additional support in Open Access, for families with multiple/complex issues EHPS ensures that intensive support is provided through casework in one of the 44 Early Help Units. The Troubled Families programme is now fully embedded into the work of the Early Help Units.
- 1.3 Out of Court disposals for young people are also managed within Early Help Units, whilst young people subject to Court disposals are managed by the Youth Justice Area teams.
- 1.4 The PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PRIAS) has adopted a new approach of intervening early and providing timely support to schools, children and families to address the issues of behaviour, attendance and exclusion. The Area Attendance and Inclusion Lead Officers work in partnership with schools to prevent exclusion where appropriate and to re-integrate excluded pupils with effective support. The PRIAS works closely with practitioners both in EHPS and external partners to empower schools to manage absenteeism and exclusion more effectively.
- 1.5 The Information and Intelligence Service provides improvement and development across the Service as well as a wide range of management information and business support functions. The Information and Intelligence Service also manages the essential interface with both referrers and Specialist Children's Services (SCS) through the Early Help Triage team.
- 1.6 To support the work of EHPS, the Kent Family Support Framework (KFSF) was launched in September 2014. This is based on a cycle of effective practice and is designed to ensure the highest quality service delivery and improved outcomes for children, young people and families. It incorporates three interacting service delivery areas and processes: Identification – Notification and Decision Making, Assessment and Plan, Delivery and Review.
- 1.7 A key element to providing an effective EHPS is the consistent use across the children's workforce of thresholds, these are imbued within procedures and processes to identify and address the risks and needs of vulnerable children, young people and their families and reduce the demand for SCS.
- 1.8 The LiquidLogic Early Help Module (EHM) was implemented in late 2015 and provides a case management system with associated workflows and case notes functionality. It shares a database with the SCS Liberi system and enables safe evidence-based step-downs and step-ups between the two services.
- 1.9 An outcome tracker was introduced to monitor throughput and effectiveness of Early Help casework and this is now firmly embedded in all areas. The tracker is welcomed by staff and managers as a useful tool to enhance their work and find the clarity of information assists in the allocation, planning and oversight of work to ensure casework is focused and ensures outcomes are achieved for children and families. The outcome tracker populates a comprehensive dashboard of all

Early Help casework across the county and can be populated and scrutinised at a county level through to area, district, unit and practitioner level.

- 1.10 Step-down panels are in place in every district to support safe and efficient transfer of cases from SCS to EHPS. Early Help Unit meetings are now well-established offering reflective review, support and challenge of open cases.
- 1.11 A Workforce Development Plan for Early Help is refreshed and revised annually to ensure a rolling cycle of key training and development for staff at all levels across the service. This ensures staff are well equipped to undertake their roles, including a comprehensive induction programme for Early Help staff.
- 1.12 The EHPS scorecard is fully aligned with the 0-25 transformation work and is produced every month. Performance is reported to EHPS Divisional Management Team, Education and Young People's Services Directorate Management Team, 0-25 Portfolio Board, Kent Integrated Children's Services Board, Children's Services Improvement Panel, and Cabinet Committee.
- 1.13 Monthly performance reporting provides clear evidence of improving outcomes for children, young people and families.
- 1.14 Demand into Early Help has risen over the last year and remains high. The Early Help Triage team receives between 800 and 1000 Early Help Notifications (EHNs) per month. Although caseloads held within SCS between September 2015 and September 2016 range from 1166 and 1442 the percentage number of cases which are closed to SCS with the outcome of a step-down into Early Help are consistently around 21%. There were 42 step-ups from Early Help to Specialist Children's Services in both June and July 2016. This equates to about 5% of the total (741) EHPS case closures.
- 1.15 In June and July there were close to 3000 (2,974) cases open to Early Help Units. In July this equated to 6,592 children and young people aged 0-19. 82.7% of the 2974 cases being worked with are within the 20 week service standard - an increase from June. In July 741 cases were closed by the Early Help Units up from 672 in June, ensuring a continued focus on throughput and the avoidance of drift. In July 81.5% of the 603 cases which were closed to a unit were closed with outcomes achieved. By targeting drift and ensuring close monitoring of all cases, case durations have halved meaning that around 65% more families can be supported per worker.
- 1.16 There were no custodial sentences last month in the Youth Justice system, which is a positive outcome. The number of first time entrants into the Youth Justice System is continuing to reduce ahead of target.
- 1.17 The percentage of young people aged 16-18 that are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) was 5.8% in July (2,763 of a total cohort of 53,048 young people) and has remained at this level over the summer period. In comparison, at this time last year it rose to 7.8% (2,973 of a cohort of 52,863 young people); an indication of the positive impact of the NEET Strategy.
- 1.18 The number of permanent exclusions across the county reduced in the last academic year, especially in the primary phase where numbers have dropped from 49 to 16 following a key focus in this area. Work is also being undertaken to support schools to understand and work to the new threshold for persistent

absence. In September 2015 the definition of persistent absence moved from below 85% attendance to below 90% attendance.

## **2. Recent Developments**

- 2.1 Children's Centres across Kent have a well-established practice of using e-Start to track registration, reach and activities, unfortunately Youth Hubs lacked a similar IT system to collect and report on case level data. In February 2016 e-Start was extended for use in Youth Hubs and staff have now completed training on its use. It is hoped that the same level of scrutiny afforded to Children's Centres, can be applied to Youth Hub activities.
- 2.2 Early Help adhere to a regular quality assurance framework (QAF), auditing a minimum of 200 unit cases per quarter (50 per area). The Unit's casework audit programme which took place between April and June 2016 returned 197 audits. 55% of these evidenced a 'good' or 'excellent' overall practice rating with the remaining cases requiring some improvement. This is an upward trend since the current QAF started in January and evidences the continuous improvement of the service. This improvement is also linked to the implementation of Signs of Safety and development of systemic practice. Figures for the autumn audit phase are being collated and a progress report will be ready in December 2016.
- 2.3 A 'light touch' assessment and planning tool based on Signs of Safety has been developed for use by staff working in Children's Centres and Youth Hubs who deliver one to one support for families at additional level and training on its use has been delivered to staff. Additional work will continue to be discussed in monthly Reflective Case Discussion Groups led by the Practice Development Leaders who will also support quality assurance auditing.
- 2.4 Training on undertaking one to one work at additional level for Early Help workers in Open Access settings (Children's Centres and Youth Hubs) was developed throughout July and August. In addition, bespoke one day training on Signs of Safety training has been developed to support workers to undertake light touch assessments and plans.
- 2.5 Signs of Safety is being used both by EHPS and SCS staff. This is a questioning approach which involves the family in identifying what they feel needs to change and allows them to be at the centre of assessments, plans and reviews. More than 85% of staff in Early Help Units have now been trained with a rolling programme of training continuing, and an additional training programme is being rolled out for staff in Open Access.
- 2.6 An Integrated Youth Justice Panel has been established at Kent Police Headquarters with Early Help representation. This panel considers all youth offending pre-court occurrences and uses a range of information to make a decision about the type of disposal the young person should receive, with the aim being to reduce the number of court disposals going forward and avoid criminalising young people.
- 2.7 Work is ongoing to continually develop and improve partnership communication and engagement. A series of meetings with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) ensure that Health partners are engaged and knowledgeable about the direction of travel in EHPS.

- 2.8 Significant work has been taking place with schools as they are the largest referring agency into Early Help. All schools have a named link Early Help Worker. This worker is a key conduit for communication with schools to raise any questions about the Early Help offer or to discuss any safeguarding concerns prior to an Early Help Notifications (EHN) being submitted. The link Early Help Workers maintain regular contact with their schools to ensure a strong working relationship. In addition to the linked worker arrangement, district managers are also visiting schools, especially those submitting the most EHNs, to ensure that the Early Help offer is clearly understood and meets the needs of those schools, and that the schools' role in early help work is managed.
- 2.9 Two leaflets have been developed for use by staff in Early Help. One is for the partners and professionals that we all work with, and the other is aimed at parents. Schools and partners can also access these leaflets from the Early Help toolkit at [www.kelsi.org.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.kelsi.org.uk/earlyhelp)
- 2.10 In June 2016 the Council, through EHPS, secured a further £10m funding from the BIG Lottery for HeadStart Kent. This is an innovative programme designed to improve the resilience and mental health of young people. The funding will enable the Council to develop and provide an approach which supports young people to develop their own resilience to cope with the everyday pressures they may face throughout their lives, as well as how young people can better help to support each other. The programme aims to support schools to recognise and support emotional health and wellbeing and has been co-designed and developed with the help of young people.
- 2.11 Phase 3 of HeadStart Kent has been informed by phases 1 and 2 which were trialled and developed across Kent over the past two years. Phase 3 started in Swale and Gravesham in September and over the next five years, the programme will increase its reach and offer identified school groupings, across nine districts.
- 2.12 Young people being supported in Early Help Units, Open Access youth settings or Youth Justice teams may be NEET or be at risk of becoming NEET. EHPS plays a key role in the county's wider NEET Strategy. A significant number of young people, not already known to Early Help, are referred into Open Access centres via multi-agency District Participation Meetings, these young people may also require additional support from a Youth Hub where a light touch assessment is undertaken to identify the level of assistance needed to help prepare them for education or training, alongside work with Skills and Employability to engage them in suitable provision and then maintain contact and support to ensure that provision is sustained. Young People who have been NEET for a sustained period of time or who do not sustain EET will be referred to a new commissioned service dedicated to supporting NEET young people who are hard to engage.
- 2.13 The PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) has designed an improved way for schools to access its services. The concept is that schools will have simpler and easier to use online pathways to request support from School Liaison Officers, Inclusion and Attendance Advisers, Outreach Officers and other teams within PIAS. These will also be used to notify the Local Authority of fixed term exclusions, permanent exclusions and to request penalty notices. A Digital Front Door, enabling a simple, streamlined access to the service, has been piloted across the county and feedback has been very positive. A particular strength for schools is that all referrals and requests for support go directly to

school's link School Liaison Officer or an expert for the particular issue, avoiding any unnecessary delay.

- 2.14 Following the success of Phase 1 of the Government's Troubled Families Programme (2012-2015), the Government expanded it for a further five years from 2015, in order to reach an additional 400,000 families across England. The criteria for families entering the programme were broadened and a legal duty on the Government to report annually to Parliament on the progress on the programme was put in place. Under Phase 2 the Council has a target number of 8,960 families to be turned around over the five year period.
- 2.15 A new framework has been developed to provide clear structures around the accessing and providing of support, and the recording and reporting of additional support in Open Access. EHPS offers a wide range of universal and targeted support for children, young people and their families from 0-25 years to ensure they can receive the right service at the right time. Partners may recommend to a young person or family that they make direct contact with a Children's Centre or Youth Hub (Open Access). This is often referred to as 'signposting'. Partners should signpost families when they are confident that the young person or family is likely to have the ability to access the service without support. If a young person or family with needs identified at Tier 2 would benefit from some 1:1 support tailored to their specific needs, then this would be classed as Additional Support. This support would be expected to last around six to eight weeks and is provided by Open Access Senior Early Help Workers or Early Help Workers. The new process launched fully in September 2016.

### **3. Current and Future developments**

- 3.1 E-Start was introduced as the tracking system for Youth Hubs in February 2016 and this work will be further developed to allow management to have a clear view and understanding of the level of use and reach of Youth Hubs, levels of integration with SCS and to tailor provision accordingly.
- 3.2 Areas for continued improvement and development have been identified through the existing audit programme. To ensure continuous learning and development, the programme will include a random selection of cases and one thematic audit per quarter (starting with step-down cases in September), reviews of individual cases in districts, the monthly review of all step-up cases and quarterly reviews of cases closed where outcomes were not achieved. In addition, the piloting of grade descriptors, changes to the online tool and planned development of auditors' skills and competencies should increase consistency in the auditors' approach.
- 3.3 PIAS' Digital Front Door has been fully rolled out across the county, with all schools being required to use the Digital Front Door to make referrals to the service and to request additional support. Area Inclusion and Attendance teams are working with Business Support to ensure a smooth and successful rollout. Schools will be offered opportunities to attend locally held briefing sessions.
- 3.4 Work is ongoing to ensure continuous improvement across our universal, additional, intensive and specialist services, and to ensure that there is always a focus on the further and better integration of services both within Early Help and also with SCS and Public Health.

- 3.5 Parenting challenges are a key issue within many Early Help cases, and parents often require support to learn new strategies and approaches, or to build confidence in their techniques. Sometimes there is an identified need for more focused parenting support through course delivery either alongside or instead of casework (depending on the range of reasons a family requires support). Previous parenting programmes have not always been well attended, with limited evidence of positive outcomes. Kent is therefore developing its own parenting intervention to feed into the wider parenting support offer across the service. This draws on the best of a range of accredited courses and techniques, and will be initially piloted in Maidstone and evaluated prior to a countywide rollout in 2017.
- 3.6 A Youth Justice review commenced in May 2016. A comprehensive assessment has been taking place which has considered:
- Caseloads across the county, volume, length and type
  - Distribution of staff, business support and management structure
  - Geographical pressures and court requirements
  - Budget and resource demands
  - Casework practice and ensuring a systemic family model
  - Processes and ensuring transfer decisions are based on professional judgement and existing professional relationships with young people and families.
  - Work with high risk offenders including resettlement work and Intensive supervision and surveillance
  - Out of court disposals and the integrated youth justice panel
  - Integration with the wider structure and systems in Early Help Services
- 3.1 The review will report on its findings and recommendations in October and November. Following the endorsement of the findings implementation will commence in November 2016.
- 3.2 Triage and the Central Duty Team (CDT) have been co-located at Kroner House since 2015. This has ensured the right support is provided to families and the swift transfer of referrals between services as appropriate.
- 3.3 A project to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of processes and practice at the 'front-door' in CDT and Triage is underway. This will make recommendations for improvements to how demand is managed, and is likely to result in the formation of a single front-door to intensive and specialist support for children and families, informed by a single referral form. A key part of the implementation of these changes will be working with partners to ensure pathways and thresholds are clearly understood and communicated.
- 3.4 Robust processes exist between EHPS and SPC for the transfer of cases across the services. This is called step-up when a case escalates from EHPS to SCS or step-down when a case de-escalates from SCS to EHPS. The percentage of cases closed by SCS that step-down to Early Help remains fairly constant at about 21% of cases closed. It has not increased significantly despite the successful formation of the joint step-down panels.
- 3.5 Early Help is committed to ensuring a constant focus on case throughput and effectiveness, and is able to take more step-downs from SCS as this is a key way in which Early Help can reduce the demands within SCS. In July 2016, re-referrals to SCS were reported as being at 22%. In July 2016, EHPS re-referrals were at 15.6%. There is further work to do to reduce the proportion of families re-

referred to SCS without Early Help involvement, and to further reduce the proportion of those who are re-referred after Early Help support. This will continue to be a priority in the coming year.

- 3.6 Another key development will be a further audit and analysis to establish the effect of Early Help interventions with families not previously known to SCS. EHPS will interrogate rates of referral into SCS for cases closed to EHPS.
- 3.7 A new online tool is being piloted as a way to further develop the Quality Assurance Framework, and build on the existing feedback forms we have in place to develop a more coherent and consistent mechanism for collecting and learning from the experiences of the children and families supported by our services. A tool to collect feedback from partners will be the second phase of development.
- 3.8 EHM is being further developed to support the data and tracking requirements of the Troubled Families programme.
- 3.9 New arrangements are being planned with Health which will be piloted this autumn in advance of new commissioning arrangements being introduced in 2017. A 0.5FTE CAMHS worker will be based within every Early Help Unit, ensuring a much more coordinated response to positive emotional health and wellbeing in children and young people. CAMHS workers will also be based in Health Needs PRUs to help assist in reintegration back into mainstream education.
- 3.10 Actions identified in Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners will be progressed so that, in partnership with schools, the outcomes for vulnerable learners and disadvantaged children and young people are improved. This includes:
  - More focused and coordinated work in the districts
  - Close working with schools to identify vulnerable children for support and provision of the right levels of responsive and timely additional help
  - Improved emotional health and wellbeing
  - Ensuring parental engagement and involvement
- 3.11 Early Help Commissioned Services have been delivered through contracts with various external providers for several years. Many have historically had very long (up to 20 weeks) waiting lists. Following a review of this provision, a diagnostic report was produced which identified the need to reduce the number of separate contracts currently in place and provide more focused and flexible services. It was agreed that new, reconfigured services would be procured for:
  - Family Support Service
  - Youth Services
  - NEET Support Service
- 3.12 The procurement process is in place for each of these three Services with the expectation that new contracts will be delivered from 1 December 2016. The existing contracts have been extended up to the end of November 2016 in order to ensure that there is no gap in service provision. As the current services come to an end, there will need to be transition plans in place for each provider to ensure that no child, young person or family is left unsupported. The new services will have performance indicators that require flexible working to



eliminate waiting lists. Any issues that arise around capacity of the service will be highlighted and responded to immediately.

- 3.13 EHPS is committed to learning from service users. Developing a more systematic way of collating and responding to family feedback is a priority. In the west of the county, a pilot Service User Task and Finish group has been set up to establish an effective tool to gain feedback and enable a greater understanding and building on the learning from the journey of a family.
- 3.14 The service continues to develop its relationship with partners, to ensure that there is a deeper and wider understanding of the EHPS offer. The Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) Threshold Training is being revised to make it more relevant, meaningful and interactive to make sure that all partners have a better understanding of their role in providing coordinated early help to families.
- 3.15 EHPS is working closely with colleagues in Public Health on a new Kent Emotional Health and Wellbeing model which will be in place for April 2017. The system has five key elements:
- 1) Single Point of Access (SPA)/Early Help Triage which will direct partners to the relevant part of these systems.
  - 2) Specialist: Assessment, diagnosis and treatment. Supporting children who need a Targeted or Specialist mental health service, including behaviour issues or where the impact of trauma, abuse, neglect or attachment needs that are severely impacting on their mental health.
  - 3) Targeted: Interventions in a community setting for complex family issues and emerging emotional or mental health needs, emotional wellbeing or mental health that are undiagnosed/unspecified or do not meet the threshold for specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) support. A clinically qualified Emotional Health and wellbeing worker will be based in every Early Help Unit. Units will also receive step downs from CAMHS.
  - 4) Health Needs PRU: clinical specialists working alongside the Health Needs PRU to assist with re-integration to mainstream school where there has been a diagnosed mental health concern.
  - 5) School Public Health Service that will support schools to promote good general health and emotional wellbeing. This will be a universal service for primary and adolescent children with 1:1 Open Access provision for children and families with very mild issues. Targeted – commissioned part of adolescent, in-reach to primary. Referrals will be via the SPA although secondary schools and the adolescent service will be able to access the provision direct.
- 3.16 During 2016/17 EHPS will revisit the Unit Skills Audit to identify the impact of the investment in training during 2015/16 and re-evaluate its training priorities going forward. Key areas for consideration are leadership and supervision for Unit Leads, Children's Centre Delivery Managers and Youth Hub Managers, and specific skills training for workers in key areas, e.g. supporting families facing the challenges of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and related disorders via Cygnet training
- 3.17 SCS are currently delivering Neglect training across the County for Team Managers and Early Help Unit Leaders. This Neglect training is planned to be

tailored specifically for Early Help staff and delivered jointly by Early Help and SCS staff in the Autumn.

- 3.18 Training will also be delivered to support Early Help staff in the delivery of the new County Parenting programme.
- 3.19 The whole service would benefit from a yearly overview of theoretical information and research that has been promoted and circulated across the service. This will be developed by the Information and Intelligence team.
- 3.20 The HeadStart resilience hub will also provide a portal for effective practice information and current research. Work commenced on this is October 2016.
- 3.21 During 2016/17, EHPS will continue to develop its relationship with schools and other partners.

#### **4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

#### **6. Equality Implications**

- 6.1 There are no equality implications associated with this report.

#### **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 Significant progress has been made in EHPS in terms of transformation, vision and forward planning, performance monitoring and outcomes focused working, all underpinned by regular quality assurance processes. This progress will be built on further in coming months
- 7.2 The service will increase its focus on developing the confidence of staff both within SCS and EHPS to drive a decrease in cases being referred to SCS.
- 7.3 EHPS will work with families to develop their resilience and increase their capacity to help themselves. The focus is to increase the availability and impact of those positive things that have the greatest beneficial effect on children's lives, such as good parenting, growing up in a household in employment, quality early childcare and learning, a good school, healthy eating, the development of emotional resilience, ambition for the future in learning and employment, help to achieve good qualifications and safe behaviours and healthy habits in adolescence and early adulthood. EHPS is deliberately adopting a whole family approach, working with parents, children and young people and their schools, colleges and early years settings.

#### **8. Recommendation**

8.1 Recommendation: The Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** and **COMMENT ON** the progress to date and the proposed future direction.

**9. Background Documents**

None

**10. Contact Details**

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