

**Sefton Integrated Early Help Strategy for
Children, Young People and Families
2019 - 2025**

September 2019

Our Behaviour



Support Inspiration

Tailor support to the needs of the individual child, young person & family



Support children, young people & families

Constructively challenge when needed



Support each other

Ensure there is sufficient learning & development for the frontline workforce young person and family



Take responsibility

Create opportunities for success



Our Model



Our Passion



Families understand & access help & support when they are in need of it. (uptake of early help offer, increase in EH assessments, referrals, reduction in inappropriate referrals to CSC, decrease in stepping up)

The workforce recognise & work with families to address unmet needs at the earliest point (Timeliness of referrals, length of time on a plan, timeliness of referral to assessment 'drift')



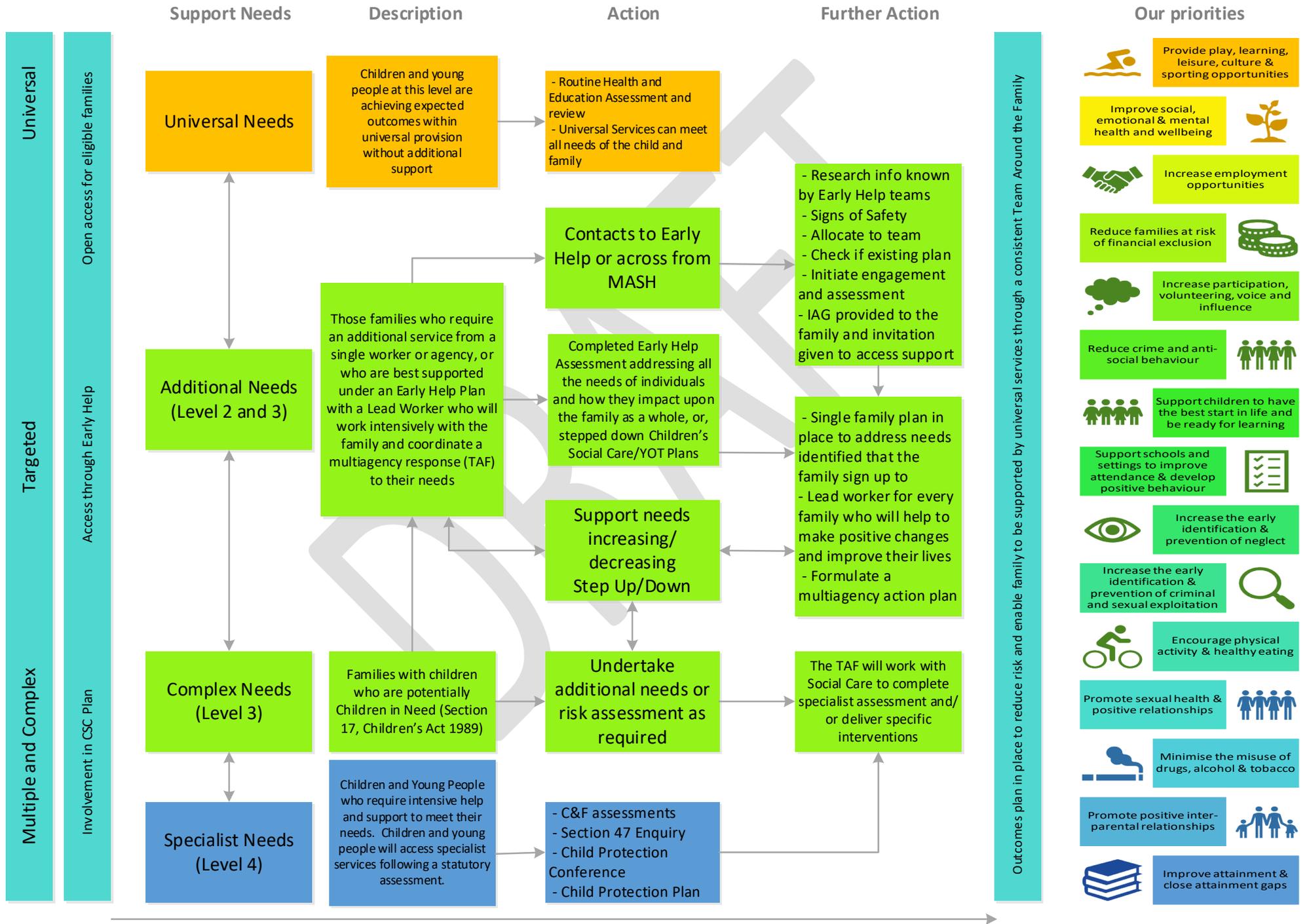
Ensure that the needs of vulnerable children & families are prioritised. (Allocation timeliness, categorising of need, SEND EHC plans, 2 Year old offer, Appropriateness of lead practitioners)

Support emotional health & wellbeing services to meet the needs of children, young people & families. (Health indicators, Commissioning, A&E attendances)



People are supported to make good choices and minimise risk taking behaviours. (Young Offenders, Exploitation, A&E attendances, Bullying)

Sefton Early Help Strategy



DRAFT

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Preface

In July 2018, the Government published revised statutory guidance; 'Working Together to Safeguard Children: guidance to inter-agency working' to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This sets out the legal requirements that health professionals, social workers, police, education professionals and others working with children must follow. The guidance emphasises that effective support and safeguarding for children and young people is the responsibility of all professionals working with children and young people and provides advice in support to sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2014, where the primary duties for all agencies are set out.

Scope of the strategy

Effective early help requires a whole family approach and encompasses all stakeholders working with children and families. This includes Health, Police, Education, Children's Social Care, Local Authority Early Help, Voluntary and Community organisations and the wider public.

The strategy acknowledges that agencies will be addressing their own distinct needs and meeting a range of key performance indicators against a variety of policy drivers and aims to provide an umbrella framework of key principles that can be applied across all agendas.

Engagement with the strategy by all sectors will require some cultural and operational changes but by doing so, and actively working together to deliver outcomes, we believe that we will positively change the relationship between the community and the public sector in ways which build and strengthen community resilience.

We are still at the beginning of this journey and the strategy is aspirational, but we are building on solid foundations established through the success of existing early intervention work.

Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018

'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'

Introduction

Early help and early intervention mean taking action to support a child, young person or their family early on when a problem emerges. It can be required at any stage in a child's life from pre-birth through to adulthood and applies to any problem or need that the family cannot deal with or meet on their own.

We know from what children and their families tell us that it can be daunting asking for help. Families have told us that they don't want to have to tell their story more than once to lots of different people. This strategy will help us to make every contact count.

The Strategy supports 'right help, from the right person at the right time' principles being adopted across Sefton which will help ensure a cohesive early help offer. The strategy will be delivered by all partners collectively with a commitment to:

- Working better together in an open, honest partnership approach with consent of the child and their family
- Identifying strengths and needs and working together to find practical and achievable solutions
- Providing the right information and advice to enable children and their families to make positive changes themselves with support tailored to their needs
- Help children and their families to build protective factors and family resilience to prevent situations recurring.

What is it like for Children and Young People living in Sefton?



The number of children and young people living in Sefton (0-25 year olds) is 62,100 a fall of 14% (9,990) since 2001.



Sefton is a good place for children and young people to live and grow up. Most receive their immunisations, with rates being close to - or above - the national average.



On the whole our children and young people achieve in school. However, there are still some that do not reach their full potential which impacts on their ability to go into further education, training and to get a job.



The health of children and young people is generally improving and they have access to a wide range of physical activity opportunities.



Almost 20% of our children are obese when they leave primary school at 11 years. The number of hospital admissions related to alcohol use in under 18's is also higher (though declining) than the England average and childhood smoking rates are average.



There are fewer teenage mothers in the borough than in previous years. Whilst the total number of births in Sefton is not rising, there has been an increase in the number of babies born to non-British born women. These mothers may need additional support to access maternity and other health services.



Sefton mothers are more likely to smoke during pregnancy and less likely to breastfeed their baby at 6 weeks.



Some of our children and young people cannot live with their parents or families; they live with Foster Carers, in children's homes or are adopted. These children and young people are more likely to experience poor life chances



As of June 2019, there are 528 looked After Children.

If Sefton had 100 children (0-18 years inc.) as they grown up

- 19 will live in poverty
- 6 will be low birth weight babies (below (2.5kg)
- 66 will be achieving good development in Early Years Foundation Stage One
- 76 will achieved year 1 phonics
- 93 will make expected progress in primary school in Reading
- 94 will make expected progress in primary school in Writing
- 93 will make expected progress in primary school in Maths
- 58 will achieve A*-C GCSEs including Maths and English
- 25 will be overweight/obese in reception
- 35 will be overweight/obese by year 6
- 16 will be eligible for free school meals
- 5 will be persistently absent from school
- 13 will live with lone parent families

If Sefton's constituencies had 100 children (0-18 years inclusive) as they grown up:

	Southport	Central	Bootle
Will live in poverty	15	9	29
Will be low birth weight babies (below (2.5kg)	7	6	8
Will make expected progress in primary school	93	96	92
Will achieve A*-C GCSEs including Maths and English	58	58	52
Will be overweight/obese in reception	22	23	28
Will be overweight/obese by year 6	36	31	39
Will be eligible for free school meals	13	13	28
Will be persistently absent from school	8	7	9
Will live with lone parent families	19	15	31

Vision

Our ambition is that **all children, young people and families in Sefton will be safe, healthy and happy, and will aspire to be the best they can be.**

In Sefton we believe that every child should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. We believe that children should grow and achieve within their own families and communities, when it is in their best interests and it is safe for them to do so. By working together, we will develop flexible services which are responsive to children and families' needs.

Sefton is establishing a vision for the future that will provide:

- A system wide approach, with joint, pooled resources and Integrated pathways operating across organisational boundaries
- An outcome focussed, system wide approach delivering long term sustainable solutions for individuals and families that enables (to secure) resilience and independence
- A shift from acute provision to an increase in prevention and early help activity
- Evidence based early help interventions that are built around customer need
- Locality based delivery with trauma informed workforce

Early help is everyone's responsibility; we want children, families, communities and agencies to work together so that families are assisted to help themselves and are supported as soon as a need arises, thereby improving their wellbeing and life chances.

Early help means providing help for children and families as soon as problems start to emerge or when there is a strong likelihood that problems will emerge in the future. If early help is not offered, there is a very real risk that for some children, their social and emotional development will be irrevocably impaired, they will experience significant harm, or their family life will break down.

Although research shows that the most impact can be made during a child's early years, early help is not just for very young children, as problems may arise at any point throughout childhood and adolescence. Early help in pregnancy and supporting parents to be good parents is also important. Early help includes targeted services designed to reduce needs or prevent specific problems from becoming entrenched, and there is substantial evidence that early help can make a difference in improving outcomes.

As a partnership we will:

- Understand those families where children may be at risk of not reaching their full potential and share concerns
- Build a relationship with the family as early as possible, and work with them to create a family environment that provides children with the best life chances and prevent problems from arising or escalating
- Reduce the number of children and their families requiring support from specialist services.

Sefton's Integrated Early Help Strategy and delivery plan has been developed across the partnership and will align with Sefton's vision for the new operating model. This will enable us to provide a joined up, effective early help offer for children aged 0 to 19 years (up to 25 for children

with disabilities) and their families. Support services will be provided at a locality level, will be evidence-based and delivered through a shared partnership approach to delivering universal and early help services. The Strategy will be implemented once agreed by Sefton Health and Well-being Board.

Sefton Council's Locality Model

Sefton's locality model is a joined-up and collaborative way of working to help our residents achieve improved health, wellbeing and independence.

The locality offer takes a whole family approach which helps to identify what needs to be done and what action needs to be taken, with a focus on strengths. Together we will look at what is going well, what could be better and what needs to happen to achieve improvement.

The localities delivery networks will help to facilitate much stronger collaboration and integration across universal and targeted services. This will include schools, GPs and other health services, the police, voluntary, faith and community sector agencies and a wide range of Council services such as Housing Options and Children's Social Care.

Guiding Principles for the Early Help Partnership

Problems may emerge at any point through childhood and adolescence. Early help is provided to prevent or reduce the need for statutory or specialist interventions wherever possible. Early help seeks to meet the need, resolve the problem and prevent it becoming entrenched.

Within this context our early help approach is based on a set of shared principles:

- 1. Early help is everyone's responsibility.** All children and young people should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Parents have the primary responsibility to meet the needs of their children and ensure the wellbeing and prosperity of their family. We recognise that parenting can be challenging and asking for help should be seen as a sign of responsibility rather than a parenting 'failure'. It is essential that when support is required, we **all act to provide the right help, from the right worker, at the right time**, to improve children's life chances.
- 2. Wherever possible all children and families' needs will be met by universal services.** Universal services working with children and adults have a role to ensure families are achieving positive outcomes, to be aware of potential difficulties and act early to prevent needs escalating. Universal services **must** remain involved even if a child is receiving additional or specialist support to ensure there is a joined up, whole system response to meeting needs.
- 3. Listen to children and families and treat them as partners.** In most cases it should be the decision of the parents when to ask for help or advice, although there are occasions when practitioners may need to engage parents actively, and with their consent, help them

to prevent problems becoming more serious. All services must keep the child at the centre of the solution, encourage families to harness their own resourcefulness and build supportive community networks, thereby enabling families to develop resilience.

- 4. Focus on whole Family working.** Sefton is committed to a culture shift in the way that we engage and work with families. In particular, adopting a 'whole family approach' and strongly encouraging multi- agency working. This requires a workforce development strategy that underpins all work with children and families across thresholds. The principles of 'whole family working', 'sustained outcomes' and building 'progression' into the way that we work with families will help to ensure that education, employment and training are a key feature in families' action plans.
- 5. All services will work together with children and families to promote family strengths, build resilience and independence.** This includes effective information sharing and joint working between professionals in children's and adult's services to reduce the impact that adult's problems have on children's experiences.
- 6. Understanding needs.** We can best understand the needs of children and families within their communities and maximise our multi-agency resources using evidence-based approaches, learning from feedback and listening to the voice of the child and family. With robust performance management in place we will be able to evidence positive, sustainable impact and best value.
- 7. Ensure clear pathways to support.** We want all families to have easy access to support when it is needed. We will set out clearly what support is available and make it easy for families to contact services themselves.
- 8. Everyone will encourage integrated working.** This includes anyone who works with children and families, part or all of the time; whether employed, self-employed or in a voluntary capacity. If you are a nurse, volunteer, teacher, early help worker, sports coach, social worker or any other member of the children's workforce, integrated working and building strong working relationships concerns you. We want the services supporting children and families to work much more closely together, forging lasting and meaningful relationships that improve the lives of the children of Sefton in the short, medium and long term.

***OfSTED, Early Help: Whose Responsibility?
2015***

'Local authorities and partner agencies delivering early help to children and families should improve the quality and consistency of assessment and plans by ensuring plans are regularly reviewed and that these reviews evaluate the child's and family's progress'

Our Priorities

Sefton are committed to delivering an effective all age partnership early help offer and a more effective whole family systemic locality-based approach to early help.

Our early help priorities in the first two years are to support the reduction in demand, and impact, upon statutory services by preventing escalation, where safe to do so, to statutory and specialist services. We also focus on families coming to early help from statutory and specialist services, bringing the down the continuum of need and helping them to access, and remain accessing, universal services.

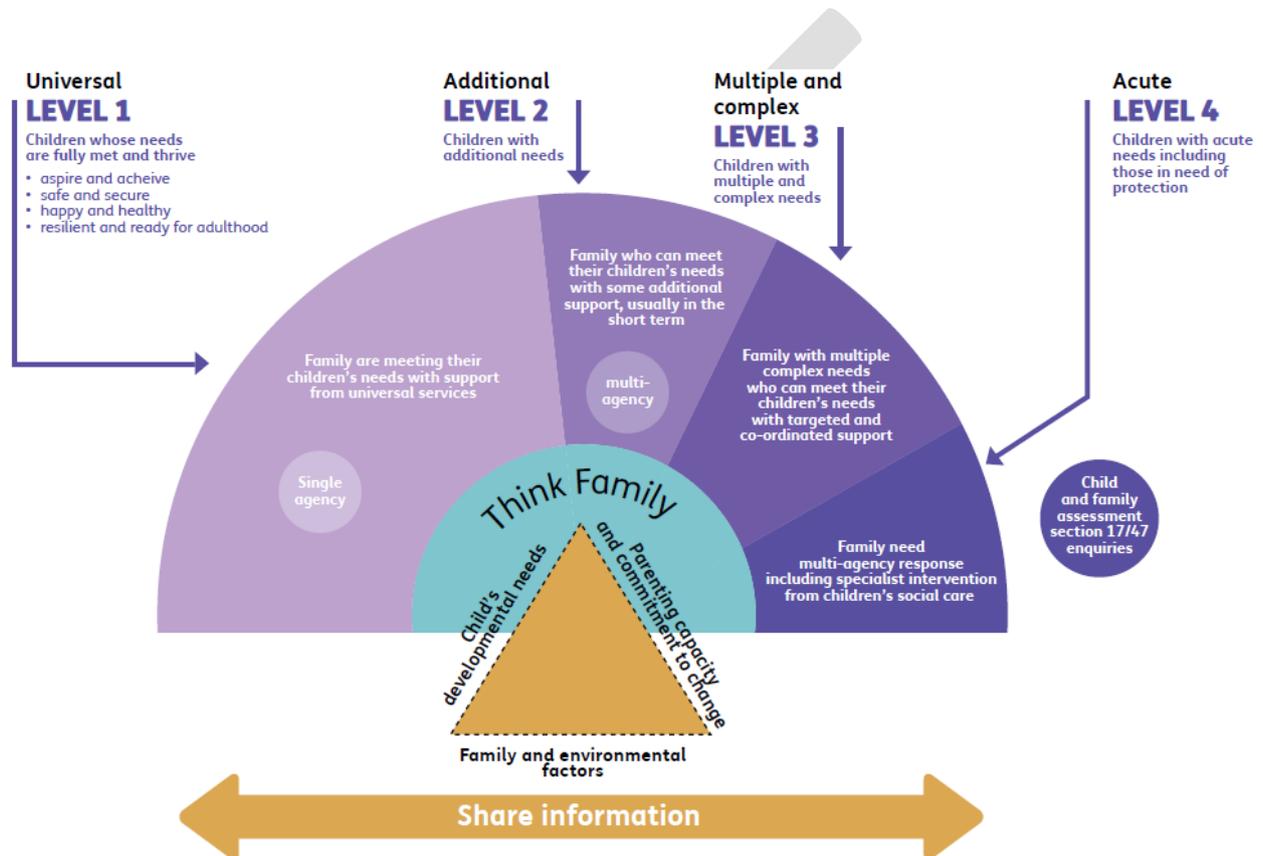
Our priorities include:



Our Early Help Approach

Effective support through the 'right help, from the right worker, at the right time' principles will improve the relationship between the four levels of need; **Universal, Additional, Multiple and Complex and Acute need.**

Since 2014 we have successfully used a 'threshold of need' model to correctly identify the level of need and proportionate support needed. The refreshed Level of Need document was published in October 2017 and is fully implemented across the partnership.



Assessment and planning for children and families in Sefton

Identifying needs at an early stage using the Early Help Assessment gives agencies working with children, young people and their families a common tool to understand the needs of the child or young person and their family. It is only once the full needs are identified that the appropriate support can then be put in place. It is an expectation that where the needs of a family have been identified for additional support, an Early Help Assessment for the whole family will be completed, in partnership with the family.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 makes it clear that safeguarding children and families and promoting their welfare is the responsibility of all practitioners working with children and young people, and that practitioners should understand the criteria for taking action across a continuum of need, including Early Help.

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

Early help assessments should be evidence-based and co-produced with families, be clear about the action to be taken, and services to be provided, and focuses on improving outcomes.

Within the assessment it is important to highlight the strengths and resources within the family. This is a useful focus when agreeing the action plan and helping other agencies to understand the protective factors within the family and identify how they can facilitate change. The more strengths present, the lower the risk will be and as support progresses it would be expected that risk factors decrease, and strengths increase.

It is not expected that practitioners will be experts in all areas of the assessment. During the assessment stage the Team Around the Family (TAF) can begin to be established. The practitioner completing the assessment will act as the lead until their role in supporting the family comes to an end. The Lead Worker can call upon their colleagues supporting the family to assist in the assessment process. This ensures that the intervention is proportionate, appropriate, timely and effective.

The Early Help Family Assessment is designed to help families to develop self-help and self-management skills in order to better meet their long term needs and to reduce their reliance on public services.

If the outcome of this assessment is single agency, the work will be completed by a lead worker. If however, the outcome identifies multifaceted problems and need for more than one agency, then a multi-agency action plan should be put in place through the assess-plan-review process.

An ongoing programme of training will be available for all practitioners regarding the assess-plan-review process and associated tools. Partners will be encouraged to complete assessments, which will be quality assured to maintain a high standard.

Other assessment tools are available to complement Early Help Family Assessment. The Outcome Star tools are a suite of assessment tools that can be helpful in evaluating, areas of, need and strength and supporting families.

For instances where neglect has been identified as the primary factor, the Graded Care Profile 2 should be completed with the contribution of practitioners involved and used as the ongoing assessment tool to measure outcomes.

In Sefton Assess-Plan-Review guidance for practitioners provides them with a guide of how to deliver effective early help support and explains the criteria for providing help to children, young people and their families.

Partnership Early Help Outcomes Plan

In Sefton the Sefton Turnaround Programme has been mainstreamed and there is a detailed multi-agency plan in place; the Service Transformation Maturity Plan. This plan will be monitored through the Sefton Early Help Partnership Group and updated regularly. There is strong commitment across the partnership, at all levels, to delivering change which improves the outcomes and experience for children and their families. This maturity model will be used to measure the impact and success of early help.

Other metrics and performance indicators will be monitored through the Sefton Locality Model and will be shared amongst partners. The ASPIRE model is linked to Sefton's locality working model and is aligned with the Locality Outcomes Framework and Sefton Turnaround Programme.

ASPIRE consists of:

Address *worklessness, financial and social exclusions*

- More vulnerable children are engaged in education, training and employment
- More children's parents/carers are in employment, education and training
- Less families experience, or are at risk of, financial exclusion

Support *Families and Individuals in Need by providing the right support*

- Early help reduces the need for statutory and specialist interventions
- Children live in safe and supported families

Promote *Education, Training, Employment and Volunteering*

- More children attend early years provision
- More children are 'school ready' and achieve a good level of development at the end of the foundation stage
- More vulnerable children achieve good levels at each key stage

Increase *attendance at schools, improve speech and language development and levels of progress that children and young people make*

- More children have regular attendance at school
- Fewer children are at risk of exclusion or excluded from school
- Improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- Improved early language and communication development

Reduce *Domestic Abuse, risk of homelessness and isolation*

- Fewer children and young people are victims of crime including sexual exploitation
- Fewer young people are involved in crime and anti-social behaviour including gangs
- Fewer families experience homelessness or living in unsustainable accommodation
- Fewer children and young people are subject to neglect or abuse
- Fewer children are affected by parental domestic abuse, mental ill health or substance misuse

Engage *Children, Families and Individuals with a range of Health and Wellbeing Needs*

- More babies and children survive infancy
- More babies are breastfed
- Fewer young people conceive or become parents
- More children and young people maintain a healthy weight
- More children and young people are fully immunised
- More children, young people and adults in their family sustain good emotional health and well being
- Fewer young people and adults in their family misuse substances
- More young people have good sexual health

Measuring the effectiveness of early help system

Early Help is an effective and proactive system in Sefton and we will ensure that:

- The Integrated Partnership Early Help Strategy is universally and consistently implemented across Sefton
- Partnership working is at the centre of all opportunities to support children and their families
- More evidence based, and effective systemic practice interventions are used to effect sustainable change
- The workforce is skilled, competent and have taken up workforce development opportunities ensuring continuous learning

Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018

‘Where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one organisation or agency there should be an inter-agency assessment. These early help assessments should be evidence-based, be clear about the action to be taken and services to be provided and identify what help the child and family require to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed through a statutory assessment...’

Delivery model for Early Help

To ensure we have a mature early help system we need to transform the way professionals work with each other and with families, and to develop the right culture, systems and behaviours that support the delivery of the model across the partnership. We have, through the work of the Sefton Safeguarding Children Board, a strong commitment by partners to undertake this transformation and to develop the right culture, systems and behaviours needed to have a mature early help system in place in Sefton.

The priorities for development during 2019-2021 are:

1. Establish Effective Leadership, Partnership Working and Governance

There are many positive examples of multi-agency working across Sefton to deliver good outcomes for children and their families and we will continue to expand on this to focus on developing more effective streamlined and joined processes. Delivery and accountability for this Early Help Strategy and the Early Help Performance framework will move from Sefton Safeguarding Board to the Early Help Steering Group, a sub group of the Health and Well-being Board. The Board will also have oversight of:

- Each partner agency's response to implementation of this Strategy. .
- Developing an effective outcome-based performance management and quality assurance framework to measure impact.

2. Establish easy to use Early Help online information and advice

In order to help children and their families and practitioners across the partnership to understand the wide range of information and services available we will build on the Sefton local offer website as a central portal to bring information together. This local offer website already provides information, advice and guidance to the public on a range of family issues, including support from partner agencies. Other online websites, advice centres, telephone helplines or supports and services not linked will be connected to this so that families and practitioners can access these.

3. Develop a suite of tools for early help practitioners to use – ensuring a whole family strength based consistent approach to working with children and families

To accompany the revised early help assessment and plan we will develop a suite of early help tools to assist practitioners to understand the child and family journey, consistently monitor and review children's progress, evaluate the impact of support and interventions offered to improve outcomes and how to measure a family's engagement and their satisfaction level.

4. Develop effective and timely processes for sharing information between agencies

To enable early help to be more effective and ensuring the right help, at the right time, we will work with partners to remove barriers to effective working and ensure that families don't need to have a series of assessments before receiving the support they need to. We will:

- Ensure we have in place clear information sharing arrangements

- Ensure we are making the best use of IT systems and portals across agencies and departments

5. Refresh structures and pathways that support the access to early help

The Early Help approach is embedded in the Assess-Plan-Review guidance for practitioners and is available to all practitioners through the Sefton Early Help website.

The Council's existing early help services have been realigned to localities and renamed to 'Family Wellbeing' creating a locality based, systemic, family key worker (casework) service to work with children and families deemed as intensive need under the continuum of need, including children deemed on the edge of escalation to statutory services and those stepped down from statutory services.

Parenting programmes will continue to be provided for practitioners working with children and families open to both statutory and early help services.

Locality based Early Help will continue to develop greater integration and alignment with communities and partner agencies, exploring co-location and/or coordination of processes with early years provisions, health, schools, children and adult substance misuse services and emotional and mental health services (those provided by voluntary, community and faith sectors).

This revised strategy also has key links with the approach for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Sefton Children with SEND should be supported at the most appropriate level for their needs at the earliest point when these become apparent. Early help supports this approach and enables coordinated early support for children with SEND and their families.

We will work with commissioners and providers to ensure that the early help supports, and interventions required in each locality and across the borough are developed in accordance with need and ensuring impact.

The multi-agency Task and Finish Group will develop and agree clear pathways to support access to early help and ensure children, families and practitioners have clear information on how to access early help.

6. Develop a skilled and competent workforce across the partnership

Delivery of early help requires effective working between professionals and between services including an understanding of each other's role, responsibility, organisational culture and values. A lead worker forum will be launched to strengthen and enhance the Early Help offer, to build on the delivery of evidence-based practice. This includes:

- Awareness raising to ensure that the 'levels of need relating to risk' are clearly understood and communicated between professionals so that families can move between early help and specialist statutory services at the right time and when required.
- Information sharing and conversations between professionals to identify families who would benefit from early help.

- Implementing whole family approaches whilst keeping the child at the centre and undertaking strength-based assessments of families including effective engagement and conversations with children and their families.
- Holding and managing risk.
- Working with difficult to engage families.
- Embedding evidence-based approaches and interventions across the partnership – including sharing good practice and developing online resources for practitioners.
- Building relationships with and getting to know families.
- Reducing the number of ‘hand-offs’ and ensuring consistency of lead workers.
- Identifying and engage family support networks.
- Reflecting on their work with families and get different perspectives from managers and peers.
- Access training and learning opportunities to develop skills across the partnership.

The practice models include:

- Restorative based work across the children’s workforce building relationships with children, young people and their families.
- Family Group Conferencing in Early Help and Children’s Social Care.
- Motivational interviewing, focussing on strengths in the individual, and help them explore their own solutions to their behavioural issues.
- Understanding attachment and trauma informed practice across the workforce.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences training.

7. Develop a joint commissioning framework for early help

More joined up commissioning will achieve economies of scales savings and reduce duplication of services. The resources saved can be applied to any gaps in service delivery. This will include:

- Enabling, through established governance mechanisms, pooled resources to develop a broader joint commissioning framework across partner agencies to direct the commissioning intentions for early help whole family approaches and maximise best value.
- Develop an intelligence led approach to commissioning that draws together key public funding streams to develop a broader joint commissioning framework across partner agencies to direct the commissioning intentions for prevention and early help
- Ensure all stakeholders, including children and families, have a voice at every stage of the commissioning cycle and provide feedback to measure and review impact and enable redesigned services that better meet the needs of our children and families.

Conclusion

Our integrated strategy for early help builds on our previous achievements and takes us on a journey with families in Sefton to maximise their opportunities for the future. The implementation plan that supports it will help us to deliver success. Our early help journey will continue in partnership with statutory and voluntary partners, communities, and partnership with children, young people and their families

Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018

‘A lead practitioner should undertake the assessment, provide help to the child and family, act as an advocate on their behalf and co-ordinate the delivery of support services. A GP, family support worker, school nurse, teacher, health visitor and/or special educational needs co-ordinator could undertake the lead practitioner role.’

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Appendix: Sefton Early Help Strategy Implementation Plan

1. Embed the Early Help Approach

Rationale	Aims	Actions	Success Measures	Progress
<p>Success and change in children’s services relies on strong and effective partnership working - we need to strengthen joined up working between local services and these services need to be reshaped and funded collectively if they are to succeed. There is a strong commitment from partners and a key aim of the early help action plan must be to make best use of this to improve outcomes for children and families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To rebalance and strengthen the safeguarding system through developing better early help and preventative services. -To increase the number of children and families supported through earlier help -To improve the quality of front line practice and develop a more relational model of support -When intervention is necessary it is swift, sensitive and effective -To strengthen community level partnership working around Localities -To raise the confidence and satisfaction of local partners in the effectiveness of early help -To promote a culture of innovation and evidence informed improvement -Ensure the voice of the child is reflected in each assessment -Place the child at the heart of holistic family-based assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Engage all partners in developing shared early help strategy -Develop and agree and Early Help Strategy -Review community help arrangements and agree shared local action plans with partner agencies -Review overall range and quality of borough- wide Early Help Services -Refresh the application of the Continuum of Need and closely assess the impact by regular monitoring and communication on referrals and contacts that do not meet threshold -Agreed culture, values and vision across Partnership -Agreed shared priorities and collective investment across partners in shared priorities and plans -Review step up/step down approach and pathways to ensure better transfers and best practice handover between Early Help and social work teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Local partners report improved confidence and knowledge of key local safeguarding policies, including thresholds and local hubs and are more satisfied with locality -Early Help data shows improvements to practice in key areas of joint working including CP processes, Domestic Violence, Missing and child exploitation (inc. CSE). -Number of families increased to support helping themselves, through knowing the full range of early help service offers 	

2. Involve Communities in Shaping Early Help

Rationale	Aims	Actions	Success Measures	Progress
<p>Research and reviews from Laming to Munro emphasise the importance of the voice of the child in ensuring children and families are effectively supported and protected. Early help provision needs to build the right relationships and trust with children and families to enable them to voice their concerns, share their views and be involved in agreeing support and plans that are right for their needs. Sefton's children and families will have better services, better outcomes and better futures if their voices are at the heart of everything we do. This needs to become a shared value and central element of practice, process and partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strengthen arrangements for involving and empowering children and families in Sefton's early help partnership arrangements -Ensure practice, processes and planning engage, involve, listen and reflect the voice of the child and family -Improve alertness to neglect, discrimination, exploitation or extremism; 'Zero tolerance' for child maltreatment -Regular monitoring, listening to children -Help individuals, families and communities to help themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Agree and implement implementation plan to strengthen involvement of families -Undertake a review led by young people and families of arrangements for involving children in early help partnership planning and agree, implement early help action plan -Facilitate conversations to ensure that children and young people are placed at the core of decision making and that we truly listen, and act upon what they tell us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Independent evaluation shows children and families have shaped the early help strategy and action plan -Young people and families led review identifies improvements to processes and impact of involving young people and families. -Actions to address areas for improvement agreed -We have asked children and young people about how they want their lives to be different 	

3. Performance, Governance and Quality Assurance

Rationale	Aims	Actions	Success Measures	Progress
<p>Use performance information to drive conversations across the partnership and also with children, young people, families and front-line professionals to help ensure that whatever we do genuinely makes a difference to their lives. Early help leaders to focus on 'creating the right conditions for success' ensuring there is a strong culture of child focus, learning and improvement, clear direction and support for professionals and right partnerships and resources in place to support services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Make our procedures for raising, and responding to, concerns about a child straightforward and effective -Develop a shared culture of reflection, learning and improvement -Security of information, transparency about activities -We understand how successful we are in achieving our aspirations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Produce regular, high quality performance reports -Provide information that is accurate and available to front line teams, partners and strategic management -Regular audits undertaken, used to inform practice improvement in all levels and informing partners and employees -Early help to be informed by evidence, including a deep analysis of population and service data -Management information for children in need of help and protection, including early help, captures the number of early help assessments or similar in the last 12 months and the number receiving a service that a team around the family (TAF) -Refreshed early help partnership governance arrangements -All staff across the partnership will receive training to help them better understand the Education, Health and care plan process -Develop multi-agency practice standards to assist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Independent evaluation shows proactive approach in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when concerns are first emerging, or where a child is already known to the local authority children's social care -Access to online early help offer provides information about services that children, young people and their families can expect from a range of local agencies. Knowing what is out there gives people more choice and therefore more control over what support is right for them 	

		<p>practitioners working with young people (relationship building including consent issues)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Develop a 'one worker' 'one plan' approach to reduce repetition.-Ensuring an effective mechanism across the partnership to openly share good practice with children and families through the Early Help Training Knowledge Hub		
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4. First 1000 days				
Rationale	Aims	Actions	Success Measures	Progress
<p>The first 1000 days of a child’s life, from conception to age 2 are increasingly recognised as a critical window where huge amounts of brain development take place. A child’s brain develops from 25% of its adult size at birth to 75% by age 2, and between birth and eighteen months new connections are made the rate of around a million per second. By age 3 inequalities in children’s physical, cognitive and social development is already apparent. One has estimated that children from more disadvantaged backgrounds have heard 30 million less words by the time they enter school - the ‘word gap’. Many children who are overweight when entering reception have already accumulated the excess weight by age 3. One of the best protective factors is a relationship with a trusted adult. Parenting and family support in the early years will support children’s development into happy and secure adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ensure we have a strong universal offer for the first 1000 days of life (pregnancy and first two years) -Develop multi-agency work around language and communication, physical activity and nutrition, and universal parenting support -Focus on preventing the development of future problems by providing universal preventative support to families as early in children’s lives as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Establish a multi-agency ‘First 1000 days’ group to develop joint working and best universal offer for the early years -Develop our antenatal parenting support offer so all parents have access to group or online support covering the transition to parenthood -Develop and support initiatives to improve literacy skills and close the ‘word gap’ -Support and encourage physical activity for very young children in families and in early years settings -Encourage the take up of two-year-old education places -Develop and support initiatives and activities linked to attachment to support early brain development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Greater evidence of physical activity in pre-school age -Reduced overweight at 2-year-old / reception -Increased % of eligible two-year olds in early education -Increased awareness of early brain development among parents and professionals -Improved antenatal parenting support offer 	