

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

02/05/2024

Subject: Family Support Strategy

Purpose: The current Family Support Strategy 2018-2023 is due to be updated this year. As part of the transformation of Children and Families Services, we are moving to an Early Help approach. This paper sets out the rationale for this and the time frame for developing the Early Help Strategy.

THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IS ASKED TO:-

Review and assess the information contained in Report and provide any recommendations, comments, or advice to the Cabinet Member and / or Director prior to the report's consideration by Cabinet.

Reason(s)

To formulate views for submission to the Cabinet / Council for consideration

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Cllr Jane Tremlett - Cabinet Member for Health and Social Services

Directorate:

Education and Children's Services

Name of Head of Service:

Jan Coles

Report Author:

Jan Coles

Designations:

Head of Children and Families

Head of Children and Families

Tel Nos.

E Mail Addresses:

jcoles@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

jcoles@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

02/05/2024

Subject: Family Support Strategy

1. **BRIEF** SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT.

The current Family Support Strategy 2018-2023 is due to be updated this year. As part of the transformation of Children and Families Services, we are moving to an Early Help approach. This paper sets out the rationale for this and the time frame for developing the Early Help Strategy.

What do we mean by Early Help?

Early Help is a collaborative approach, not a provision.

All children and young people will receive universal services, however, some children, because of their needs or circumstances, will require extra support to be healthy and safe and to achieve their potential. In Carmarthenshire we recognise that a timely response is essential for families who need some support and to achieve this we are developing our Early Help Approach.

Building on the long-standing commitment of Carmarthenshire to supporting families sooner rather than later, the Early Help Strategy will establish a common understanding of Early Help and to ensure everyone can see how their contribution can make a difference to the lives of children, young people and families in Carmarthenshire. The Strategy will describe how we ensure families receive accessible, co-ordinated Early Help when they need it. Early Help will happen across a continuum, from universal preventative approaches through to more targeted help where families are experiencing more complex and multiple difficulties aimed at preventing statutory intervention.

Principles

- Right Help

Key to achieving our aims for supporting children and young people in Carmarthenshire is a commitment to early help through a range of evidence-based interventions.

- Right Time

Early Help may be needed at any point in a child or young person's life, and we will offer support quickly, to reduce the impact of problems that may have already emerged.

- Right way for Families

Families are best supported by those who already work with them organising additional support with local partners as needed.

Why Early Help?

It is recognised that Children and Families Services in Carmarthenshire needs to change to meet the increased and changed demand. The recent paper on the Children and Families Division budget position has set this out in detail. The Early Help Strategy is a vital part of the transformation of Children and Families Services.

So much has changed, locally and nationally since the Family Support Strategy was implemented. The Early Help strategy will acknowledge these changes setting out the Carmarthenshire context and the national picture.

Create opportunities for greater partnership and integrated working

The Strategy will outline our common purpose. The development of an effective Early Help approach is the responsibility of all strategic partners and requires a whole system / whole workforce approach across all services working with children. This strategy seeks to outline how we will work in partnership and as a community to play our part in helping those families most in need.

Measures of Success

We expect the Early Help approach to make a real difference. The key indicators the Early Help is working will be:

A reduction in the number of children subject to Statutory Assessments

A reduction in the number of Children closed to Statutory Children's Services following an assessment

A reduction in the number of children subject to Care and Support Plans and Child Protection Plans

A reduction in the number of children who are looked after'

Timeline

April 2024 – Complete scoping the range of services currently providing early help in Carmarthenshire and identify key partners

May 2024 – Engage with partners

June 2024 – Establish the Early Help Hub and routine use of the distance travelled tool

Oct 2024 – Early Help Strategy and implementation plan to CMT

Dec 2024 – Multi Agency Early Help Strategy adopted by partners

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?	NO
--------------------------------------	-----------

IMPLICATIONS

ALL IMPLICATIONS REQUIRE SIGN OFF BY THE DIRECTOR OR HEAD OF SERVICE

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed:



Head of Children and Families Division

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets	Bio-diversity & Climate Change
NONE	NONE	YES	NONE	NONE	YES	NONE	NONE

3. Finance

Some investment has been included in the Children and Families Divisional Budget growth to support this approach. This has been detailed in the Children and Families Divisional Budget report.

7. Staffing Implications

The Children and Families Senior Management Team responsibilities were realigned, and a new team appointed in November 2023, in part to enable the implementation of the Early Help approach. Teams are moving to align to these new responsibilities.

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED

YES

Include any observations here

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:
THERE ARE NONE