

## **CAMBRIDGESHIRE EARLY HELP PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOPS SUMMARY REPORT**

During April /May 2014 Cambridgeshire County Council held five partnership workshops to consider developing a model of Early Help in Cambridgeshire. This report provides a summary from the 42 table discussions, feedback sessions and evaluation forms.

### **1. Workshop aims**

The aim of each workshop was to:

- begin the conversation about the collective ‘Early Help’ offer for families living in Cambridgeshire and how all partners can contribute to a joint strategy
- seek partnership sign-up and feedback for the direction of travel the local authority is setting for its re-shaped early help teams and arrangements
- think creatively about how we can develop new approaches to early help – thinking particularly about the strengths and capacity within families and communities

### **2. Workshop participants**

Over 290 partners from across Cambridgeshire attended the workshops. The breakdown of partners who attended is as followed:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Number of people</b>
Cambridgeshire County Council	162
City and District Councils	13
Early Years settings and providers	20
Fire & Rescue	1
Health <i>Mental Health 4</i> <i>NHS 17</i> <i>Cambridgeshire Community Services 10</i>	31
Job Centre Plus	1
Police	5
Probation	2
Schools, Academies, Colleges	30
Voluntary and Community Sector organisations	28

### **3. Presentations and discussion areas**

Presentations were provided on the emerging early help model, early childhood services, whole family working and supporting young people.

Partners were asked to consider a range of questions around:

- The priority needs and issues that we should focus on in the future in working for families
- Gaps in provision and other risks

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- How to maximise the capacity of local people, community groups and voluntary sector organisations
- The opportunities for organisations to work better together in supporting young people
- To consider who our vulnerable and priority young people are.
- What can be done by services working together to close the Foundation Stage Profile gap at reception age?
- Data sharing and strategic engagement in shaping services
- The opportunities and challenges of incentivising schools to take a lead on early education from age two

### **4. Key themes emerging from the workshops**

This is a summary of key themes that emerged from the discussion sessions:

#### **4.1 Strengths based approach**

We need to work to support protective factors and develop resilience in families and children.

- Build upon strengths; focus on opportunities rather than risk.
- Caution of a strengths based model that we avoid telling parents about the negatives, we need to be honest, assertive and challenging.

#### **4.2 Empower families - engage and listen to families and young people**

Engage and listen to what families and young people want, involve them in developing the solutions. Support parents to support their children and build resilience and work towards self help

- Use the Family Group model, looking at solutions and opportunities from within the family/community to provide support.
- Involve families and young people in developing the Early Help model.

#### **4.3 Whole family approach**

Move to a whole family approach.

- Joint commissioning of services across health and the local authority, children and adults services
- Greater integration between health, adult, children and family services – draw health and adult services into localities
- Adult services also beginning to make the transition to greater prevention and looking at building capacity using greater community support
- Job Centre Plus in working with workless adults do they recognise family risk? (including generational impact)
- Court structure could have more links with non statutory services
- Ability of the system to respond to primary exclusions

#### **4.4 Support community and voluntary sector development**

Services need to support communities to build confidence and capacity. Promote community navigators, mentors and good role models within the community. Provide and support opportunities for volunteering.

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- Promote community navigators/champions, they have the potential to provide the coordination and cohesion that is so difficult to sustain.
- Time credit schemes bridge community resource and professional input
- Encourage young people to get involved in timebanks
- Value and utilise church / faith groups
- Use voluntary groups e.g. cadets, church, scout to engage young people, perhaps facilitated by community navigators. Link with the Princes Trust.
- Provide 'Community Welcome' through volunteers/ community champions to signpost /engage new families
- Engage with past service users to provide support and mentoring
- Promote intergenerational activities
- Excluded pupils working on community projects
- Target local business for work experience, volunteering and accommodation
- Concern that we are leaving early intervention to the community which is unregulated and not monitored. Is the community adequately equipped and if so can it be sustained?

### **4.5 Communication and information sharing**

Improved information sharing and effective communication between organisations working with families is key.

- We need to keep it local, find out and share what's happening locally.
- Improve knowledge of other organisations roles, contacts and networking. A directory / database of all agencies that can be contacted for specific support, with a brief summary of job role.
- Have speed dating style events to highlight different resources in the local area
- Make better use of locality structures to identify, reach out, communicate and coordinate support
- Relaunch/ standardise the lead professional role.
- Escalation/ challenge of services not meeting requirements to meet the needs of a family

### **4.6 Identification, referral and assessment**

- Look to intervene at an earlier age and earlier stage of need to prevent escalation of issues
- Use RONI as a universal tool
- Referrals/ pathways feel unclear. Central referral system/coordination needed, meaning professionals don't need to make a decision about right service
- Strengthen assessment element of CAF. Invest time in meaningful completion with the family. Make the CAF form simpler for parents to fully understand.
- Voluntary sector often not involved in CAF because of lack of knowledge/ visibility of the service

### **4.7 Transition points**

Focus on times of transition; develop clear embedded processes and information exchange.

#### **4.8 Schools**

A number of points came out relating to schools:

- Schools encouraged to interact/share information with localities to ensure safeguarding and access to universal services
- Focus on engaging schools in community approach: links to Parish Council, PCSOs, work with local business to provide opportunities for young people, voluntary groups to work in schools with targeted groups.
- Well being teams in schools (Orchard School, Wisbech)
- Support schools to manage behaviour
- Summer programmes - problems can arise during summer, put solutions in place
- Many schools do a fantastic job supporting children and families however this is often down to a particular heads commitment how do we make sure it is a guaranteed entitlement for families wherever they are in Cambridgeshire?

#### **4.9 Workforce development**

- Develop staff skills and knowledge to enable greater flexibility to work across a wider range of family needs, particularly early support around mental health issues
- Share and pool the expertise from across organisations, promote peer support and mentoring

#### **5. Next Steps**

The feedback from these workshops will inform the development of the early help strategy and discussions with partners which will be taken forward through the Governance of the Children's Trust. The proposals will also be consulted on through the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Health and Wellbeing Board, a reference group of local schools and a range of other partnership fora. We will be seeking final sign off of the strategy by November 2014.

During June 2014 we will engage and consult with young people and families to inform the development of Early Help services.

The reconfiguration of Enhanced and Preventative Services within the County Council will be informed by the feedback from the partnership workshops. We will hold an informal consultation with staff during June 2014. Responses will inform the development of specific proposals, including staffing structure and budget implications to be set out in a formal consultation in November 2014. The response to this consultation will be published in March 2014 with the implementation of these revised structures from April 2015 – April 2016.