

# Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	10 October 2024
Title of Report:	<b>Early Help</b>
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director of Children's Services)
Author:	Martine Aquilina
Contact Email:	Martine.aquilina@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

## Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an informative update regarding the Early Help System and how we work together to ensure children and families are receiving the right support by the right person.

## Recommendations and Reasons

For the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel to note the report.

## Alternative options considered and rejected

Not applicable for this report.

## Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This report directly links to The Plymouth Plan 2014-2034 'to create the conditions where children, young people and families can thrive, assisting them to build resilience through the early development of good physical and emotional health and by equipping young people and parents with the skills to improve their wellbeing'.

A Bright Future 2021-2026 states that 'As partners, we want to make sure all children and young people in Plymouth have a Bright Future, supported by a system which works seamlessly to spot difficulties early, responds quickly and effectively, and makes sure that help is there for as long as it is needed' and makes a commitment that 'We are strengths based: Early Help will be embedded across the system'. As part of this Plan the 'Early Help Strategic Board was established to drive partnership working on how we transform early help and targeted services for vulnerable children' and has subsequently agreed an Early Help Strategy.

## Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

Information only

## Financial Risks

N/A

**Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

N/A

**Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:**

*\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

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**Appendices**

*\*Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report title							
B								

**Background papers:**

*\*Add rows as required to box below*

*Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.*

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Sign off:**

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Temilola Salimon

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 30/09/2024

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications),

Date approved: 01/10/2024

## **I. Introduction**

At the request of the Scrutiny Panel, this briefing report has been prepared to offer an informative update regarding the Early Help System and how we work together to ensure children and families are receiving the right support by the right person.

In 2021 the multi-agency vision for Plymouth, 'A Bright Future 2021 – 2026', was published, outlining how local partners planned to support the best outcomes for all children.

A Bright Future vision focused upon three areas, to stay happy and healthy, to be safe and to aspire and achieve.

Within the vision was the clear intention to help children and families at the earliest sign of need, and to provide support, ranging from advice through to specialist intervention. This commitment has been formalised into one of the 10 priorities outlined in the One Children's Service 3-Year Plan, to develop 'a strong and effective early help offer which reaches children, young people and families who need it when they need it and improves outcomes and destinations for all children and young people and families.'

The delivery of Early Help, is a fundamental project in the One Children's Service Programme, and it aims to, in collaboration with all key city partners, build on the existing Early Help offer and delivery of Family Hubs to develop a network of services, processes and interactions that are able to understand, predict the need and respond together to help children, young people and families at the earliest opportunity.

## **2. Family Hubs in Plymouth**

In 2022 Plymouth was successful in being one of the 75 local authority areas in England to receive a share of the Government's Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme funding for 2022 – 2025.

To ensure the efforts undertaken in Plymouth were complementary, the 'Family Hub and Start for Life' work and the Early Help Innovative Partnership unified as the Plymouth Early Help and Family Hub Partnership Executive. The partners and representatives from Plymouth City Council Children's Services, started working together to build on best practice, local offers of family help and engage those key stakeholders to design and deliver the city programme.

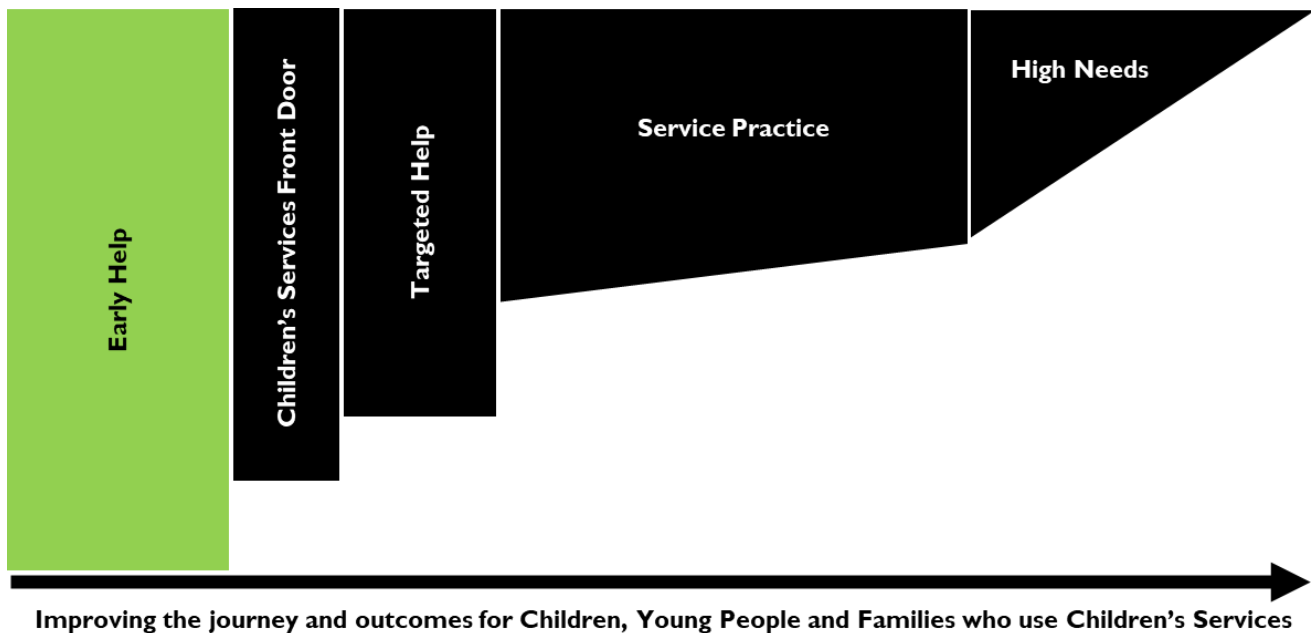
Since the awarding of the funding -

- Plymouth Family Hubs have launched 9 Family hubs, we have 1 Family Hub to follow, and additional venues have requested to become an outreach site or partner Family hub site
- Plymouth Family Hub network has grown to over 120 different organisations to help support Children, Young People and families to get the help they need, when they need it from a place they can access.
- Plymouth Family hubs have membership from 18330 families
- In 2024 (January to August) Plymouth Family Hubs have supported 826 Families.
- In 2024 the percentage of families supported at level 3 and above was 59% (Open to a social worker)
- Family Hubs have staff trained in a variety of courses such as GCP2, IAPT, Outcome Stars, VIG and PEEP
- Family Hubs have staff at Derriford Hospital supporting families within the NICU ward
- Family Hubs have staff in MASH supporting PCC Front Door

## **3. Proposal (A Future Model for Early Help)**

Our future model for Early Help aims to create a network of Early Help that sits at the forefront of our operating model (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Operating Model for Children and Families going from Early Help into Children's Services



This model will enable us to create simple solutions that connect our Early Help network with the Front Door and then into our Targeted Help Services. Showing a complete join-up of prevention and initial services to improve our abilities to provide the right support to children, young people and families at the right time and in the right place.

#### 4. Plymouth's Vision for Early Help

Plymouth's vision for early help is to ensure that every child and their family can access and receive timely, effective support from trusted sources. We aim to build supportive trusted relationships around families and communities, addressing diversity and equity to provide equal life chances for all children. Our aim is to create a city-wide system of early help, that will improve prevention and provide self-help support options for families, children and young people from 0 – 25 years.

We will do this by building any future change using the agreed strategic principles.

##### **Universal and Specialist Services Integration (Integrated community-based teams)**

- Work with both universal services and specialist services to create a cohesive support network that enable children and their families to be able to get the support they need from the right professional easily and without delay.

##### **No Wrong Door Approach**

- Develop a system where families can access support through multiple entry points where they will receive consistent advice and guidance and the support they need.

##### **Building Support through Multi-Agency Collaboration**

- Enhance collaboration among local agencies, including health, education, housing, and employment services and voluntary and community organisations to ensure we build a support network around families when they need it.

### **Family Hubs Network**

- Utilise the Family Hub Network to provide comprehensive support from pre-birth to 25 years (for those with SEND) and co-locate multi-agency teams, including midwives, health visitors, early years settings, schools, and other relevant services.

### **Trauma-Informed Practices**

- Embed trauma-informed approaches across all children's and adult services to understand and use trauma-informed lenses to understand and address the complexities of children's and families' lived experiences.

### **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)**

- Focus on local assets and strengths to foster sustainable community development and promote the involvement of community members in developing solutions and support systems.

## **5. Targeted Help Services and an Integrated Front Door**

As part of One Children's Service 3-year plan and the introduction of the new Working Together 2023 and the Social Work reform, we have started to review and realign the Targeted Help services to enable them to support children and families referred into Children, Young People and Families Service.

Targeted Help Teams have been realigned into 3 x Teams, 2 of which are managed by Qualified Social Workers in line with Working Together 2023 and are now supporting families directly from the front door, providing a more intensive level of support to families where further assessment from a social worker is not needed.

We have agreed pathways in place to provide a seamless approach to children who need to step down or step up to / from statutory services.

We are working closely with partners to strengthen the Integrated Front Door Model ensuring that we have specialist workers within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub who can support with identifying the right support to families when they need it.

## **Conclusion**

The Family Hubs hosted the first Strengthening Families and Communities Market Place on the 1st of October 2024 in the YMCA. We had 83 different agencies showcasing the work they do and the service they offer to children and families in the city and over 250 people at the event networking, sharing information and building relationships.

The event also enabled us to consult on how we progress plans to develop Integrated Community Based teams, using places and spaces already hosting our partners to develop and grow community-based services where our children and families need us most.

We will continue to work with our partners to provide services in the community that are child and family focused, where need is considered and responded to at the earliest opportunity, by the most appropriate worker and that we ensure that these services are sustainable into the future.