



Early Help and MSCB 'Working Together' Event

JANUARY 2016

A Newsletter providing feedback from the Early Help and MSCB 'Working Together' event held on the 20th January 2016 at Manchester's Town Hall

CONTENTS

Welcome	1
Speakers	1
The Key Messages	2
What's Working Well	3
What Needs to Change	3
The Early Help Journey	4
Good and Effective Early Help and Quality Early Help Assessments	4

Welcome to the multi-agency event

January can be a bleak month when everyone's energy is at a low. This certainly wasn't the case on the 20th January at the Early Help and MSCB 'Working Together' event.

Over 160 professionals came together to explore the development of Manchester's Early Help and to discuss how they think early help is working in the city. Representatives of all agencies attended including health, education, social care, early help hubs and police.

The event was opened by Cllr Sheila Newman, Executive Member for Children's Services. She thanked everyone for the work they do to improve the lives of children within the city



The Great Hall and a Great Gathering of Early Help Professionals

and reminded the audience of Manchester's early help journey. She expressed confidence in the way early help has developed

and is keen to be able to demonstrate this to Ofsted. In particular, she is keen to show an increase in the number of early help assessments being undertaken with Manchester families.

David Ashcroft, independent chair of the Manchester Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB), also welcomed everyone to the event. He outlined the role of the MSCB in early help and stressed that the MSCB is there to provide challenge to ensure that professionals and families are all working well together at an early stage.

The Speakers

John Edwards, Director of Education and Skills at Manchester City Council delivered an overview of education and early help.

Jenny McGarry, Head teacher at St Mary's and her colleagues illustrated early help work in schools. Jenny introduced Naomi who delivered a powerful speech giving a parent's perspective on early help.

Marie Forshaw, Deputy Director of Nursing at CMFT

delivered a presentation on early help in the NHS and Neil Evans, Chief superintendent GMP introduced the developments in early help and policing.

Gladys Rhodes-White, Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services always enjoys being able to engage directly with staff and partners and was therefore very disappointed not to be able to attend the event due to illness. Julie Heslop, Manchester City Council's Strategic Lead for Early Help kindly stepped up to

the microphone to deliver Gladys' presentation on good and effective early help.

Sarah Jackson, Superintendent GMP joined forces with Marie Forshaw to talk about improving early help and the early help assessments.

The final presentation was delivered by Paul Pandolof, Manager at Shelter's Inspiring Change programme who talked about early help and the voluntary and community sector.



Key Messages: Education and Schools

“Education Matters to early Help and Early Help Matters to Education”

Early help is the heart of everything in schools and colleges and it is based on a partnership of trust. Work in schools must compliment other work with families and the Early Help Hubs can provide support for this.

Education staff are urged to trust in the early help tools and to see the early

help assessment, not as a form but, as a positive way of working.

Schools are embracing this with a *“do whatever it takes”* attitude. Head teachers confirm that the challenge lies in being able evidence this. They promote the early help assessment as a key tool in evidencing and improving practice. They are confident that early help is having a major impact on

families. Naomi, a former pupil of St Mary’s described her personal experience of early help as “a god-send”. Her family encountered major challenges and the school responded by offering support and opportunities for both Naomi and her son. Most importantly for Naomi, the school “never gave up” on the family and family life soon improved.

“without the support, I don’t know what I would have done. Its more than a school, it’s a family”

Key Messages: Health and Police

The key driver for the NHS is to keep families healthy and well. Every child born in the UK has a health visitor who works hard to ensure the physical and mental well being of the baby. At age 5 children are then seen by school nurses and are part of the healthy child programme. The NHS sees early help as part of

their day to day duties. Managers are now working with clinical commissioners to be clear on how they can count everything they do under the early help umbrella.

For Greater Manchester Police, early help is a cross service issue that presents exciting opportunities for professionals to work

more closely together and to do more interventions based work to prevent escalation and a criminal justice response. Frontline workers will be given more autonomy to act. PCSO’s are already taking the lead by acting as key workers for families and this is seen as the way forward in policing.

Key Messages: Voluntary and Community Sector

The voluntary and community sector has a rich history of supporting people. However, they have noticed that often the people they help do not go on to achieve success. This has signaled the need for change and new ways of working.

Shelter’s Inspiring change programme does this by being more person-centred, less risk focused, and by tapping into community assets. The voluntary and community sector are well placed to be innovative and feel that partnership will lead to

more successful early help. Any one wishing to be involved in developing early help in the voluntary and community sector should contact MACC, Manchester’s Voluntary and community sector support organisation, on 0161 834 9823 or e-mail Pauline@macc.org.uk



What's working well



Everyone felt that the event was a good opportunity to bring early help practitioners together to strengthen shared goals and to continue to build the already positive vision of early help. There was significant praise for

the early help systems of triage and allocations. Staff within the hubs are seen as very supportive and highly professional. Many people commented on feeling assured that there is someone there to help them and give sound advice. Having social work staff in the hubs was also seen as very positive.

Partnership working was highlighted as a positive, although several people noted that we have moved beyond partnerships now and that we should

be thinking in terms of public services.

Involvement of PCSOs is working very well as is the involvement of housing providers. Partners report growing confidence in early help. They like the early help pocket guides and tools and feel that they are better able to give families the right support.

There was recognition that there is a wealth of good practice in Manchester and we must continue to share this.

Everyone attending the event had the opportunity to say what they think is working well and what needs to be improved. Here is what they said...

What could be improved

Practitioners feel that there is a need to continue to promote the understanding of early help and the role of the early help hubs amongst professionals and parents. Parents need to be reassured about early help and its links to social work. More work is required around the levels of need thresholds are not always clear. This was evident from the thresholds exercise at the event where several groups were unsure about the levels. One suggestion is that the MSCB referral form should also use levels of need.

Training was raised by several professionals, particularly the need for training on early help assessments, the role of the lead professional and strength-based conversation training (which is due to be rolled out to 2000 practitioners). Several practitioners noted that early help information and learning is often not cascaded to front-line staff.

Information sharing was key issue raised as there is a need to develop information sharing protocols.

Shared monitoring arrangements were highlighted as well as the need for more flexibility in the way early help is counted. Suggestions included having a shorter EHA form, having a version for professionals who only have contact with the parent, having a young people's EHA, and using action plans as evidence instead of an EHA. Some professionals requested clarity on using and counting referral forms instead of EHAs.

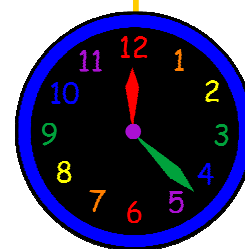
One group noted the divide between adults and children's services and suggested that more early help information should be available to better support young adults.

There were comments regarding Early Years; more tools requested to support the EHA and step down to Early Years to be agreed.

There were several suggestions for developing systems. These included having a process map of actions, timescales, and referral pathways. There should be systems for ensuring feedback and systems for quality assuring of allocations. Building IT solutions was also flagged-up.

Suggestions for strengthening early help included building involvement in particular from the voluntary and community sector, mental health services, probation, Sure start, and social work. More cross threshold work was identified as being worthwhile.

Acute health services felt that they would benefit from clarity around their role in early help as they do not feel it is possible for them to undertake assessments or act as lead professional given the emergency nature of their work.



Time is ticking - We don't have long to evidence our early help

A Reminder of the Early Help Journey so far...

July 2015

Re-launch Early Help Strategy
Refresh levels of Need

Sept 2015

Early Help Hubs go live
Launch Early Help Assessment
Launch Early Help Practitioner zone

Jan 2016

Established triage and case allocation
Schools pilot underway
Many Partners onboard and undertaking key working and assessments
Surge in use of practitioner zone

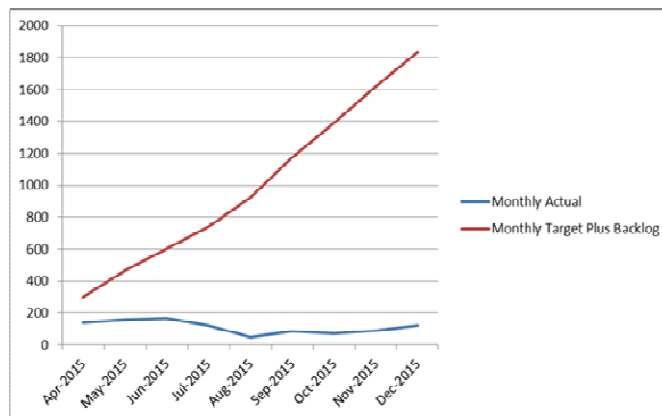
Good and Effective Early Help and Quality Early Help Assessments

We know we are well on the way to delivering good and effective early help in Manchester. We have a robust strategy and sound levels of need. As we move towards

further developing early help we will be focusing on;

- Supporting practitioners to have quality conversations with families and to develop strong plans
- Ensuring we hear the voice of the child and their family
- Ensuring oversight from management and the MSCB
- Ensuring appropriate referrals and effective step up and step down processes
- Evidencing early help
- Developing Early help Champions

As well as undertaking more early help assessments, the event highlighted the need to ensure that



Reaching our early help assessment targets - We are a long way off, but by working together we can move closer to our targets and ensure early help for everyone who needs it

all assessments are of good quality. A good quality assessment has the following elements;

- Consent
- A lead professional
- Baseline data
- Clearly identified needs

The assessments should stem from a quality conversation about strengths and difficulties

across the 5 areas of life. By reading the assessment, the voice of the child and family should be clear. It should result in a quality plan that is reviewed. Above all it should lead to positive change for the child and their family.



A Message from Gladys - Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services

"Sorry I couldn't be with you all at the event as I was ill, instead I'd like to send my message of support to our early intervention and prevention services. I also want to make a plea to everyone working with our children and families to really 'step up to the plate' and deliver our quality Early Help Assessments to evidence the vast array of fantastic early help work happening in Manchester. Remember, if we don't EHA it, Ofsted won't count it, so let's work together to secure the EHA targets and really make it count for our children and families!"

For more information on Early Help in Manchester, please visit: www.manchester.fsd.org.uk

Following your quality conversation with a family you may need to signpost. Remember 'Help and Support Manchester' Provides a wealth of resources to help families help themselves.