

Priority Area 3: Early Help, Pathways, Thresholds and Assessments

Early Help is crucial. It means taking action to support a child, young person or their family early in the life of a problem, as soon as it emerges. It can be required at any stage in a child's life from pre-birth to adulthood, and applies to any problem or need that the family cannot deal with or meet on their own. It also applies to all children and young people, with any form of need.

It is vital that the LSCB has a clear understanding of our Early Help arrangements and that we focus significant effort on the prevention of abuse. Much of this year has been dedicated to applying our efforts, building on Ofsted's recommendation (2015), to have a better understanding of the effectiveness of early help assessments and interventions

Our progress

- We have assumed the governance of early help arrangements, previously held by the Early Help Partnership Board.
- In recognition that the local authority has predominantly taken the leadership role in coordinating early help strategies, information and access points, the LSCB has established a new Early Help Subgroup to provide strategic direction around the multi-agency delivery of Early Help and to promote an integrated and effective multi-agency Early Help approach across the city.
- Continued to test whether professionals understand the threshold for social work intervention.
- Continued to assess whether the child's emerging needs are appropriately met elsewhere when the threshold for Social Work intervention is not met.
- Continued to assess what impact Early Help has had on outcomes for the child and family.
- Gained an improved understanding of the capacity at early help access points.
- Delivered training on Early Help systems and processes, with professionals guided through Early Help documents and paperwork, exploring the MASH processes, interpreting the Threshold document and examining the function and role of the Weekly Allocation Meeting.
- Throughout the year our agencies have taken positive steps to improve the delivery of early help (read from page 30)

Still to do

- Ensure families and children's views and experiences of early help intervention and support influences service delivery.
- More clearly understand how agencies work together to better support the whole family (to ensure interventions are targeted to each member of the family) e.g. closer working with Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Adults Board.
- Explore opportunities for co-production and co-commissioning, pooling resources and efforts to do things differently. The commissioning of services (which support early help) needs to be evidenced based and must avoid duplication of resources, offers and efforts.