

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 4 September 2018

Subject: Early Help Strategy

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Summary

This report provides a further update on the progress and impact of the Early Help Strategy and the delivery of the offer of early help. The report covers the refresh of the Early Help Strategy in 2018, highlights the activity and impact from the Early Help Hubs, and outlines future priorities.

Recommendations

The Committee asked to note the contents of this the report.

Wards Affected: All

Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)

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	Effective Early Help Services are critical to ensuring the most vulnerable citizens are able to connect and support the drive towards a thriving and sustainable City
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Ensuring the most vulnerable in our society are given the opportunity to access and achieve in the City is supported by the delivery of a strong and cohesive early help system
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	A timely and effective offer of early help builds the resilience of children and families which they need to achieve their potential and be integrated into their communities
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Improving outcomes for children and families across the city helps build and develop communities
A connected city: World class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Early Help services support families to be successful who are then able to deliver continuing growth in the city

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee – 21st October 2014
Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee – 3rd February 2015
Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee – 23rd June 2015
Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee – 1st September 2015
Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee – 19th July 2016

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update on the progress and impact of the Early Help Strategy and delivery of the offer of early help. The report will provide an overview on the refresh of the Early Help Strategy undertaken in 2018 and will highlight the delivery and impact from the early help hubs and partnership working in the localities. The report will address challenges and will outline strategic priorities. Case studies will be utilised to highlight the evidence and impact being achieved both for individual families and the impact being achieved at a community level.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 This report provides a further update on developments in early help and provides a coherent picture on how the offer of early help is developing in the City since the last update was provided to Scrutiny Committee in July 2016. The report will cover developments and progress since the early help hubs were established in 2015; the progress of the Early Help Assessment (EHA) and associated performance activity will be highlighted along with evidence of impact and emerging trends and pressures.

- 2.2 Since the last report to Scrutiny Committee Ofsted have inspected Children's Services including Early Help and the key feedback in relation to early help was:

‘As a result of significantly strengthened and accessible early help services, children are able to access timely support, when difficulties arise. Partners work well together in locality based hubs, undertaking an increasing number of early help assessments.’

- 2.3 The work of the early help social workers was recognised with the feedback that ‘the early help social workers ensure a smooth transfer for cases requiring stepping up and ‘step up and step down arrangements are well co-ordinated’. An area for development was understanding the impact from early help and Ofsted highlighted that ‘measuring the impact from early help requires development’.

This feedback has informed the priorities and work of the Early Help Operational Board and has featured strongly in the refresh of the Early Help Strategy resulting in the development of a revised performance dashboard and impact map.

- 2.4 *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* is the key strategic guidance that governs safeguarding arrangements; this was revised in July 2018 and recognises the importance of early help and the early help system to effective safeguarding.

The guidance states that ‘ local authorities should work with organisations and agencies to develop joined up early help services based on a clear

understanding of local needs' and highlights that there should be in place 'targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve outcomes for the child'.

The guidance is clear that early help assessments should be evidence based, be clear about the action to be taken and services to be provided and focus on improving outcomes. We measure this via the Early Help Quality Assurance Framework and the programme of audit activity.

- 2.5 The revised safeguarding guidance helpfully replaces the term professional with that of practitioner so the Lead Professional is now known as the Lead Practitioner. In addition the guidance extends the groups of children where we should be alert to the potential need for early help, and includes children at risk of exploitation, including trafficking, those at risk of modern slavery or being drawn into criminal behaviour.

An effective early help specialist team has been in place since October 2015 and provides support and interventions to families where there is a risk of exploitation. This is in complementary to the work undertaken with schools, the joint work with Voluntary Community Service partners and with youth providers to ensure earlier intervention to prevent exploitation.

2.6 **Governance and Accountability Arrangements**

The Children's Board is the key strategic partnership to provide overall leadership for the shaping and delivering the vision for children, young people and their families and has overseen the refresh of the Early Help Strategy. The refresh has been aligned to the overall vision - **Our Manchester – building a safe, happy, healthy and successful future for children and young people**'.

To ensure connectivity with front line staff, an Early Help Operational Steering Group is in place. This meets bi-monthly and identifies and responds to themes and challenges, addresses workforce development issues and monitors performance and delivery of the Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Early Help Hubs.

3.0 **Early Help Strategy**

- 3.1 The Early Help Strategy has been refreshed in 2018 and followed consultation with front line staff, with families and children and young people. An Early Help Survey was issued to front line staff and responses received helped inform the refresh. The refreshed Early Help strategy reflects the co-design approach and is aligned to the delivery of the four 'Our Manchester, Our Children' outcome priorities: safe, happy, healthy and successful.
- 3.2 In the strategy the previous definition of early help has been maintained as this continues to apply:

“Early Help is intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families or with a population most at risk of developing problems. Effective intervention may occur at any point in a child or young person’s life”.

- 3.3 Fundamentally the strategy is reflecting the key message that Early Help is a collaborative approach; it is not a provision or a service and this is reflected in one of the core principles that **‘early help is everyone’s business’**. Relationships are fundamental and the strategy acknowledges the importance of developing effective relationships at every level with a focus on **people rather than process**. Feedback from the consultation highlighted that co-location of front line staff works and that good progress had been made in developing a multi-agency offer of early help in Manchester. Examples that illustrate this are the co-located early years and health visiting teams in Old Moat Sure Start Children’s Centre and the 3 Early Help Hubs, with weekly allocation meetings, cited a strong examples of this approach.
- 3.4 In refreshing the strategy the intention was to create a strategy that is accessible and visible and this will be achieved by developing an interactive online strategy that will provide links to family’s stories and experiences. There will be tools and guidance provided along with evidence of impact. The communications team aim to have a draft interactive tool ready by the autumn.
- 3.5 In developing the strategy a number of priorities have been identified and they are:
1. **Invest in our Workforce** – ensure the workforce has the tools to deliver an effective and integrated offer of early help through an accredited Early Help Practitioner *Learning Programme*. This will focus on embedding further the ‘Our Manchester’ approach, culture and behaviours rather than process.
 2. **Focus on Information Technology and digitalisation** - to support information sharing, feedback and early intervention.
 3. **Encourage Family Co-design** - regular feedback through improved use of technology and ensure families inform the design and build on the successful approach developed through the SEND Parent Champions.
 4. **Enhance Locality delivery** –with an enhanced focus on early years, community health, schools and VCS partners and strengthening further the relationship with statutory/specialist services; all part of the developing Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO).
 5. **Focus on Early Years**- closer integration of early years and early help services to support school readiness and achieve closing the gap.
 6. **Schools** - a number of approaches are in place to support schools and colleges in recognition of the central role schools play in building

resilience for our children and young people, their families and our communities.

“It is important to recognise that we have done a lot in a short space of time, that behaviour change in organisations will take time (like turning around a very big boat at sea) and that we need to embed good practice and not feel that we need to change too much too soon”

Feedback taken from Early Help survey

- 3.6 To ensure the Strategy achieves the priorities and impact a delivery plan is being developed with each partner providing evidence of delivery and impact; the first session to agree this will be with members of the Early Operational Board on the 3rd September 2018.

4.0 Early Help Hubs and Partnerships

- 4.1 The Early Help Hubs are well established in coordinating a targeted offer of early help and in providing advice, guidance and support to partners and to families. As well as delivering targeted and specialist family support via the Early Help Assessment Team (EHAT) and the Early Help Practitioner (EHP), the hubs also support partners to develop and deliver an early help approach within their own organisations. In addition, the Early Help Parenting Team who are based in the Central Hub deliver evidence based parenting programmes city wide. This is complimented by parenting programmes delivered by early year’s staff and shorter courses delivered by partners such as MAES (Manchester Adult Education Service) and schools.
- 4.2 Every month the early help hubs receive between 1,500 and 2,000 enquiries, either directly from partners, social work colleagues or from the Contact Centre and MASH (Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub). Some of these are telephone enquiries that require advice, assistance or signposting to other services; calls to the hubs increased from 14,480 in 16/17 to 16,641 in 17/18. Approximately 600 enquiries a month result in a more detailed assessment conversation and a further offer of support, either from a partner agency or an early help hub intervention.
- 4.3 The EHAT was established to work with those families where a brief intervention is required, either because more information is needed to give a fuller picture or where the family would benefit from a shorter period of support to help them get back on track themselves. Families receiving support from EHAT are contacted for an initial screening visit within 24 hours with intervention starting within 3 working days and lasting up to 8 weeks. EHAT has been operating for 18 months at North Early Help Hub and a review of EHAT cases closed between January 2017 and March 2017 was undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the model.
- 4.4 In order to evaluate the sustainability and impact of the intervention each of the cases were tracked for a period of 12 to 18 months. In 70% of the cases the outcomes achieved have been sustained with no further referrals into the

Contact Centre or Early Help Triage being received. An Early Help Assessment, a Team around the Family Meeting or a combination of both were completed in 74% of the cases by Early Help. In 91% of the cases an identified lead professional from a partner agency continued the coordinated multi-agency offer of early help support following the closure of the case to MCC Early Help Services. In 100% of the cases the family continued to engage throughout the period of intervention.

- 4.5 The strengths of this model of working can be evidenced through the high rates of engagement, the significant rates of sustainability through reduced re-referral, the increased capacity of practitioners and the continued accountability of partners throughout the intervention. This service is now operational in all 3 Early Help Hubs.
- 4.6 The Early Help Practitioners within the hubs and the Early Help Parenting Team between them support 600 families; a third of the families are joint worked with social work, around a third are cases that have 'stepped down from social work and a third are families referred by partners who require a more intensive offer than they can provide. Analysis of presenting needs in the hubs continued to demonstrate in 2017/18 that mental and emotional health (both adult and child) remains the predominating need, followed by parenting and domestic violence and abuse, which features as a presenting issue in 30% of all referrals to the early help hubs.
- 4.7 It is worth noting, at this point prior to the establishment of the early help hubs significant demand was made on the statutory social work service and a factor that led to excessively high caseloads for social workers. Since this time we have an improved understanding of how demand is being responded to in the City and the emergent needs and pressures. We know Manchester's child population growth has grown rapidly and increased by 21.8% in the last 10 years and will continue to grow by 2021 and beyond. We have an improved understanding about the causal factors that impact on a family's resilience, health and well-being, the impact of poverty and the increasing number of families presenting with housing needs. This is illustrated by the growing reliance by families on the private rented sector which has increased the proportion of families seeking help due to rent arrears, threat of eviction or homelessness. This accounts for 29% of all enquiries and referrals to the hubs.
- 4.8 To respond to these needs partnership work in relation to improving child and adolescent mental health and well-being and supporting the homelessness strategy have been key priorities. This resulted in developing an earlier intervention service to support child and young people's mental health; the ICR (Integrated Community Response Service). This is a partnership between CAMHS, 42nd Street and the Early Help Hubs and is included in *i-Thrive* the CAMHS transformation programme.
- 4.9 The ICR workers are based in the hubs and provide advice, guidance and brief intervention to young people. Although early days this is proving to be a successful approach which has resulted in positive feedback from young

people, earlier support for young people experiencing crises which might include self-harm and suicidal thoughts. The co-location has increased the knowledge, skills and confidence of hub staff in relation to young people's mental health and young people are receiving a quick and effective response.

- 4.10 Families at risk of homelessness and or risk of eviction are increasingly being referred to the hubs. The co – location of the MCC Floating Support Housing Team in the hubs enables a multi - agency approach for families. The early help hubs are part of the delivery plan for the Homelessness Strategy and are contributing both to strategic plans and locality delivery. In addition the hubs have supported a number of joint initiatives to address issues experienced by families in homes of multiple occupancy. Registered housing providers remain strong partners for the delivery of an offer of early help and some such as Great Places, have redesigned existing tenancy support services to have an Our Manchester focus and emphasis on whole family support; whilst in the North and South of the City registered providers deliver both family support and contribute to early help triage and allocation meetings.
- 4.11 In the North of the City the early help hubs have worked proactively with partners in the locality to address anti- social behaviour and to identify and to respond to the families circumstances. One example concerns an area in North Manchester where a number of parents were reporting being physically assaulted, having property damaged, and being the victims of anti-social behaviour. Early Help convened a multi-agency meeting with involved partners including Education, Community Provisions, GMP, Northwards Housing, Community Safety, Children's Social Work and Youth Justice.
- 4.12 The identified concerns focused on a group of 28 children aged 10-18 years and involved in a number of reported incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour. The multi-agency group took a targeted approach using challenge, support, disruption and diversionary methods of engaging the group and their families around their offending behaviour. Bespoke case planning was facilitated around all the children with a range of options being explored to ensure that the individual and holistic needs were met, capturing any vulnerabilities particularly in regards to criminal exploitation.
- 4.13 The North Hub coordinated the project and contacted every family ensuring that an in depth EHA of the family's holistic needs was undertaken; this was combined with enforcement action through Tenancy Warnings and Injunctions. Additional support was offered to tenants that had been targeted around their rehousing and safety options. The Project has now ended and tracking of sustainability was completed on all identified children. Results demonstrated that 23 out of the 28 children have not perpetrated any further offences in the 4 months since the end of the Project, this was a success rate of 82% and Police and ASBAT have reported a decrease in reports of Anti-Social Behaviour perpetrated by this group in this area. This is alongside the 50% reduction in ASB complaints achieved during the first 6 months of the project.

5.0 Work with Schools

5.1 Pupil referral Units (PRUs)

The Early Help Service has established a close and effective relationship with Bridgelea, the primary pupil referral unit. There is a strengthened offer of early help in place to pupils in the setting through the co-location of two Early Help Practitioners who work directly with Bridgelea pupils. The service commenced in January 2017 following recruitment and the EHP's are regarded as part of the Bridgelea team by members of staff but particularly from pupils and parents/carers and achieve a high engagement rate (17 families successfully engaged out of 21 referred in the first year of delivery).

- 5.2 The EHP's have built trust by working with children in the classroom environment as well as visiting families at their homes and are the lead for many cases and the EHP co-ordinates and chairs Team around the Family (TAF) meetings. Good follow on support has been provided and where cases are closed to an EHP the family continues to receive 'step down' or less intensive support from the core Bridgelea team demonstrating an integrated approach to work with families.
- 5.3 An example, which encapsulates the positive impact on families, is where a year 6 pupil was supported back into mainstream education by an Early Help Practitioner and Bridgelea. This pupil and his family continued to receive support as he made the difficult transition to year 7 and a mainstream high school. This pupil remains in a mainstream high school setting and follow on support ensured the resilience and stability of the family.
- 5.4 There is ongoing work to strengthen the partnership between the Early Help Hubs and the Secondary PRU; this is important as Schools respond to the increase in exclusions. Currently the Strategic Lead for Early Help attends multi agency meetings in the Secondary PRU to share information and to identify children and young people who require early help and support. We are looking to develop a joint response to enable Early Help Practitioners to be co - located in the Secondary PRU so that the benefits of the partnership working from the primary PRU are extended across the age range.
- 5.5 The Early Help Hubs have a key role to support the achievement of the Children and Education Services Directorate Plan 2018 – 2021 including improving outcomes for all children and ensuring good attendance, stability of education placements and reducing exclusions. Attendance officers are well integrated into the early help hubs; the additionality of education case workers will strengthen the connectivity and ensure the achievement of stable and good educational outcomes is core for all partners working not just in the hubs but also within the localities.
- 5.6 Feedback from schools through Early Help Champions meetings and other networks demonstrated that staff in schools often felt a level of frustration related to poor communication with them about plans that are in place for a

family. Education colleagues reported they were being left out of the loop about key decisions and work that was being undertaken with families.

- 5.7 To address this since November 2017 Children's Social Care and Early Help in South locality have held 'Bridging the Gap' meetings, this fora takes place every six weeks and is open to all primary schools. The purpose of the meeting is to support the early identification of a child and family's needs and to enable the right response at the right time. The meetings have been received very well by the schools that have attended and have demonstrated some good evidence of early help.
- 5.8 A good example of school led early help and good evidence of use of TAF (Team around the Family) was shared at the meetings with clear actions to address early signs of neglect. The bridging the gap session provided advice and guidance on the offer already being delivered, provided reassurance and recognition of the schools' work and prevented the escalation of need. Forums are in place across the City and from autumn will look to expand to include secondary schools and will include a targeted approach to invite schools where EHA numbers are low.
- 5.9 Given the demand for social care support from schools it is recognised that the fora currently being developed in each of the localities is of significant strategic importance, the early help service views the problem solving and support aspect of these foras as highly important and will ensure it has a full and meaningful engagement with this process to ensure our targeted offer is able to meet the needs of schools.

6.0 Performance and Impact

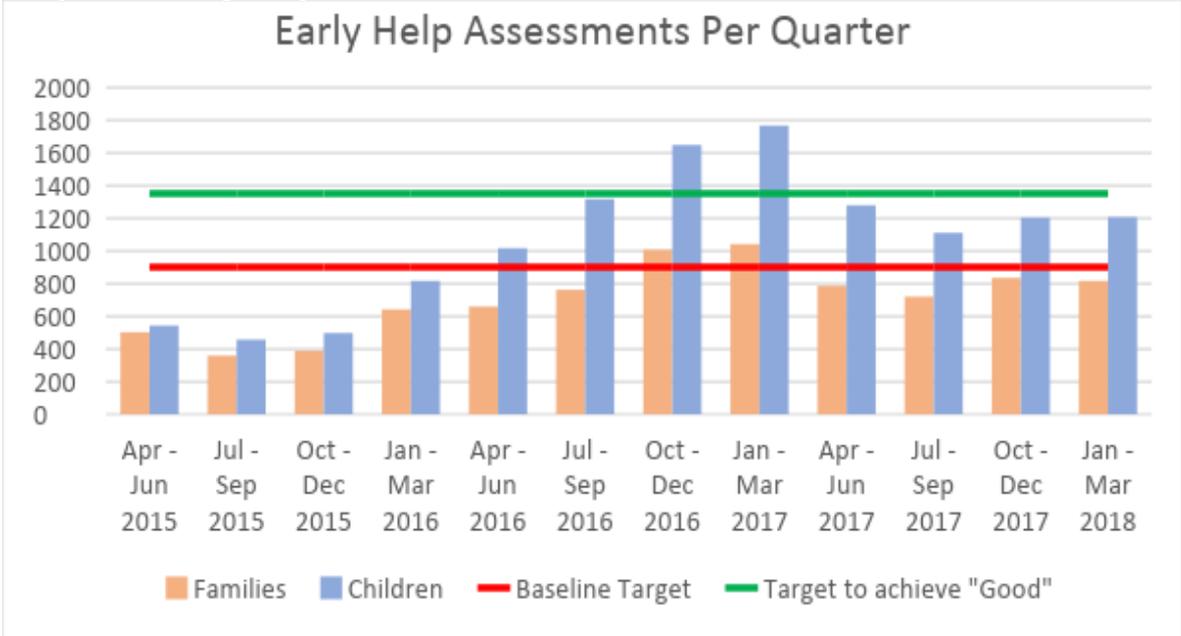
- 6.1 Over the last six months there has been focused work to develop a performance framework to better evidence the impact of Early Help delivery in Manchester. The framework that has been developed is an impact map that describes the key activities of the early help strategy and is linked to the 4 outcomes of the Children's and Young People's Plan. This will strengthen the current early help dashboard that reports on activity in the Early Help Hubs and registration of EHAs. The impact map is attached as an appendix to this report.

6.2 Early Help Assessments

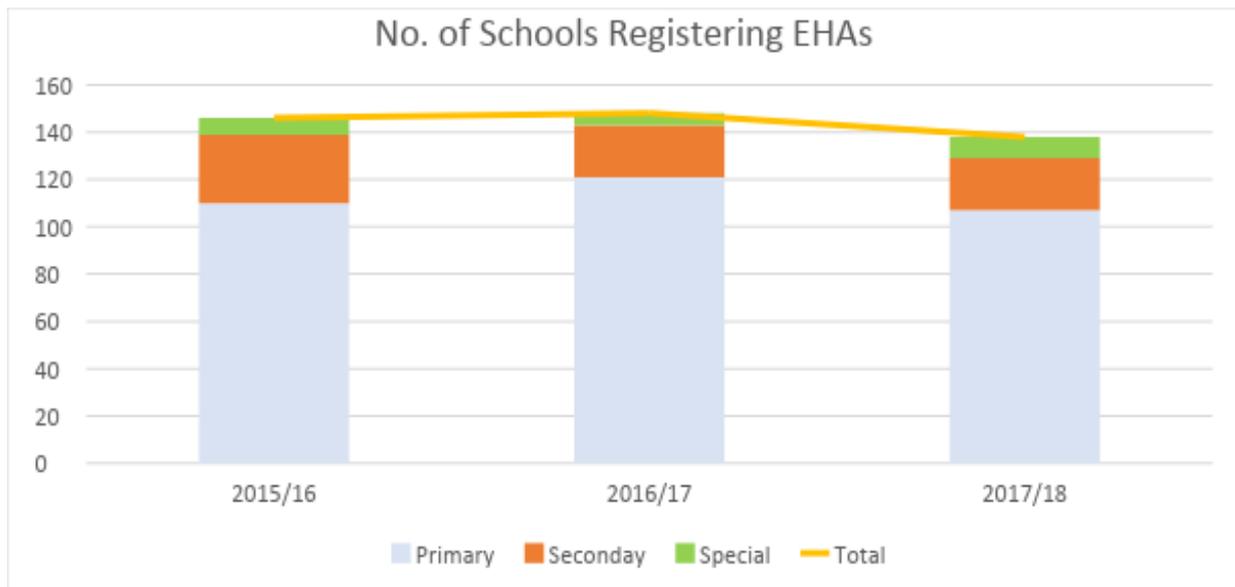
It is three years since the introduction of the EHA in 2015 and performance on registrations is included in the Early Help Hub Dashboard and monitored and tracked via the Early Help Operational Steering Group and quarterly via the Children's Board.

- 6.3 In 2016/17 performance in relation to EHAs was strong with a peak of activity resulting in 3,471 families' registered and 5,749 children; sufficient to achieve a rating of good. In 17/18 the volume of registrations was lower than anticipated with 3,155 families registered, relating to 4,798 children. This is illustrated in the graph 1.

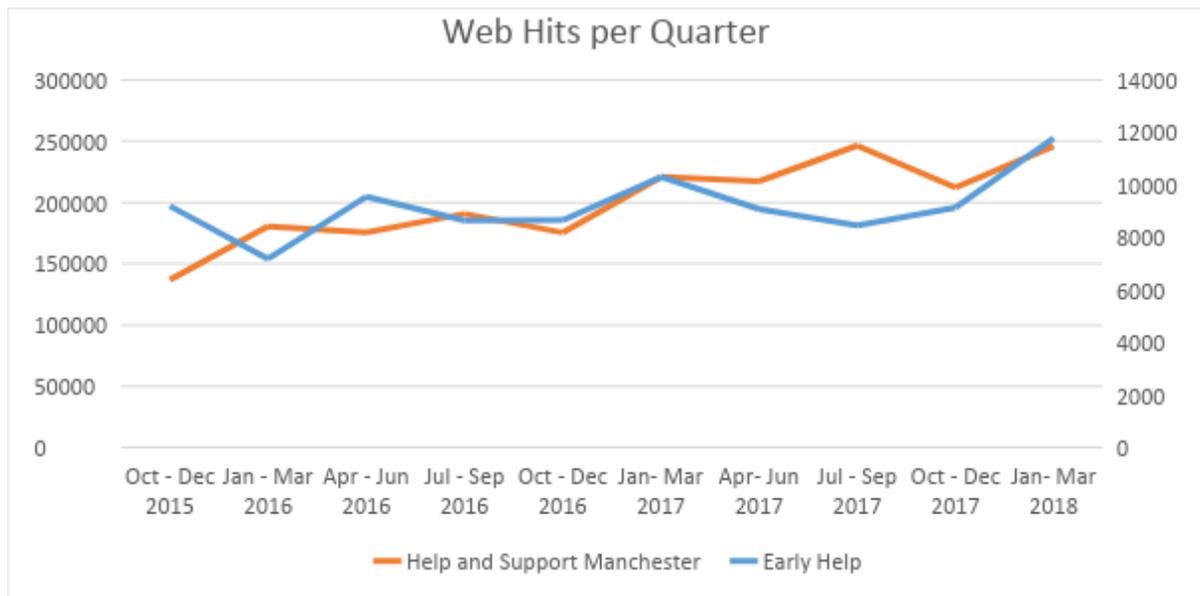
Graph 1: Early Help Assessments



- 6.4 In relation to specific sectors health registrations reflect minor variations with the percentage of registered EHAs remaining stable at 26% in 2016/17 and increasing to 29% in 2017/18. Within the health sector the health visiting service account for the highest proportion of registered EHAs with numbers increasing sharply in 2016/17 and remaining at a similar level in 2017/18.
- 6.5 The schools sector account for 41% of all registered EHAs and have seen a variance with a reduction of 47 registered EHAs compared to the previous year. Secondary schools register a low number of EHAs and this is a concern both in terms of the size of the school population, the unrelenting demand for social care services and the increase in the number of troubled adolescents where an earlier offer of help could have assisted. This is within the context of a number of initiatives being in place to support schools e.g. Bridging the Gap sessions, early help key workers co - located in the primary PRU, the CPOMS data project which looked at capturing a school offer of early help and a strong offer from the hubs to support schools with the offer of early help.



- 6.6 Primary schools are delivering an offer of early help but the challenge remains in capturing early help activity in schools, and evidence of Team around the Family (TAF) meetings and their impact on improving outcomes to reduce escalation of need. System challenges remain both in relation to having a fit for purpose electronic portal to enable partners to register and record their EHAs and a system that captures the huge diversity of the early help offer especially amongst the VCS sector. Whilst Liquid Logic will provide an improvement and better connectivity with the social care journey for partners an electronic early help module remains some distance. In the interim a number of actions such as the roll out of the e learning early help module together with targeted work with schools and partners will continue but this must also be driven by system leaders who share the collective responsibility to evidence a strength based offer of early help.
- 6.7 The Early Help Practitioner Zone within the Help and Support Manchester website continues to receive a high volume of activity and the last quarter of 2017/18 saw a record number of 'hits' (nearly 12,000 compared to 9,137 in the quarter before). This demonstrates the interest in early help and demand for information both from the workforce and from residents has remained high.



Impact from the Early Help hubs

- 6.8 There has been an increase in direct contacts to the early help hubs from 20% in 2015 to 58% in 2017/8 with an increase in the provision of advice and guidance resulting in 45% of enquiries/advice and support now resolved at the first point of contact . Performance data from North EHAT demonstrates 70% of families post intervention sustain stability and well – being and are not re referred for statutory support.
- 6.9 The Troubled Families (TF) programme is delivered through the early help offer, data is available to demonstrate the impact of the EHP intervention as part of the Troubled Family return and the latest annual report is imminent. The last analysis of Troubled Families outcomes in 2017 showed strong evidence of the positive impact of the Early Help Service on outcomes for families. For example, in terms of safeguarding, 12 months after the completion of the Early Help Practitioner intervention:
- 81% of families at Child in Need level had that status removed. There was only a 14% recidivism rate.
 - 87% of families with a child on a Child Protection Plan had that status removed. There was only a 15% recidivism rate.
 - 53% of families with ‘our children’ (looked after children) had that status removed with only a 7% recidivism rate.
- 6.10 This is in the context of the Early Help Practitioners working with families across the levels of need and a change in the number of cases also open to social workers. In 2015 the early help practitioner service caseload reflected 65% of cases were also open to social workers in 2017/18 this is now 34% and is enabling earlier intervention with a targeted offer of support.
- 6.11 Demand for parenting interventions and group based parenting programmes has increased by 50% over the last three years with demand exceeding supply

at times. The MCC Early Help Parenting Team produce a termly report on the delivery and impact of the evidence based interventions. The impact achieved is significant; data collected at 3 points of intervention; prior to the course starting, completion and 3 months post completion enables tracking of impact and outcomes. Performance data from 2017/18 highlights:

- A 77% retention rate for completion (national average is 40% - 60%)
- 74% of parents saw a reduction in their perceptions of their child's overall stress
- 78% of parents saw an improvement in their mental health and well-being scores
- 50% of children were removed from child protection planning

- 6.12 This is confirmed by qualitative feedback with parents reporting '*I'm more confident and it really helped me a lot to deal with my teen*' and '*I became more understanding of my child and her needs and how play and praise has a huge impact on day to day life*'. Feedback from children has been '*I'm not arguing with my Mum anymore and my relationship with Mum is going well. I'm not getting into trouble with bad mates now*' and '*I like home because I feel safe with Mum and Dad*'. Additionally as a result of improved family stability and well-being parenting are accessing volunteering and work opportunities via good links with the Troubled Families Employment Advisor based in the hubs.
- 6.13 Positive impacts are being achieved at a community level; the early help team have been key in achieving positive outcomes for families living in houses of multiple occupancy. Coordinated partner activity resulted in 16 separate properties being visited and immediate health and safety, basic needs and safeguarding issues addressed. Concerns relating to property conditions were resolved including safety checks and remedial repairs made with residents no longer living in unsafe conditions. Together with general disruption activity this reduced Police calls outs to the property from 34 to 3 and is a strong example of a cohesive multi agency response to community problems resulting in significant cost benefits.
- 6.14 The South Hub supports the delivery of WINS (Wythenshawe Integrated Neighbourhood Services) this is a partnership in Wythenshawe that was developed to provide a different response to working with residents who are multiple callers to GMP, Ambulance, and Wythenshawe Community Housing Group. Although WINS has predominantly worked with vulnerable adults there are many households with children and young people, some where the families are known to Early Help or Children's Social Care and some where a request for support would be appropriate. Some of early impact from this approach has been that across the partnership there is a better understanding of the strengths and presenting needs of our communities, and an improved sense of services within a community. Consequently this is preventing the duplication of referrals and identifying the right type of support at an earlier point.

6.15 **Quality Assurance**

We measure the impact of the Early Help Strategy via our quality assurance and performance framework. In 2017/18 the hubs focused on driving the quality of practice forward through analysis of the performance data, robust supervision, direct observation of practitioners and development of the Early Help Practice Standards and audit activity. Early Help Hubs have a good record in completing supervisions and appraisals, regularly achieving 90% of all supervisions required. The quality of supervision has been the focus of a recent audit and areas for improvement were identified which have resulted in greater clarity around case planning, identifying next steps work and ensuring improved recording. Findings from audits highlight quality of practice is improving and learning circles held for all cases where practice is judged inadequate following moderation.

- 6.16 The quality of EHAs is monitored via the Locality Early Help Champions Networks who complete multi-agency audits and support is given to partners where improvements are identified. Previously the majority of audits indicated a 'requires improvement' outcome and dedicated resources have been made available to support partners to embed strengths based conversations and use of the EHA. Over 100 agencies and 800 individuals have completed the Early Help Journey training session on undertaking a strength based conversation and the EHA process. This is being supplemented the roll out in 2018 of the e-learning Early Help module. Targeted work with 93 GP practices has taken place, including a clear referral pathway for GP's and briefings with practice teams.
- 6.17 A City wide Quality Assurance process is in place delivered via the Early Help Champions Network and a quarterly report is produced. In quarter 4 there was an audit of 29 EHAs registered by a range of partners; the audit activity reported that 5 were inadequate, 12 required improvement, 11 were good and 1 was outstanding. The Early Help Champions Network oversees the learning from the audits and ensures any deficits are addressed with bespoke training and follow up audit activity undertaken with the organisation including feedback and development for the practitioner.

7.0 **Future Priorities**

- 7.1 The key priority will be the ensuring the implementation of the refreshed Early Help Strategy achieves the desired impact and demonstrates that outcomes are improving for children and families. Achieving a successful strategy will be determined by a number of factors including the evolving work to strengthen locality working with the early help hubs continuing to have a key role to co-ordinate a targeted offer of early help.
- 7.2 Strategically work is being progressed to develop closer alignment and integration with early years and early help and the strategic and operational responsibility for both services will come together under the Strategic Head of Early Help. We will strengthen the offer of early help in the early years' by targeting families at an earlier age, by providing a more seamless service with

the early help hubs, and building on the existing integrated delivery model with health colleagues. This alongside the developing work to pilot school leadership of the early years' systems provides an opportunity to achieve system wide reform that is firmly rooted in partnership delivery of services in the localities. MCC Early Help leaders will be key partners in developing the evolving Children's Health Transformation Programme which will inform the future service delivery and the arrangements of the Local Care Organisation (LCO).

7.3 We will ensure we meet our funding requirements for the national Troubled Families programme which changed over the last 12 months. The funding is now devolved to GMCA and income is no longer received, retrospectively, based on family 'attachment' and 'payment by result'. Instead money is received up front through GMCA's Reform Investment Fund (RIF) so it can be invested in early help models and areas of reform.

7.4 We will submit a Reform Investment Plan to GMCA in September 2018 which will articulate how we intend to invest the funding. The reform investment plan will need to be supplemented by a full Cost Benefits Analysis which will focus on the totality of our investment in Early Help. Our Reform Investment Plan will align with the strategic approach outlined in the Early Help Strategy (2018-2021) with a particular focus on investments in the workforce, digital/IT capabilities and 'place'.

8.0 Summary

To note the refresh and revised priorities outlined in the Early Help Strategy 2018 – 2021 and the progress and impact from the Early Help Hubs. The report highlights the diversity of the offer of early help and the flexibility of the Early Help Hub in responding to the presenting needs of families and communities and illustrates the development of the Early Help Service over the past three years. Key priorities are highlighted which will inform the future development of the Early Help Service.