

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 2 December 2020

Subject: Early Help Evaluation (2015 - 2020)

Report of: Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Summary

This supplementary note to the main presentation highlights the scope of the Early Help Evaluation and some of the key areas of success. It also summarises how continued investment in Early Help can support the City with a number of key strategies and priorities including helping to reduce the need for high cost children's social care.

Recommendations

The Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

1. Note the positive difference Early Help is making for children, young people and families; and
 2. Note the wider contribution a good offer of early help can make to the city.
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Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

n/a

Our Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	n/a
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Early Help works closely with DWP. Employment Advisors are co-located in our Early Help Hubs to support adults into work. Employment outcomes are a part of the evaluation

A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Early Help is a strength-based approach, and the evaluation demonstrates the positive impact the offer can have building resilience in families and communities.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	n/a
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	n/a

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

Not applicable.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Early Help evaluation has evolved over the last few years from an analysis of the Troubled Families programme, focussed on the interventions provided by Manchester City Council (MCC), to a wider evaluation of the City's offer of Early Help. The broader scope of the evaluation helps us to recognise the breadth of the offer in the City and answer a key question: Is the Early Help approach making a difference for families?

This evaluation covers the period April 2015 to August 2020 and will:

- Act as a full analysis of Manchester's contribution to the government's Troubled Families (TF) programme, the second phase of which ran from 2015 to 2020 (note: Manchester was able to draw down approx. £14million of TF funding in this period);
- Help Manchester understand the impact for families of our Early Help Hub and Early Help Assessment model introduced in September 2015; and
- Look at how the Early Help approach supports the City to meet its wider strategic priorities.

- 1.2 These areas are explored in more detail in section 2.

The Scope of the Evaluation is as follows:

- The evaluation includes analysis of 11,367 Early Help Assessments. These are 'whole family' assessments and would usually be instigated when there is more than one agency needed to support a family. There would always be an identified lead professional.
- 46% of these EHA's were led by a practitioner within the Early Help Hub- these tend to be families that are experiencing multiple difficulties and require intensive support;
- 54% of these EHA's are led by a practitioner from outside of the Early Help Hub including schools, health visiting and early years outreach- these tend to be families needing less intensive, multi-agency support;
- Analysis is based on two sets of data i) 'hard' data received from areas such as schools, GMP, DWP and Children/Adult Social Care ii) 'soft' data received from practitioner surveys providing their professional judgements;

2.0 What does the Evaluation tell us?

The three key areas highlighted in 1.2 in more detail

Troubled Families- Regional/National Impact

- 2.1 The evaluation is shared with GMCA and Government to demonstrate the progress made in Manchester, how these have supported regional and national targets and how TF investments have supported positive family outcomes;

- 2.2 The evaluation tells us that the offer of Early Help in the City has grown as a result of TF investment from, largely, an MCC offer to a broad partnership with more than half of the families supported by a professional outside of the Early Help Hubs. This means families can access the support that best fits their needs whether through school, health, early years or a VCS organisation.
- 2.3 The evaluation shows that Manchester has a positive and sustained impact with most of families against the six main TF areas of need: worklessness; poor school attendance; police call outs; domestic violence; poor physical/mental health; and children who need help.
- 2.4 For 2015 – 2020 Manchester met 95% of its target of successfully working with 8,023 families

Manchester's Offer of Early Help- Local Impact

- 2.5 The evaluation shows how our local, whole-family offer is making a difference to the lives of children, young people and their families. Some of the highlights include:
- 4,337 families who received a targeted offer of early help had no Social Care status. Of these 4,202 (97%) remained having no Social Care involvement for up to 12 months after support had ended. 135 (3%) families were stepped up to Social Care following an Early Help Intervention.
 - 28% of families had a child(ren) who were persistently absent from school before support, this is reduced to 12% after support (58% Impact)
 - 51% of families were supported through early help because of concerns around parenting. These issues were still present in just 14% of families 12 months after support ended.
- 2.6 The evidence shows that an offer of early help can prevent children and young people's needs escalating to the point that statutory intervention is required. Early Help can also work alongside social work and successfully support families to 'step down', particularly at Child in Need level. The evaluation shows that 83% of families with one or more child at CIN level had seen that status removed when early help ended their involvement (this was sustained for 12 months). This demonstrates the importance of early intervention in helping to manage demand for high-cost statutory interventions as well as supporting families to achieve positive outcomes.

Supporting Local Strategies and Priorities

- 2.7 The evaluation also allows us to see how investment in Early Help and a 'whole family' way of working can help support wider city priorities and strategies including the Children and Young Peoples Plan, the Inclusion Strategy and the Our Manchester Strategy:
- Ensuring children are 'Safe, Happy, Healthy, Successful' are the key priorities in the Children and Young Peoples Plan and the evaluation shows

how an offer of early help is reducing the need in families for high cost children's social care, is helping families to manage their mental health and wellbeing and helping pupils be more successful in school by improving attendance.

- 11% of families had a child(ren) with a fixed term exclusion in the 12 months before early help support was in place. Only 2% of these families had another fixed term exclusion up to 12 months after support had ended (80% impact). This supports the good work in schools to promote inclusion and prevent permanent exclusions.
- The evaluation demonstrates the contribution the early help approach- strengths based- can make to the Our Manchester strategy by building resilience in families and communities, helping children and young people to reach their potential and, overall, supporting Manchester to become a 'fair and equitable City'.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 A thorough analysis of the outcomes of over 11,000 families over five years provides us with a good insight into whether the Early Help approach is making a difference for families- the data shows that for most families, it is. However, it should be recognised that an Early Help Assessment is only a small part of the wider system of family support. For example, sustaining positive change, after involvement with a family has ended, can only happen with the support of VCS organisations, the community and strong universal services- the offer of early help cannot be successful in isolation.
- 3.2 Manchester's early help approach is multi-disciplinary with a broad partnership. The evaluation shows it can support both adults and children and it can make a difference in the home and in the community. Continued investment in 'whole family' early intervention and prevention can, therefore, support the City to achieve many of its wider strategic aims and priorities.
- 3.3 Looking to the future, and considering potential changes to the Troubled Families programme, some of the priorities we will focus on in the coming year will include the prevention of homelessness and interface with homeless services. Earlier prevention in relation to serious youth violence and continued focus on attendance and the inclusion strategy. Our continued collaboration at a neighbourhood level will help drive outcomes for children and families.