

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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UPDATE ON INTEGRATED FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

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Summary

This report is an update on the work going on to ensure that Medway targeted Early Help offer is as effective as possible and is designed to meet the needs of children, families and young people. It is the Council's role to enable, facilitate and stimulate Early Help support, though they are provided by a wide range of organisations and services. This paper describes the work to date to strengthen the system for supporting multi agency interventions and simplifying the system.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The Council does not have a dedicated early help budget, but along with the CCG, NHS England, schools and colleges, the Council directly funds, trades or commissions a substantial number of services which are part of the overall offer. The Council's contribution goes wider than Children's and Adults Directorate – Public Health, Housing and Community Safety play important roles in supporting vulnerable families, children and young people, with Public Health in particular playing an increasing role in identifying and supporting children and young people facing challenges.
- 1.2 Early Help provision has been developed through the learning and the highly successful Medway Action for Families (MAfF) initiative (Medway's response to the national 'Troubled Families Programme').
- 1.3 Rt Hon Greg Clark was appointed Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and announced at the beginning of September 2015, details of an expansion of the government's Troubled Families programme, to help vulnerable younger children from struggling homes to get a better chance in life.
- 1.4 As well as expanding from working with school-age children to those under 5 years, the wider programme will also have a particular focus on improving poor health, which new data published recently highlights is a particular

problem in troubled families, with 71% having a physical health problem and 46% a mental health concern.

- 1.5 Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Rt Hon Greg Clark said:

“The Troubled Families programme has been a brilliant partnership between the government and councils, changing the way services are run, saving taxpayers money and turning around the lives of some of the hardest to help in the country, with kids back in school, youth crime and anti-social behaviour cut and adults better able to work. Building on this momentum, we are now able to help even more families and deal with even more problems and I am delighted that that work will now begin in the next few months”.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Troubled Families Programme was introduced in 2011 and Medway was tasked to turn around the lives of 560 families that met a government set criteria around crime and anti social behaviour, educational risks and worklessness. In response, the Council established the Medway Action for Families (MAfF) team to develop a partnership approach to tackle this agenda.
- 2.2 MAfF achieved the target in Phase 1 of turning around 560 families over 3 years and was nationally recognised for doing so, and the quality of the programme and approach.
- 2.3 Government proposed an expanded Troubled Families programme, Phase 2, and MAfF have been successful in demonstrating and attracting significant additional PbR funding from the DCLG to support the work in the next phase and effectively triple the number of families supported over a wider range of criteria. This provided a perfect platform to enable and embed the wider Early Help strategy. The activity and names of MAfF now needs to be seen and understood as part of a wider Early Help system.
- 2.4 Most children’s needs are met by their family or universal services (those services that are available to everyone). These are provided as a right to all children, young people and their families, including those whose needs are also met within targeted and/ or specialist and statutory services.
- 2.5 For those children and families who face more challenges, and may have multiple needs, targeted services provide additional capacity and expertise to work with these families to address their needs.
- 2.6 The average Troubled Family in Medway has over 3 children and has 9 risk indicators within the family home, which has informed and shaped the criteria for Phase 2 (see 3.4 for new criteria moving into the next stage of the programme).
- 2.7 For children whose needs and circumstances make them more vulnerable, a coordinated multi-disciplinary approach is usually the most effective, based on an Early Help Assessment (previously Common Assessment Framework – CAF), with a Lead Practitioner/ Professional to work closely with the child and

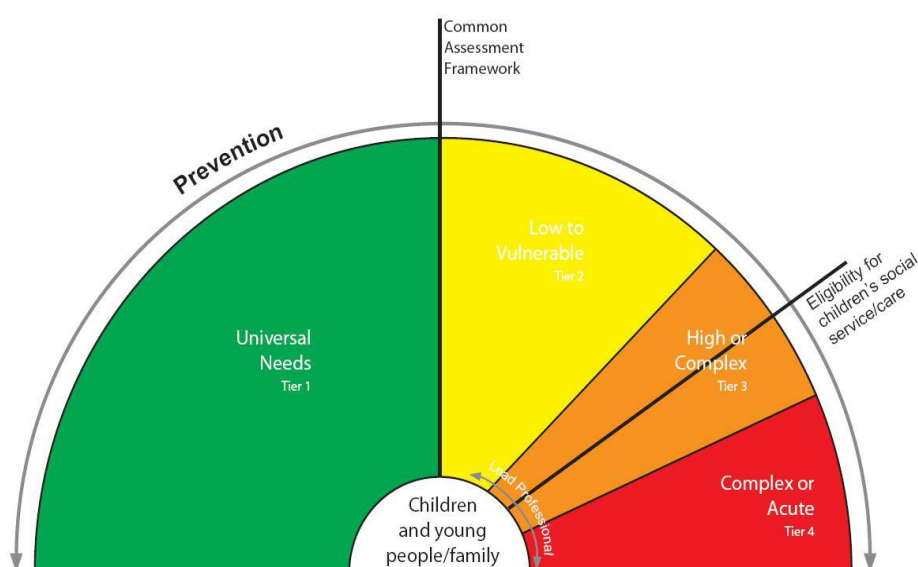
family to ensure they receive all the support they require. A range of targeted services are available across Medway to support these interventions.

2.8 When a child's needs cannot be met in universal or targeted services, practitioners can make a request directly to specialist Children Social Care services. This includes when a child is in need of help, and where it is believed that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

2.9 The MAfF programme has promoted a different approach to working with families in order to help them to change or turn their lives around:

- By working with the whole family in a way which recognises they interact and influence each other rather than viewing them as individuals with problems;
- Using a dedicated worker or dedicated team to get to the underlying problems, rather than individual services responding to the presenting problem of each family member;
- By developing a relationship with the family, being persistent and building trust with them in order to challenge them to make the changes they need to, step by step, rather than containing and monitoring their problems;
- And, where necessary, drawing in specialist services in a sequenced way at the right time for the family rather than services being available on the basis of meeting thresholds and availability.

2.10



2.11 Above is the Early Help windscreen showing the different levels of intervention that exist. Early Help may be provided through an increase in the levels of universal service, or services provided or commissioned across Medway;

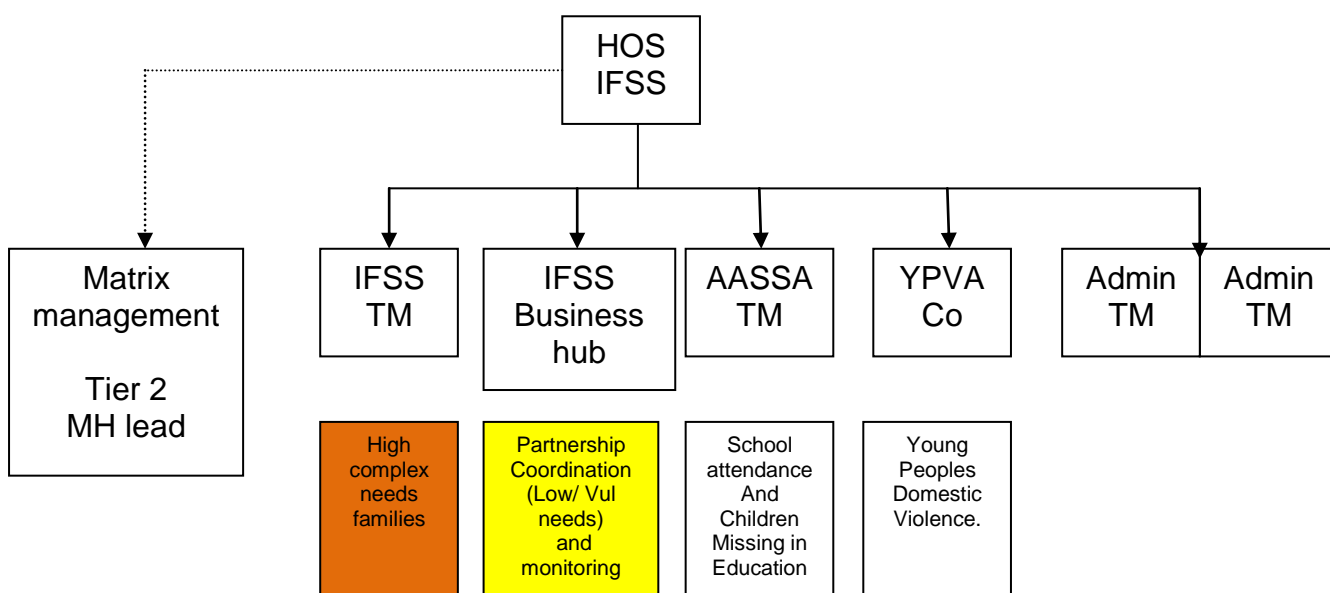
- 2.12 This includes family support provided by schools and third sector services. Families are best supported by those who already work with them organising additional support with local partners as needed.
- 2.13 The purpose of Early Help is, through prompt and targeted interventions, to prevent issues and problems becoming acute, chronic and costly to the child, young person, the family and the wider community.
- 2.14 It is extremely important that other Early Help services work together well, so that families, children and young people receive coordinated, rather than sequential, packages of support, which meet their needs and build their resilience.

3. Development of Integrated Family Support Services (IFSS)

- 3.1 Medway pooled its resource of family workers from Children's Social Care, Youth Offending Team and Family Intervention Projects, and in combining this with the multi-agency Medway Action for Families team established the single Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) IFSS works with families with multiple and complex needs and was fully established in September 2015.
- 3.2 FSS is now working with partner agencies to develop a virtual area based model and Children's Social Care teams will be gradually aligned during 15/16. This will support greater joined up work around families in the community and children on Child in Need and Child Protection Plans, enabling more seamless 'step-up' and 'step-down' planning that is child focused and promotes a 'never do nothing' approach.
- 3.3 Based on demographic data identifying the areas of greatest need, the locality areas we will be working in are:
- Chatham Central, Luton and Wayfield and River Wards
 - Chatham and Rochester (excluding the wards above)
 - Gillingham and Rainham
 - Strood and Peninsula
- 3.4 We have increased the resource to support this work by increasing from 1 CAF Coordinator to 4. An enhanced CAF team will enable us to draw on a larger pool of practitioners, form a wider range of services; and monitor the quality and progress of early help interventions
- 3.5 The first vital component of this new approach is about managing families proactively. Many are chaotic and struggle to function day to day whether as a cause or effect of their experiences and problems. So without some help to stabilise them and help them function, little progress can be made
- 3.6 For families it is important to establish what is happening in their lives aside from the list of individual problems identified by different agencies i.e. to understand the wider family dynamics and how they themselves see their problems and the causes of those. This ability to look from 'inside out rather than outside in' has been identified as a crucial element of family intervention in the MAfF programme

3.7 IFSS has improved systematic sharing of information to provide a more complete picture of the family, to ascertain which other public services are working with that family and what their involvement is seeking to achieve. Families often become subject to different services' processes and assessments without anyone having a clear picture of what is happening overall for that family and what needs to change. This is likely to result in the family also being unclear about what is going wrong for them as a whole, and what they need to do to turn things around.

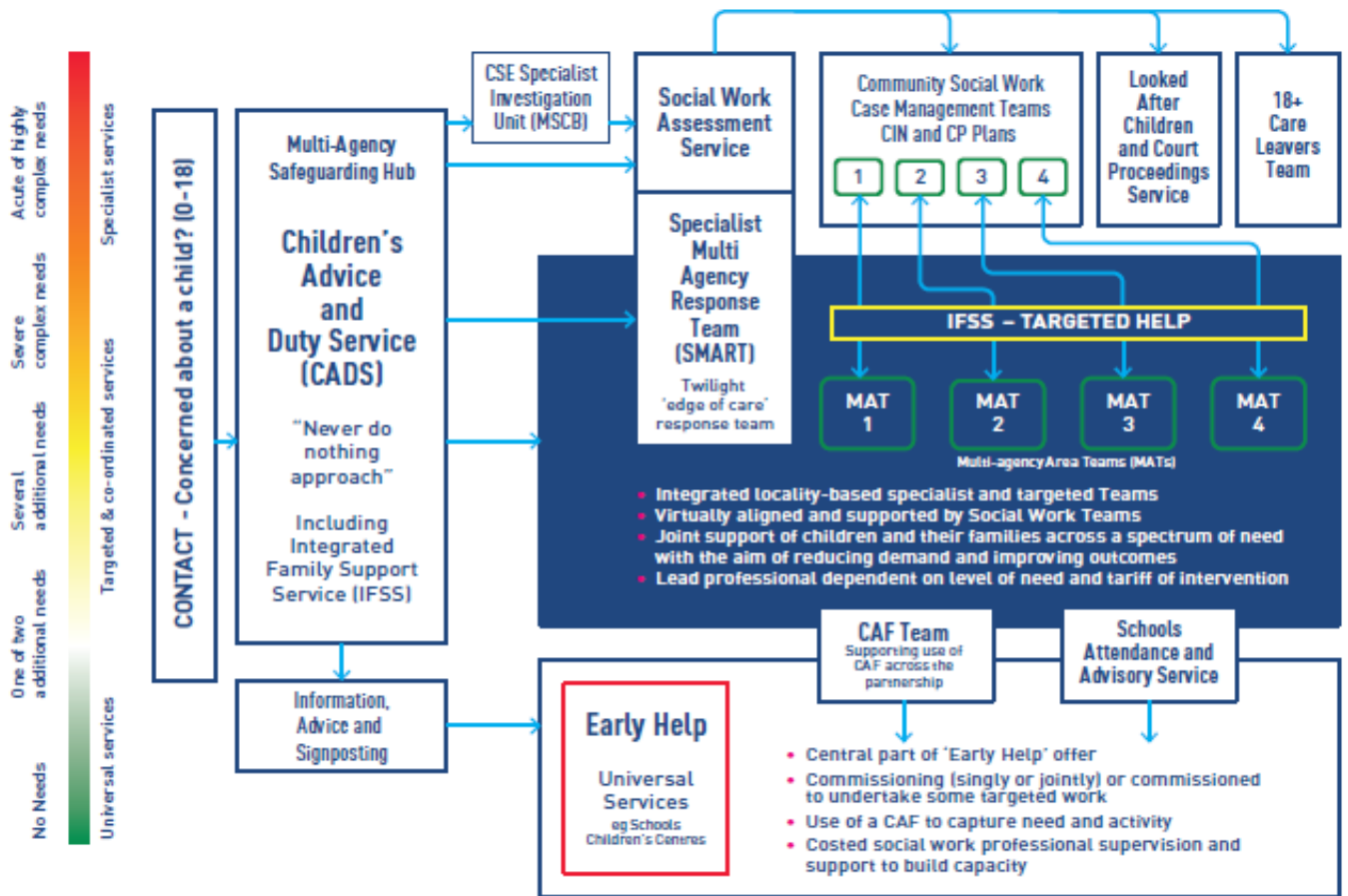
3.8 Below is the structure of IFSS put in place to support families with high and complex needs, as well as support partners with low level needs to ensure we build and establish effective Team Around the Families (TAF).



3.9 IFSSs aim is to be a 'good to outstanding' service by 2017 that makes a difference by delivering the: **right response, to the right family at the right time.**

3.10 Below is the Medway Children's Social Care new delivery model and demonstrates where IFSS 'fits' systemically in support children and their families in Medway.

3.11 This work has been presented to the Medway Safeguarding Children Board Executive who have endorsed this approach and it is due to go again to the full MSCB Board in the autumn. This work is embedded in our multi agency partnership approach to supporting the most vulnerable children and families



4. Response to families

4.1 The diagram above illustrates that Early Help is the appropriate response across a fairly wide spectrum of need, with most families' needs requiring the lower level of support, but others require more intensive support, such as that provided by IFSS.

4.2 Children, young people and families with lower level needs would continue to be supported by practitioners from a wide range of services through the Early Help Assessment and Teams Around the Family.

4.3 Families with more complex needs are supported by IFSS and the extension of the Troubled Families programme will increase the number of eligible families to 1,980 as part of a wider partnership endeavour to support this many families.

4.4 To be included in the expanded Troubled Families programme, a family will have to be identified as having 2 of the 6 following problems:

- Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- Children who have not been attending school regularly
- children who need help
- Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness
- Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
- Parents and children with a range of health problems

5. Next steps

- 5.1 Complete the initial Family Progress Data (FPD) evidencing the outcomes achieved with the families we are working with.
- 5.2 Start the National Impact Study (NIS) that will be ongoing over the next 5 years and will support Medway to gathering data and intelligence about the needs of the families we are working with, then support us in commissioning services in the future.
- 5.3 Implement the family cost calculator which will show and evidence the savings the programme has made to support families with multiple and complex needs.
- 5.4 Review Early Help dashboard to ensure that the programme is no longer about a small MAfF team but a wider business transformation of Early Help support and system.

6. Implications for Looked After Children

- 6.1 All Children that meet the criteria highlighted under 3.4 will fall under the programme.

7 Legal implications

- 7.1 All local authorities have a legal duty pursuant to section 10 of the Children Act 2004 to promote co-operation to improve the well-being of children in the authority's area, and Medway targeted Early Help offer is designed to meet the needs of children, families and young people in its area.
- 7.2 Medway Council must comply with its obligations to equalities under the Equality Act 2010, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by this Act. It must advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people. This involves removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people, including taking steps to meet the needs of people who have a "protected characteristic" in the terms of this Act. It must encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life and other activities where their participation is disproportionately low. In order to comply with these equality duties, the Council is required to engage with service users and representative groups, and to use the information and views gathered to assess the equality impact of any proposals made by the Council in relation to service provision.
- 7.3 Medway Council processes Personal Data and Sensitive Personal Data in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

8. Budget implications

- 8.1 The funding for the programme is ring fenced. There are no budget risks identified for this financial year. Although there is no immediate budget risk for

the current financial year, there is uncertainty about the future funding arrangements beyond 2016.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 That the Committee note the progress to date and the further actions planned to establish a comprehensive, multi agency Early Help offer for children, young people and families in Medway.

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Appendices:

None

Background papers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/financial-framework-for-the-expanded-troubled-families-programme>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/336430/Understanding_Troubled_Families_web_format.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/troubled-families-progress-information-by-december-2014-and-families-turned-around-by-may-2015>

Early Help outcomes plan