

# Early Help in Doncaster



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## Children and Young People



What stage are you at?

- Best start to life
- 3 to 5 years old
- 6 to 11 years old
- 12 to 19 years old

# Early Help Strategy

## VISION AND COMMITMENTS

Our vision is clear. In Doncaster we want Early Help to be a priority for all.

This vision is supported by 9 key commitments that have to be embodied across the partnership.

### 1. Never do Nothing

We will provide families with the appropriate support they need at the first time of asking.

### 2. Build Stronger Relationships

We will have strong trusting relationships with families, communities and colleagues.

### 3. Always Build on Strengths

We will work with families will build on their strengths and empower them to grow.

### 4. Work with Families for as Long as it Takes

We will work with families in a person and child centred way for as long as support is needed.

For families, we want support to be available in their community and accessible, without difficulty or stigma, in a way that allows families to tell their story once and fosters trusting relationships between them and professionals.

For professionals, we want early intervention and collaboration to be second nature with arrangements in place that make multi-agency working effortless and enable all professionals from across the partnership to adopt the whole family working approach in a meaningful way.

### 5. Empower Families and Communities

We will work on enabling families and communities to have a voice and become self sufficient.

### 6. Be Transparent

We will be open and honest with each other and the families they work with in order to build trust.

### 7. Be Flexible

We will support families creatively in a way that suits them.

### 8. Work Together

We will collaborate with all partners and families to maximise their impact.

### 9. Ensure Accountability at Every Level

We will work with staff and families to own their role within the support being offered.

## OUR PRIORITIES

Our priorities can be split across four areas. These are characterised under the following themes: families, communities, leaders, and workforce. Our priorities are designed to deliver our vision for Early Help and provide families with the support they need.



PRIORITY ONE:  
Build Family Resilience and Trust in the System

PRIORITY TWO:  
Strengthen Local Community Services and Support Networks

PRIORITY THREE:  
Cohesive, Consistent and Collaborative Leadership across the Partnership

PRIORITY FOUR:  
Support Professionals across all Services to maximise their Impact



# Early Help Strategy Impact Report

- 9 out of 10 of families had an improved family star, reduced vulnerability and increase scaling question.
- Priority One: Build Family Resilience and Trust in the System - The last year has seen a notable increase in capacity and engagement across the early help system.
- Priority Two: Strengthen Local Community Services and Support Networks
  - Supporting Families Programme, as a partnership, have exceeded, achieving 106% of our target number of families and, therefore, maximising funding coming into the early help system.
  - Local Help – Your Families expanding with contacts nearly trebling in their first full year of operation.
  - Our delivery of the Start for Life Programme has also been rapid in the past year. from conception to 5 years old.
- Priority Three - LGA Peer Challenge evidence
- Priority Four: Support Professionals Across all Services to Maximise their Impact -
  - Developing practice, training and systems to ensure that staff across the partnership are equipped to deliver meaningful family support and evidence-based interventions; 168 training sessions were delivered to 2057 learners with 87% of them stating they gained knowledge and confidence from the training. This is translated into audit findings.





# Enablers

- Political and Corporate support
- Clear strategy and vision
- Partnership buy-in
- Strong Governance
- Embedded Family Hub Offer in localities
- Your Family Local Teams
- Strong regional partnerships – developing a peer review.
- LGA Peer Challenge
- Family Help Pilot
- ADCS Regional Group



# Local Government Association Peer Challenge

12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2024

# LGA Peer Challenge



## Peer Team

## Process

LGA Associate, former DCS

Children's Portfolio Holder

LGA Associate (Health Peer)

LGA Associate (Education Peer)

LGA Peer Challenge Manager

LGA Associate (Early Help)

- Peers reviewed a range of information to ensure we were familiar with the council, the challenges it is facing, and its plans
- The peer team gathered information and views from over 40 meetings, in addition to further research
- Spoke to around 180 people including a range of families, council staff, councillors and partners
- The team spent around 225 hours working for on peer challenge, in preparation and on site, plus travel and working next week on the report.
- This is the equivalent of one person spending more than six weeks scrutiny.

# Leadership, Governance and Partnership



- Inspirational leadership at strategic and operational levels
- Leadership accountability demonstrated through clear links to the Safeguarding Children's Partnership, the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Early Intervention Steering Group
- There is a clear vision and strategy for Early Help
- You demonstrated a sound understanding of the strengths and challenges regarding Early Help in Doncaster and a commitment to improvement
- The Children's Overview and Scrutiny Panel provides scrutiny and challenge and demonstrates Members' commitment to Early Help
- Early Help is valued by Elected Members
- Strong commitment from Health Commissioners and providers
- Early Help is an undoubted strength



# Capacity and Resources



- Family Hubs are developing the multi-agency offer to families and they are on a journey from co-location to integration
- Passionate and committed Early Help workforce (partnership), appreciated by families and by partners
- Partnership demonstrated responsiveness to emerging needs
- Schools are providing valuable Early Help to families
- Early Help Co-ordinators work well together as a team, taking lead roles for specific areas (e.g. health, education, training) to share responsibilities
- Waiting lists for targeted early help has an impact on the timeliness of response which could result in crisis
- The partnership is trying to mitigate waiting lists in a variety of innovative ways
- Heard example of how parents are empowered to use their own lived experience to help others

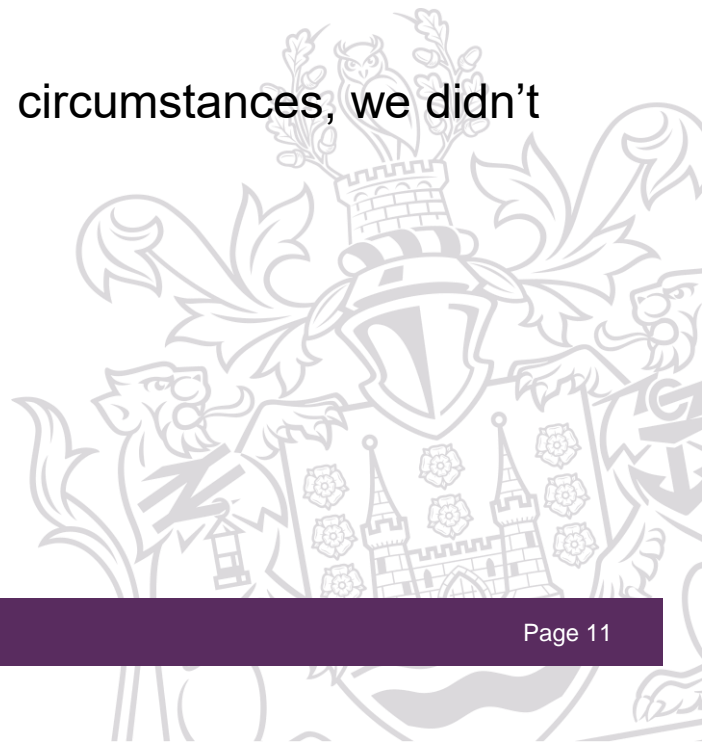
# Effective Identification and Assessment

- Early Help is seen as everyone's responsibility
- Views, worries and lived experience of the child/children are actively sought
- Good multi-agency working reported.
- We've seen child focused direct work alongside solution focused support for parents and working in partnership with family members
- MASH as a single referral point is working. Systems are in place for check and challenge. Co-location with police, probation, health, Social Care, Exploitation, EH really working. There is always two Early Help Coordinators in the MASH
- Number of inappropriate referrals to the MASH from some partners, coupled with the onward referrals from MASH to Your Place results in inefficient use of resources
- Gathering and interrogation of data is helping to inform the response to communities' needs
- St Wilfrid's taskforce gives an opportunity for more timely interventions.
- Mosaic is potentially a great tool, but needs to develop to achieve universal acceptance and effectiveness

# Whole Family Working



- There is a clear Shared Practice Framework endorsed by all partners and the audit activity is key to identifying whole family working and where improvements could be made.
- Early Help workforce and families gave examples of being tenacious in engaging and not giving up on the families. This included identifying who can best work with families when they are hesitant
- Early Help workforce report that they look to engage the wider family where possible including grandparents.
- While families' views are sought on their individual circumstances, we didn't see evidence of co-production



# Improved Outcomes



- Family feedback is valued.
- A range of positive outcomes for children and families were evident in case reviews, including improved school attendance, improved parental confidence and self-esteem and improved access to healthcare
- Families report that they struggle to navigate local services unless already accessing support at the Family Hubs, where signposting is very effective.
- Parents reported that practitioners were supportive, caring and responsive, very sensitive to the needs of the family and the family dynamics which enabled positive outcomes to be achieved and sustained
- Supporting Families programme in Doncaster has enabled the partnership to make significant progress with families from a range of communities

# Recommendations

1. Senior Leaders to continue to work with partners to clarify what constitutes a d referral to the front door.
2. Use Outcomes data at cohort and place level
3. Working with Governors, Trustees and school leaders to help engagement with schools
4. Clarify roles and responsibilities; consider generic job titles and team names.
5. Ensure Comms professionals help the simplification and effectiveness of re-branding and evaluating comms channels
6. Clarify definitions; particularly around outcomes
7. Work to be assured that the Voice of the parent is truly reflected in your approach and your assessments; evidence is mixed
8. Know your service users regarding E&D needs. Provide tailored support when required e.g. easy read and translated information and language barriers that are a barrier to effective working



# Contacts and references

## Contacts

Lee Golze, Service  
Director: Partnerships,  
Early Intervention &  
Localities

[Lee.golze@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Lee.golze@doncaster.gov.uk)

Alison Tomes, Head of  
Service Early  
Intervention & Prevention

[Alison.tomes@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Alison.tomes@doncaster.gov.uk)

## References

- [Early Help - What is it in Doncaster? - City of Doncaster Council](#)
- [Early Help - Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- [Early Help Strategy Impact report](#)
- [Help for your Family](#)