



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities



Department
for Education

Early Help System Guide

A toolkit to assist local strategic
partnerships responsible for their Early Help
System

March 2022

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Department for Education



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Introduction

Purpose of This Guide

The Early Help System is not a single service. It is a network of services, processes and interactions that aim to help children, young people and families at the earliest opportunity. Improving this system requires clarity of what success looks like, shared across a range of partners, and informed by the voices of managers, practitioners and families.

This is the second iteration of The Early Help System Guide. This second version outlines a national vision and descriptors for a mature Early Help System that is shared by DLUHC and DfE. It has been widely consulted upon across other government departments and local areas and is based on what is working around the country. It is a living tool that will adapt as new and better ideas are implemented.

The Guide is intended for the local strategic partnership responsible for the Early Help System. It aims to provide a framework for local workshops, partnership conversations and strategic planning and to support prioritisation. The Guide provides a self-assessment tool to support discussion, reflection and action planning against key areas that influence the effectiveness of Early Help. It does not dictate what needs to be done; but is a dynamic tool designed to focus the system on common goals, and progress towards these. Your reflections with partners and communities on the Early Help System Guide should lead to an improved local early help strategy which, in turn, will help your local partnership improve families' outcomes and reduce demand on acute services.

The Guide is designed to help you use local and research evidence to deliver an effective approach to early help. It asks you to consider what organisational and community data you use to understand your current position, as well as which evidenced-based interventions and practices you use to support families across the partnership.

Background and Context

This Guide has been produced by the national Supporting Families programme (formerly the Troubled Families programme) within the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in partnership with the Department for Education.

Since 2012, the programme has been supporting and challenging local areas to transform services and systems to achieve significant and sustained outcomes for families facing complex challenges and problems. The programme promotes a whole family approach and has been evaluated as successful in improving outcomes. The programme invests significant resource into local areas in order to support the transformation this Guide sets out.

The Supporting Families programme places a specific expectation on all areas to use the Guide to self-assess the maturity of the Early Help System and to identify priority descriptors to work towards. More detail on this can be found in the [Supporting Families programme Guidance](#).

System transformation: Supporting Families, Family Hubs and Start for Life

During the budget 2021, the Government announced increased investment in the Supporting Families programme alongside new investment to transform Start for Life and family help services by creating a network of Family Hubs, investing in tailored breastfeeding services, infant and parent mental health, parenting programmes, and establishing a clear Start for Life Offer in half of upper tier local authorities.

Supporting Families drives high standards of continual improvements to local partnership working and data use, while funding intensive keywork support for those families facing multiple complex problems. Family Hubs are one way of delivering the Supporting Families vision of an effective early help system.

Where Family Hubs exist, they provide a single access point – a ‘front door’ – to universal and early help services for families with children of all ages (0-19) or up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), with a great Start for Life offer at their core. Family Hubs involve co-location of services and professionals to make it easier for families to access the services they need, including Start for Life services, and this can include both physical locations, outreach support and virtual offers. Many services offered in a Family Hub network will be for families who do not need intensive, whole-family Lead Practitioner support; however, hubs will ensure seamless access to a whole-family Lead Practitioner where needed.

Supporting Families’ outcomes align with the Best Start for Life vision of achieving good early years outcomes for babies and young children, and practitioners, services and families all benefit from expanded core services which ensure that children have the best possible start in life.

Many local authorities have already adopted hubs as their leading model of delivery with the help of Supporting Families funding. These programmes can be entirely complementary and together they form a strengthened local family help and support offer, led by the Department for Education, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Department for Health and Social Care working in close partnership across government.

How to use this Guide

This guide provides the key descriptors of a mature Early Help System. It is a self-assessment and planning tool, the outcome of which should lead to a clearer and shared understanding of the current maturity of the Early Help System in an area and what steps need to be taken to progress. This could form the basis of a refreshed Early Help Strategy in a local area and a plan for implementation.

The guide contains:

Contents	Description	Page
The Early Help vision	A summary of our vision for the Early Help System of support for families	6
The Early Help system	A diagram demonstrating which services have a role to play in the Early Help System	9
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Conducting a self-assessment

There are a number of different ways the self-assessment can be conducted.

1. A series of multi-agency workshops – using the themes in the guide as a structure, workshops could explore different perspectives on what is working well and what needs to improve linked to each descriptor. Evidence from family feedback along with population, cohort and family level outcome measures should be used to inform discussion.
2. Individual interviews with stakeholders from different agencies and services – this approach could yield more insightful responses from individual stakeholders, the results of which could be used to draft the self-assessment with stakeholders or used as one of the evidence sources for a multi-agency workshop.
3. Peer review – a number of stakeholders from 2 areas may wish to work together to complete the self-assessment to enable benchmarking and comparison of activity and progress.

The Guide can be used by any partnership to assess and plan for maturity in the Early Help System.

The Early Help vision.

Early Help is the total support that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse.

Workforce

1. There is a professional family support service. Whole family working is the norm for all people-facing public services through a shared practice framework. And early help is seen as everyone's responsibility
2. Public services work together in place based or hub-based working where partners are integrated virtually or physically, based in the community with a common footprint
3. We invest in our workforce with a workforce development plan to embed the shared practice framework and there is direct support for professionals to improve their practice through a quality assurance framework
4. The response to different presenting needs are aligned or integrated to ensure there is always a whole family response

Communities

1. We are improving the connectivity between voluntary and community sector activity, family networks and formal early help activity
2. Our relationship with community groups and voluntary organisations embodies a culture of valuing the contribution of all
3. We are building capacity in communities and harnessing the talent of parents, carers and young people with lived experience to help one another
4. We are shifting decision making about local services and facilities towards families and communities

Family voice and experience

1. There are well established mechanisms to gather and act on feedback from families and engage people with lived experience in service design, governance, and quality assurance.
2. Families say they know how to navigate local services and how to get help.
3. Families who have several needs say they know who their lead practitioner is, that all their needs were considered individually, and as a whole, and they only needed to tell their story once. They also say all the professionals work together to one plan in a team around the family.
4. Families say that those that helped them listened carefully, cared about them and told them about their strengths.
5. Families say that the help they have received addressed all their problems and they are better connected to their own support network and local community

Leaders

1. There is a senior strategic group accountable for the Early Help System and the partnership infrastructure evidences a focus on early help, whole family and whole system working
2. Our system is balanced, so that more appropriate support is provided for children and families earlier to avoid unnecessary or costly statutory intervention in the children's social care system
3. Partners have agreed a shared set of measures at family, cohort, demand and population level, including quality of practice and family voice, which collectively represent the effectiveness of the Early Help System
4. There is a culture of using evaluation and evidence to inform development of the Early Help System

Data

1. There is a senior strategic group with representation across the partnership, which is accountable for developing and driving the use of data for the whole Early Help System
2. All data feeds are shared safely and robustly across the partnership, brought into one place and used to identify family needs
3. Case management systems are accessible to all partners working with families and allow us to quantify all issues affecting the family and report on all issues and outcomes in a quantifiable way
4. Working with our strategic partnership group we are developing innovative approaches to the use of data. We are using technological solutions to match data, present information to family workers and strategic boards and analyse these data to prevent the escalation of needs

The Early Help vision (Plain Text)

Early Help is the total support that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse.

Family voice and experience

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1. We are improving the connectivity between voluntary and community sector activity, family networks and formal early help activity.
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Early Help System



The Early Help System (Plain Text)

The Early Help System available to children and their families is made up of three types of services that combine in different ways to form a local area's Early Help offer to its citizens. These are universal services, community support and acute and targeted services.

Community support includes.

Family and friends, local places and environments, online support services, voluntary, faith and community services, local members of the community and local businesses

Universal services include.

Post-16 education, schools, early years settings, family hubs, children's centres and youth centres, GP surgeries, libraries, maternity services, specialist public health or community nurses and community co-ordinators

Acute and targeted services include.

Family support, social care, accident and emergency departments, allied health professionals, mental health services, special education needs support services, jobcentre plus, school attendance and exclusion support, domestic abuse services, alternative provision, housing services, police, probation and prison services, family court and family court advisory services, substance misuse services, fire and rescue, youth offending and targeted youth services.

Multi-Agency Workforce

A strong Early Help System is made up of many different types of practitioners and services who operate as one. This table attempts to define the likely role of different types of practitioners in the Early Help System. The contents of this table were developed with local areas and relevant government departments. We recognise this is not a complete or exhaustive list, and the identified roles may have different names. This should be seen as a 'minimum' level of activity for how workforces should operate, for example how often they may act as lead practitioner. The lead practitioner (defined along with other aspects of whole family working in the family voice section) should always be the right person for the family at the right time, with the family having a say in who they are. In some circumstances specific professional groups or VCS organisations may have greater involvement as lead practitioner or as part of the team around the family following needs or risk assessment or because of specific contracting arrangements. The grouping terms relate to how often these workers would likely act as lead practitioner (e.g., frequent) and what role they have in whole family working (e.g., modelling)

Use this table to assess the current status of activity within your local workforce.

Grouping – Early Help and whole family working	What does this look like	Who is likely to be in this group
Frequent and Modelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These practitioners support families with multiple needs and act as Lead Practitioner for the majority of families they are accountable for • They provide whole family, sometimes intensive, support for families often in their home, being proactive to reach out to families where needed. • They are experts in processes to support families with multiple needs and help families, other professionals, commissioned organisations and voluntary and community groups to understand those needs, advocating where necessary. • These practitioners may support others with the lead practitioner role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s social workers • Family Workers/Early Help Worker • Targeted Youth Worker/Support Worker • Specialist Public Health or Community Nurse • Family nurses

Grouping – Early Help and whole family working	What does this look like	Who is likely to be in this group
Regular and promoting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These practitioners are often the first to identify a family’s need for help or support, are able to assess the needs of all members of the family and form the core of a team around the family where involved. • They connect families with support in their community. • They are well versed in processes to support families with multiple needs and help families to understand them. • They may be the Lead Practitioner to start the Early Help process and regularly retain this role if they are the most appropriate person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Public Health or Community Nurse • Schools and colleges – e.g., school pastoral leads, designated safeguarding leads, SENCOs, school family support workers and teachers. • Early years settings including nurseries – nursery SENCOs and designated safeguarding leads. • Children’s Centre Workers • Family Hub Workers
Sometimes and active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These practitioners bring specialist expertise and therefore need to be part of a team around the family when required / involved. • They connect families with support in their community but also know how to start the process to bring wider support around a family where there are several needs. • They may act as the Lead Practitioner if they are the most appropriate person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing / tenancy officers and Homelessness advisors • Young people’s substance misuse services • Adult substance misuse workers • Child and adolescent / primary mental health workers • Midwives • Careers advisers • Youth Offending officers with prevention/whole family remit • Neighbourhood police officers/PCSOs • Supporting Families Employment Advisers • SEN support staff and caseworkers • Education Welfare Officers • Universal youth workers • Allied Health Professionals

Grouping – Early Help and whole family working	What does this look like	Who is likely to be in this group
Occasional and aware/ connected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These practitioners or volunteers understand they are part of a system of support which ‘helps’ people. • They know how to ask questions to explore the wider needs families may have. • They know how to connect to other support for families. • These practitioners bring specialist expertise and need to be part of a team around the family when required / involved. • They don’t usually act as a Lead Practitioner unless this is in the family’s best interests. • They are active users of the local online directory of services to identify the right help for a family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probation officers • Prison officers • Offender managers in custody and community • Reactive police officers • Adult mental health workers • Adult social workers • Domestic abuse worker • Voluntary, community and faith sector workers and volunteers (unless commissioned differently) • Work coaches • GPs and practice nurses • Library staff • Youth Offending Officers

The self-assessment

This self-assessment section is structured as five sections focusing on family voice and experience, workforce, communities, leaders and data. Areas should work as a partnership to identify on average their score for the individual descriptors, what is working well and the evidence that shows this, and plans for what will be prioritised next.

Scoring system

0	1	2	3	4	5
Early stages ←—————→ Mature					
There are no or few elements of this descriptor in place with no plan for development.	Planning has started and is at an early stage of development. It is too early for evidence of impact.	There is a plan to achieve this and some evidence that this is being implemented. It's too early to demonstrate impact/outcomes from this work.	There is some good evidence of progress – to some extent / across many elements. There may be some emerging evidence of the outcomes/ impact. The next steps are clear.	This is largely in place although not yet fully established or embedded. There is some good evidence of outcomes/impact. There is a plan for continuous development.	This is in place and well established. There is strong evidence that developments are having impact where needed. There is a commitment to continuous development.

The self-assessment descriptors

	Family voice and experience	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
1	<p>Family engagement: We have well established mechanisms to gather and act on feedback from families and engage people with lived experience in service design, governance and quality assurance.</p> <p><i>A mature area has a range of methods to collect feedback from families (all children, young people, parents, carers and significant others) including but not limited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>From families during and following support given as part of a Family Plan reflecting whole family working principles. This feedback relates to the work of all parts of the Early Help System.</i> • <i>From families who have not accessed support e.g., families who have been offered help and refused, those who needed help and were not able to get it, and those who have needs but haven't come to the attention of services.</i> • <i>From families from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.</i> <p><i>This feedback is used as learning to support changes in how the whole system works together.</i></p>	4	<p>Within last year's submission Priority 1 in this area was to embed a more rigorous improvement programme focusing on both qualitative and quantitative data. We are continuing to work towards this and can demonstrate this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seeking feedback on outcomes to show how well children, young people and parents/carers voice have influenced their individual family plan. - Parent Forum meetings are established in each area, meeting monthly, these meetings are minuted and actions are agreed. In the last year, 294 parents participated in these meetings. The actions from the forums are recorded to ensure parent feedback is considered to improve service provision. The Children and Family centres regularly display 'You Said We Did' posters. www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentcouncil - Locality Partnership meetings take place in each locality on a regular basis meeting monthly, where partners meet to share information from their own services and where service user feedback is shared. 	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore Digital Engagement for Families i.e., to have a view of family plans and reviews. 2. Finalise and implementation of the case closure feedback from families that can be included in evaluation to be used for further development of services. 3. We will be implementing the case audit tool in June 2023 that Team Managers will use against a sample of case work practice. 4. The Early Help and MASH merger includes aligning systems and working processes for one front door team into Early Help and Children's Social Care. 5. To raise awareness of EH service and improve our mechanism of engagement and support provided to

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each year the service undertakes an annual survey which is sent to residents across the borough. - Our Supporting Families Division created a Feedback Project to engage children and families. This feedback mechanism will ensure that services and practice are strengthened and developed. This process is carried out 3 times a year. - Engagement with young people is currently being undertaken as part of the Young Tower Hamlets consultation process – 800+ surveys have been carried out, 4 large scale consultation events (Hackathons) and outreach sessions for vulnerable young people have taken place. In addition, we have youth voice mechanisms, youth council, Youth Justice Board forum etc. VCS youth providers also have their own engagement processes. - As part of the Early Intervention (EI) work that takes places with children aged 0-5 years, there are several targeted and universal sessions on offer. The parents are contacted post 12 weeks after receipt of the offer to request their feedback. The team analyse the feedback received consider any recommendations made by parents accessing these services. The EI team are reviewing their audit tool of the quality of the EI practitioners’ observations undertaken with families. 	<p>families by simplifying EH offer so families and organisations understand what it is. New comms refresh with clear core offer of early help and pathways</p>
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- We are working with our Learning Academy and partner teams to provide a case audit (case closure feedback) tool to use within our Birth to 19 (B-19) Family Support service, by gathering feedback from families, during the time we are working with them and after support has come to an end. There are plans to roll this out across the service within the next few months.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has also been nominated as one of the 75 Local Authorities to implement Family Hubs across the borough providing joined up early help services to families with children aged 0-19 (25 years for SEND) with lower-level presenting need. The FH programme has a set of workstreams, including the 'Welcoming Hub' and 'Raising Awareness' that are carrying out surveys with the community to gather feedback and understanding of the current engagement challenges. This will inform how the programme can support families.


We are working towards meeting Priority 2 we have merged our Early Help Hub and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to ensure that families receive the right level of support at the right time. The team are co-located in the new town hall and is made up of different partners including Early Help, Children's Social Care, Police (both Police Protection Desk and Child Abuse Investigation Team), NHS Safeguarding Nurse, Barnardo's Children and

Young People's Practitioner focused on supporting low level mental health concerns, an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) with plans to recruit an Education Safeguarding Lead and Housing Support Officer. This is based on the level of presenting family needs across the borough. The team also have close working links with the Exploitation team, Probation, Adult Mental Health and Substance Misuse. This is to ensure that families are supported to access the most appropriate service for their needs.

With regards to Priority 3 and digital engagement, this remains a priority area that we will continue to work for the coming year and to explore the range of ways we can engage on a digital format with families. Youth Service is exploring to create of adolescent offer and online offer which planned creation of a directory for youth and an app replicating the care leavers app as part of the wider adolescent offer. It was advised to create a specification via a 3rd sector to speed up the process.

	Family voice and experience	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
2	<p>One Lead Practitioner: We have evidence that families say they know who their Lead Practitioner is, and they have a good relationship with them.</p> <p><i>A mature area has Lead Practitioners who co-ordinate the activity of the team around the family, ensure the assessment and the family plan responds to all needs identified and leads on ensuring the family co-produce the plan. The time commitment to deliver this role will vary family by family depending on the complexity of their needs. Families should always have a say in who their lead practitioner is and be able to give feedback on their relationship with them.</i></p>	4 Chosen descriptors	<p>We are meeting our priorities set within this area of work as a part of the pilot. The Family Hubs Southwest pilot has now launched, and Theory of Change workshops have taken place involving families and partners across the locality.</p> <p>As part of Family Hubs development and the Early Help service, we are producing an Early Help Practice Guide which will set out the agreed Pledges, Behaviours and Better Together practice framework. As part of delivering this we need to continue our work with partners to ensure everyone works towards the same set of behaviours. This work will involve updating our workforce development plan and offer for multi-agency partners to ensure all are supported to take on the role of the Lead Professional for the families they are working with.</p> <p><i>Better Together practice handbook is attached, and behaviour framework refer to Workforce section 'Descriptor 1'.</i></p>  <p>4734-Better-Together-Practice handbook</p> <p>The families we work with are assigned a key worker who acts as their Lead Professional. We aim to strengthen the Lead Professional role by providing ongoing guidance, training and coaching within our Early Help service,</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To develop Protocol on Team Around the Family and Role of the Lead Professional 2. To continue 'Lead Practitioner Training' to all practitioners who work with families.

		<p>embedding the role externally with partners either by face-to-face workshops or explore different Comms that would support such work.</p> <p>The annual survey provided feedback that families who were receiving targeted family support knew who their keyworker was, that they had a Family Support plan and who was involved in supporting them. The terms Lead Professional, Team Around, Family Plans would ensure that all services are aware of the process, agreed shared principles and behaviours and our Early Help practice is consistent and clear for families accessing services.</p> <p>We are producing Early Help Practice Guidance to provide information across the service which will include all the various levels of services that are provided i.e., Family Hubs, Early Intervention, Birth to 19, Social Workers in Schools (SWISS) and the Early Help and MASH.</p>	
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<p>3</p>	<p>One assessment: We have evidence that families say the assessment process considered their needs individually and as a whole, their views were reflected throughout the process and the assessment meant they told their story once.</p> <p><i>A mature area has an assessment process that explores the needs of all members of the family as individuals and considers how their needs impact on one another. It should cover not just the presenting needs but also any underlying issues. It should explore strengths as well as needs and be carried out in partnership with the family.</i></p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Some partners may be using different assessment tools and have their own case management systems however the Early Help service have a developed Early Help assessment. Partners can complete this when working with a child/young person and family who have further support needs. These assessments are currently recorded online via a portal (managed by Firmstep) and stored on the Holistix case management system. There has been confusion working across two different data systems for Early Help and are now in the process of migrating all internal Early Help teams into Mosaic to provide more joined up case recording across the system. This will provide a clear journey of the child when services are supporting the family, the assessments that have taken place with the family and level of support provided. The Supporting Families Outcomes Framework embedded into this new Mosaic EHA. We are currently in the process of making a decision to enable external partners access to Mosaic for the purpose of completing an Early Help assessment.</p> <p> Early Help Needs and Outcome.docx</p> <p>Within the Family Hubs development as a group of partners we are exploring workforce development needs. Our vision is to provide a multi-agency training offer across the service for practitioners to share their own service experience and provide practitioners with the necessary skills in engaging families,</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transition to Mosaic currently being processed for Q3 of this year. 2. Alongside the transition training for staff, partners and professionals will be provided. 3. Finalising the Early Help Assessment on Mosaic to enable partners to complete this, to ensure better joined up information sharing.
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		<p>undertaking assessments, and coordinating family plans and identifying the underlining issues.</p> <p>The main aim is to have one assessment and one family plan which will be one live document owned by everyone helping families from basic universal level up. It was discussed how the families will have access to their file which has been identified as a challenge concentrating on who and what to give access to, and the approval process. This is work in progress.</p>	
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	Family voice and experience	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
4	<p>One family plan: We have evidence that individuals and families say their needs are reflected in one family plan which the whole team around the family work to. Families and professionals agree outcomes together.</p> <p><i>A mature area has high quality family plans that provide the detail of what all members of the team around the family, including the family, will do to meet the needs identified. There is a recognition that the support needed may not always be a person/service but could be an item which needs to be purchased and the team around the family have easy access to small pots of funding to deliver this.</i></p>	4	<p>On undertaking an Early Help Assessment there are regular reviews built into the process whereby the keyworker coordinates the family support plan with clear role and expectations from all members including the family. The plan is reviewed on a regular basis, approximately every six weeks.</p> <p>We have met priorities set in this area as we have developed a case audit tool (see Workforce D3) which will gather feedback to ensure that families are aware of their family plan, they have ownership of this and are able to contribute to the Team Around the Family.</p> <p>There is also work underway to introduce the Budget Holding Lead Professional to ensure that small pots of funding can be accessed when emerging needs arise, that is within an agreed budget and does not require sign off from another manager.</p> <p>The Locality Partnerships enable partners to share information on local resources, collaborate with each other to develop services. Sharing of resources supports capacity building. The joined-up network approach enables families to access early help across a wide age range, therefore thinking whole family approach within our services.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To monitor the whole family approach and one family plan by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gathering feedback from case audits. performance data such as One family Plans. EHA's. Team Around the Family Meeting. Lead Professional role. Development of the Budget Holding Lead Professional Role

			<p>The merger of both Early Help and MASH has resulted in weekly MASH huddle meetings for team members to share information from their own service areas, share case practice issues and share expertise. This team are developing as one integrated team with several multi-agency partners, a first full team meeting was held recently and is recommended to continue as part of ongoing development of an integrated working culture for multi-agency partners.</p>	
5	<p>One team around the family – we have evidence from families about how well services work together to co-ordinate support to meet the needs of their family.</p> <p><i>In a mature area team around families are groups of professionals and volunteers who work alongside the family to improve outcomes. They are led by a Lead Practitioner, but all members are active participants and their contribution equally valued. The team will be able to demonstrate good communication and co-ordination based on the family's plan and this will be reflected in the family's feedback on the support provided.</i></p>	3	<p>As previously discussed, we now have a developing Family Hubs programme, this is enabling services to share resources and information through locality partnership meetings.</p> <p>With regards to our data system our Supporting Stronger Families currently use Sentinel as a data lake where several services through a data sharing agreement can provide data on the services provided and capturing level of need.</p> <p>In terms of the Social Inclusion panel, this is held every two weeks that partners and practitioners refer into when a child has multiple needs. The Lead Professional is invited to attend a panel to represent the referral they have made and to talk about the support needs of the family. The LP is also invited back at review point to ensure information is</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create Sentinel user profile to identify professionals involved with the family, useful data set in terms of level of need, service provision and any gaps in service provision. Update data sharing agreements and include any partners that are not party to this. 2. Widen the scope of the Social Inclusion panel, inviting both the Lead Professional and parents/carers in future. 3. Ensure that in our dip-audits the look at the way team around the families are used, and if necessary, take forward

			<p>coordinated and the family needs are well presented.</p> <p>In future we would like to ensure families are routinely invited to this panel.</p> <p>For parents with Children with Disabilities (CWD) and young people with SEND there is an opportunity to attend various forums to input their views and feedback with regards to service provision. For families that are supported by the CWD team a lead professional ensures that the family are engaged in their Team Around the Family meetings, the TAF's involve may include culturally appropriate services and voluntary sector services to meet the family's support needs.</p>	<p>the learning from this through our training program.</p>
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	Family voice and experience	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
6	<p>Access to support: We have evidence that families say they know how to navigate local services and how to get help.</p> <p><i>A mature area has digital solutions such as a service directory, social media and also roles such as community connectors and service access points which provide accessible opportunities for families to understand and access the support available. Each solution should take an approach which ensures there is 'no wrong door' for families accessing support.</i></p>	3	<p>The residents annual survey provided feedback that families know what local services are available to them and how to get help. We have also developed an outreach strategy to engage with key target groups to ensure that families who may have needed a service but did not receive one are able to share their views.</p> <p>We are developing our Family Hubs offer to ensure that all early help services are available, and that all services can communicate the offer across the communities they work with. We have developed a Family Hubs website which links to the Family Information service (FIS) website (refer to link in Communities section descriptor 1) where information of the Local Offer for parents and carers with children with SEND is available. As part of the Family Hubs development there is a regular online information share between partners, a digital newsletter of services available which will include any information of networking opportunities. Evidence is the link below:</p> <p>www.thfamilyhubs.co.uk</p> <p>As part of aligning working processes at the front door, the co-located integrated Early Help and MASH team have developed ONE referral form. This draft has been shared with our MASH Partnership group and the options for</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To review the Council website and update where necessary to ensure service information is easy to navigate for families.

			<p>delivering this are currently being explored which could result in some changes to how referrals are currently made to the team.</p> <p>As well as the Family Hubs and Local Offer websites, the further evidence is regular information published as part of Comms distributed across the localities. This provides further opportunities to provide updates and service information to residents. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Residents newsletter (weekly) -Families Matter magazine (3x per year) -Families Matters ebulletin (monthly) <p>www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/familiesmatter</p>	
7	<p>Sustainability: We have evidence that families say their needs including underlying issues have been addressed. They will be better equipped to cope when support from services ends because they have identified their own support network and feel connected with their local community and the support network it provides.</p> <p><i>A mature area includes extended family, friends, community support and other local resources early on in the life of any family plan.</i></p>	3	<p>The Family Hubs service user evaluation is currently being developed to ensure we gather feedback on families' experiences of engaging with services and the challenges faced. We ensure families are well connected into the local services, communities, families, and friend. This will shape further family hubs programme delivery to ensure family resilience can be sustained from prenatal, early years through to adulthood.</p> <p>For the early intervention work undertaken within the Childrens and Family Centres with children aged 0-5 years we have introduced a 12-weeks review following intervention for those where more targeted intervention has been provided. There also is a case closure form being implemented for the B-19 service, families will be encouraged to provide their feedback and the form completed within 12</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We aim to embed evaluation within as a part of our Quality Assurance System for Early Help.

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	Workforce	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
1	<p>The workforce in our area operates effectively to deliver what is working and is aligned with the levels set out in the workforce table (page 11).</p> <p><i>The workforce table shows our vision for how all professionals who contribute to the Early Help System operate in practice although we recognise this is not a complete or exhaustive list. The family voice section gives definitions of the Lead Practitioner role and wholefamily working.</i></p>	3	<p>We have published our shared Early Help Strategy for 2022-2025, our vision is that early help is everyone's responsibility. Tower Hamlets Early Help Strategy 2023-25</p> <p>As part of the development of Family Hubs the wider partnerships have been invited to a number of participatory workshops and have used some of this time to engage in Theory of Change discussion, this has helped share the message that we are all working together as part of the Early Help system and all organisations working within the borough have a responsibility in providing early help support for children and families living in the borough.</p> <p>The Family Hubs pilot has a number of key workstreams to develop the hubs with our partners. A Family Hubs website has now launched with links to the Local Offer website, where information on services, guidance and parental feedback is included.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To co-produce a shared Quality Assurance framework with partners.

<p>2</p>	<p>Early help is understood and seen as everyone’s responsibility across the partnership of services working with children, adults and families. We have a shared culture and set of core principles that underpin the wider Early Help System.</p> <p><i>In a mature area all those who work with children and adults understand they have a role to recognise needs, support families in finding solutions and access help at the earliest opportunity. There is a common set of principles that reflect this, and it is regularly promoted within and between agencies.</i></p>	<p>3</p>	<p>The early help service will provide a multi-agency training offer to those set out in the workforce table and any further workforce development needs will be progressed by our Quality Assurance team.</p> <p>We are working towards meeting our priorities in this area. The Council is in the pilot stage of developing our Family Hubs approach and will disseminate our Quality Assurance framework to all partners working as part of the Family Hubs in each locality; and once embedded we plan to disseminate this by organising multi agency training. This includes an agreed set of integrated behaviours developed and identified through the Family Hubs partner and family consultation.</p> <p>We recognise that some partners may have their own practice frameworks in carrying out their own direct interventions however we are working towards ensuring that the whole service works towards the same set of principles & behaviours of whole family working. Overall, more work needs to be done across the partnership to bring together the Better Together framework, Pledges and Behaviours to ensure all partners working as part of early help have a shared awareness and understanding of these.</p> <p>The Family Hubs Programme in collaboration with our QA team will deliver a Workforce Development Strategy, this is currently in draft stage to be agreed with our partners.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to develop and raise awareness of Early Help being everybody’s business and of the early help services and process.
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The Better Together approach is the practice framework that LBTH have adopted, our aim is for all internal staff to complete the Better Together and Restorative training. This is mandatory for all Council Children's services staff.

By having an agreed set of principles and behaviours and embedding practice principles of the whole family approach within our Quality Assurance Framework and within our team action plans will provide a consistent practice framework within our Early Help work with families. Agreed set of Pledges have been circulated to all staff and these are now to be aligned with an agreed set of Behaviours C-Change.

The agreed behaviours framework can be viewed here and Pledges in Workforce Descriptor 6:



Behaviours Practice Framework 170323.d

As part of gathering qualitative feedback, we will ensure all staff are aware of our Quality Assurance framework, we will review this ensuring it is coproduced with partners and families, tested and guidance is available.

The QA framework will include a clear plan for all staff across the service to have access to supervision from their line managers to ensure staff are supported within their roles and good practice maintained across the service. Up to

			<p>seventy per cent of managers have attended the Coaching Supervision training which was specifically commissioned for managers within the Supporting Families Division.</p>	
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	Workforce	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
3	<p>We have a shared practice framework and locally agreed processes for professionals in partner agencies working across the wider Early Help System which is known, understood and consistently used.</p> <p><i>In a mature area, partners will have agreed an overarching framework that articulates the shared values, principles, key theories, and models that underpin local ways of working with children, young people and families, with whole family working at its core. As well as describing what is common, this framework will also recognise the value of the specialisms and perspectives from different agencies. There are many different services which provide Early Help. In a mature area, there will be a clear service map outlining how all services contribute to the whole system of support and the pathways and processes in place to enable families and practitioners to navigate this system.</i></p>	3	<p>As previously mentioned, the shared Early Help Strategy 2023-25 sets out the vision for Early Help delivery and service provision across the borough.</p> <p>In meeting our first priority in this area there is now governance provided for Early Help via the Early Help Partnership Board, the board is made up of a number of partners who provide review and feedback on an agreed shared behaviour, current service provision, partnership working, any identified gaps in services and training or further developments required within the service. The Early Help Partnership Board is co-chaired by the Director of Supporting Families and the Voluntary and Community Sector Lead.</p> <p>As previously set out within this guide we are working towards Early Help practice guidance which will promote the agreed Early Help Practice Framework (principles of whole family working, set of Behaviours, the Better Together framework, Pledges and agreed C-Change Behaviours) across the early help partnership. This will importantly share information of the services available across our teams.</p> <p>Other priorities set out within this area have been discussed previously.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To promote shared Early Help, Practice Framework with our partners across the borough.

- The process of sharing Early Help Assessment and ensuring better information sharing when both Early Help and statutory services are involved in supporting the family has seen some progress in moving towards a shared case management system for Early Help Assessments. The 'Team Around' will include partners meeting with family and can ensure that any step down or step-up process to services can be discussed and transitioned via this meeting.
- The SIP that is held is seeking to include both lead professionals and families when a referral is made.
- A case audit tool is being developed and regular auditing will take place with practitioners and managers, to ensure good practice is maintained and implemented.



Audit tool.docx


	Workforce	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
4	<p>We have a multi-agency workforce development plan based on workforce development needs, to help embed the shared practice framework and culture. This equips the workforce with appropriate levels of understanding and skills to enable early identification of and response to family needs and the implementation of a whole family approach.</p> <p><i>A mature area has a workforce development plan. It may not stand alone specifically for Early Help, because in a mature system of support, the culture and practice framework are in operation across the spectrum of need and across children and adults support services. Wherever this is governed or located, the plan will address the continuing professional development needs of all workforces through a range of methods.</i></p>	3 Chosen descriptor	<p>The Early Help Workforce Development plan is a part of the wider directorate workforce development plan – which is spearheaded by our Learning Academy.</p> <p>We have identified our priorities for the coming year in this area by producing a workforce development strategy plan, this includes four focus areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Attracting a strong, stable, and permanent workforce ii) Retain skilled and experienced practitioners. iii) Develop conditions for good practice to flourish. iv) Inspire effective leadership. <p>We are aiming to gather feedback from partners on their current training offer, skills, and training needs analysis as part of a workforce development survey. This work is taking place within a workstream group and will shape future workforce development plans as we want to achieve a well-equipped workforce to deliver early help support and intervention to families. We will utilise and share a workforce strategy as an incorporated model.</p> <p>The Early Help Hub and MASH have developed</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A multi-agency training that would be made available across Early Help partners

MASH huddle meetings where they are beginning to share one another's expertise in case discussions and determining good practice. Within this team we will also be exploring a training needs analysis to ensure that this can contribute towards a multi-agency workforce development plan, not just for early help workforce but for those involved in delivering specialist statutory interventions. The team development sessions are an opportunity for partners to share information of their host agencies and areas of expertise.


In addition, Multi- Agency Framework commissioned by Department for Health and developed in partnership with Health Education England, Skills for Health, and Skills for Care. It has been agreed to review the attached and see how it can be incorporated.



mental_health core skills education and

5	<p>We know the quality of early help practice across professionals listed in the workforce table. We directly support professionals in our partnership to improve their practice, including around whole family working, through a quality assurance framework, e.g., through audit, supervision and guidance.</p> <p><i>In a mature area, 'Early help practice' spans a wide range of skills including Early Help Assessments, Family Plans and monitoring of outcomes, the application of the practice framework and enabling families to connect with the right support at the earliest opportunity.</i></p>	4	<p>We are working towards meeting the priorities within this area. We have developed a Quality Assurance framework that has been shared across the service, all managers are able to access coaching supervision for managers. As mentioned previously we have highlighted that there is still work to accomplish in this area but there is an agreed supervision framework in place to ensure consistency and delivery of whole family working and good practice principles.</p> <p> Supervision Policy Tower Hamlets 2022_</p> <p>As well as the supervision framework all employees are required to complete My Annual Review with their line manager, this focuses on employee wellbeing, workplan and development.</p> <p>Tower Hamlets Learning Hub</p> <p>We recognise that although some partners can complete Early Help Assessments and work with a range of services and the family to create a support plan that will meet their needs, there may be partners that may need further support to do so. There is a need for training implementation and capacity across VC and schools for instance VC are unable to access training independently as they are not Statutory Organisation. The Social Workers in Schools is a DfE funded project that provides support and guidance within Schools when practitioners have identified additional needs</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Combine training offer for our multi agency partners.
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		<p>for children who may benefit from early help services and to support any onward referrals to CSC. Despite the funding coming to an end at the end of the year, we have agreed, given the positive impact of the work to continue funding the project internally.</p> <p>The Early Help Coordinator that provides quality assurance across the early help system.</p> <p>We would like to create a workforce development plan whereby each partner contributes to developing the training offer, support and guidance available.</p>	
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	Workforce	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
6	<p>We have a model of place-based or hub-based working in the community with a common footprint. Partners are integrated either virtually or physically in e.g., family or community hubs. The model helps underpin the principles of whole family working.</p> <p><i>In mature area families are able to easily identify where to go for help in their local community, when they make contact they experience a welcoming response where 'asking for help' is seen as normal. The response will enable the needs of the whole family to be explored and the family are helped to seamlessly access all the help they need, including a Lead Practitioner if needed. Where hubs exist, they are a fundamental and fully integrated part of the Early Help System. The local offer is responsive to the diverse needs within the local community and is proactive in removing barriers to access to enable inclusion for all.</i></p>	4	<p>Tower Hamlets agreed set of Pledges which have been distributed and displayed across all our Children and Family Centres, this provides a positive message to partners and to any families accessing the service. Evidence is attached.</p> <p> Pledges_x6.pdf</p> <p>The Family Hubs development has resulted in creating a Shared Behaviour for Family Hubs, this has been co-designed and co-produced by parents, staff and partners; and sets out the behaviours staff and volunteers should adopt in their interactions with families and young people accessing our Family Hub Networks.</p> <p>Training has been developed and has been delivered to cohorts of workers and volunteers from different organisations across the Borough.</p> <p>There are also options being explored which includes looking at the range of ways that a family can access our services and how services align with one another to ensure easy step up and step-down processes for those families that may be supported by Children's Social Care or may have more complex needs requiring more specialist intervention.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <p>1. Continue to review partnerships working and ensure partner inclusion across the community, i.e., identify any gaps.</p>

			<p>Although there is acknowledgement that some partner agencies may have their own practice frameworks, we are aiming for the whole service to be working within the same set of agreed principles such as Whole Family working and an agreed set of behaviours.</p>	
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	Workforce	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
7	<p>The response to different presenting needs (pathways) are aligned or integrated to ensure there is always a whole family response. This could take the form of a 'team around the school' approach where all relevant professionals work together to anticipate and respond early to for example school engagement, mental health or special educational needs of children and young people in the school.</p> <p><i>A mature area knows that needs within families are often interconnected and have underlying causes. They do not treat a presenting need in isolation to avoid causes not being addressed and outcomes not being achieved. Rather than having distinct pathways for different needs, the practice framework and integration of pathways means that regardless of the presenting need, practitioners consider and respond to the wider needs. For example, whenever an SEN need, or school attendance or mental health issue is suspected or identified, the family receive a whole family response.</i></p>	4	<p>We are developing our whole family approach across the service which will involve including older children. To meet this priority the Family Hubs development includes a Junior Youth Club pilot workstream where there is PDSA cycle 'Plan-Do-Study-Act' (is a systematic process for gaining valuable learning and knowledge for the continual improvement of a service) models aiming for improvement in introducing new activities in different settings and provision of services for this age. Two pilot Junior Youth Clubs sessions to commence June 2023, the sessions will provide informal learning and personal and social development of children and young people primarily aged 8 to 11 (KS2) including those that may have learning difficulties or disabilities.</p> <p>Within our targeted Early Help service we have secured continuing to fund the Social Work in Schools project, where social workers are based with particular schools to ensure there is a whole family response when support needs arise for children and young people within the school setting and to undertake earlier intervention.</p> <p>Also new roles to the service are the Early Help Coordinators will support plan and co-ordinate Early Help services in Tower Hamlets, working</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring our referral pathways are aligned to ensure the right services are provided for the family.

			<p>directly with schools. They will provide advice and guidance around the Early Help Assessment process, attendance at multi-agency meetings and offer information and advice on best practice and how to engage with families.</p> <p>The Early Help Hub and MASH merger is one integrated team that can signpost and ensure appropriate referrals are made so families receive the right help at the right time. This is an integrated team providing both Early Help and Safeguarding expertise, with a range of professionals from partner agencies to ensure those children at risk of harm receive the help and protection they need. There will be screening of enquiries received and triage of referrals when needed by both Early Help and MASH to determine level of needs if unclear. The team have good working links with other services i.e., work closely with the Exploitation team that share the same office. There has also been agreement for a Barnardo's practitioner that will work with children and young people with lower-level mental health concerns and ensure any referrals are signposted into the appropriate CAMHS service and support the family as part of their Team Around the family if needed.</p>	
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	Communities	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what? evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
1	<p>Public services partner closely with voluntary and community groups to maintain up to date information about local community assets, community groups, voluntary sector support and faith groups and have made this information accessible to local staff and residents e.g., through a website.</p> <p><i>A mature area will have a quality assured, up to date, user friendly website to enable flexibility and self-service. This supports Lead Practitioners and families to connect into their local communities. Monitoring is in place to check whether this information is used, is helpful and is making an impact. Public sector services should be confident the services/groups included deliver safe, quality support.</i></p>	3	<p>We are working towards our priorities in this area. Extensive work has taken place to develop the Family Hubs website, where information of the Family Hubs offer is posted, and updates are provided on the services and sessions available to families. The website is linked to the Local Offer Family Information Service. To assess the usefulness and impact of the information provided, we monitor the number of families visiting our websites and collect their feedback. This helps us to continually improve and enhance our services.</p> <p>Family Information Service (towerhamlets.gov.uk)</p> <p>For the Family Hub website please refer 'family voice & experience section Descriptor 6'</p> <p>The Early Help website is also being reviewed to simplify our offer to enable users to understand it better and take up services when needed.</p> <p>We have also established Early Help Partnership Board (EHPB) which is co-chaired by our Voluntary and Community Sector Lead. As part of this development, we agreed a shared strategy plan and vision with our partners when forming the EHPB, also agreed with our partners a set of Principles and Behaviours underpinning</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To update websites to ensure our information is joined up to ensure residents and partners can easily navigate information and services available to them.

			<p>Early Help practice. We are in the process of developing our practice framework, QA and Workforce Development strategy.</p> <p>As part of developing the Early Help System Guide we will be making arrangements to attend the Locality Partnership meetings to share information of the guide, sharing the developments taking place and enabling our partners to become more informed and part of developing the early help service.</p>	
2	<p>Our relationship with community groups and voluntary organisations embodies a culture of valuing the contribution of all, prizes creativity, collaboration, and local solutions, alongside quality and inclusivity. We are building a culture and system where our communities understand that everyone helps to deliver a whole family approach.</p> <p><i>A mature area recognises and values the contribution of all public sector, community, faith and voluntary groups and works to actively remove any hierarchical barriers in place and works to include a broad range of voluntary and community groups including under-represented groups. Leadership at the local level should be shared between the public sector and community and voluntary groups. Areas should also put in place mechanisms to discern and challenge any harmful practices which may exist in a minority of situations. Public bodies should support integrated communities - encouraging local people to live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.</i></p>	3	<p>We continue to have strong relationships with many local stakeholders in the voluntary and community sector and other organisations.</p> <p>There are monthly locality partnership meetings take place which enables participation from our partners.</p> <p>The Early Help Partnership Board consisting of local area partners takes place bi-monthly. The chair rotates between the Director of Supporting Families and the Voluntary Community Sector Coordinator Lead, the EHPB provides governance for the early help system across the local area.</p> <p> Early Help Partnership Board - 1</p> <p>As part of the developments taking place, we have a Comms lead to ensure that information is disseminated to our teams internally, external partners and to residents.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify voluntary and community sector partners who are supporting families and engage to include within the Family Hubs developments across each of our localities.

			<p>One of the recent developments of moving to the new town hall has achieved all internal teams that are part of the Supporting Families Directorate sit within proximity of one another, which could have a positive impact on working culture and practice.</p> <p>We also have diverse workforce which can cater diverse communities in a culturally appropriate way.</p>	
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	Communities	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what? evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
3	<p>We are building capacity in communities and making the most of the refreshed sense of community which grew through COVID-19. We harness the talent and contribution of parents, carers and young people with lived experience to help one another.</p> <p><i>A mature area recognises that those who need help often also help others or want to help others. The system provides opportunity for people to improve their community and values their contribution by creating space and opportunity for this to flourish.</i></p>	3	<p>We recognise the impact that COVID19 had upon our communities and are working hard to ensure that we connect with families, and enable families to connect in the services we provide by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. we are developing our outreach strategy, and outreach work is being carried out in the community. 2. there is a volunteer project officer in place, with those who wish to volunteer being supported to do so within their placement across the borough and then into further training and employment. 3. plans to develop our detached youth work and outreach work with young people. 4. currently planning two pilot projects for young people, these include an After School Family Club (Mowlem) for Refugees and their families, and Southwest Locality Junior Youth Club (Whitehorse Adventure Playgroup) for children aged 8-11 years old. 5. Northeast Locality have introduced late night opening to encourage young people whose families are supported by family support services and have a family support plan, to come together to plan how Family Support services can better support them. <p>There are services available in each locality including –</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to build and develop our youth work service and detached outreach youth services.

		<p>Work Path Outreach IAG workers supporting parents into education and employment. NHS Talking Therapies Employment Service. The Children and Family Centres provide a working in Schools project that offer employment opportunities within Tower Hamlets Schools.</p> <p>The Volunteer Centre in Tower Hamlets recruits and supports volunteering in the community. <u>Volunteering in Tower Hamlets - Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets (vcth.org.uk)</u></p> <p>We have a Project Worker focused solely on Volunteering and supporting parents to take up volunteering opportunities. Within the past year there has been interest with over 50 applications, from this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 10 referrals have come via the Supporting Stronger Families and B-19 service.- 8 signposted to Parent Adult Education- 5 parents are studying on Level 2/3 Childcare course.- 21 volunteers recruited.- 12 are currently being processed.- 28 DBS checks completed. <p>The Supporting Stronger Families Team have designed posters and leaflets providing information of the Supporting Families Employment Advisors role in supporting parents with education and employment opportunities.</p>	
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			 <p>TH Supporting Families A5 v5.pdf</p> <p>Youth service planning to create an App to engage young people and get feedback how to improve the service.</p> <p>We continue to provide the following forums and encourage young people and parents to engage in (as mentioned in the previous EHSg) i.e., SENDIASS, Youth Council, Children in Care Council, the Children and Families Executive Board and SEND Improvement Board.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>We are improving the connectivity between voluntary and community sector activity, family networks and formal early help activity.</p> <p><i>A mature area has staff in public services who are well connected with and understand the local areas they serve, including the differences within communities at a granular neighbourhood or street level. Where there is a need for a Lead Practitioner, family assessment and plan (formal early help), the team around the family engage the wider family network and relevant voluntary and community group support at the earliest opportunity, throughout the plan and as part of a sustainability plan.</i></p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Our council has established a Residents' Hub that provides residents with free face-to-face consultations (by appointment), virtual or over-the-phone advice across numerous services. We, along with our partners, are collaborating to support our most vulnerable residents.</p> <p>The Residents' Hub aims to work with residents who face difficulty in accessing the support they require through other channels such as online or telephone. Our primary focus is to empower residents and assist them in resolving their problems. Evidence is the link below.</p> <p>We offer a diverse range of services that are not limited to Council Tax, Debt Management, Welfare Benefits, Domestic Violence, Housing, Employment, etc.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to seek feedback from families of the work we undertake with them and of the service provided.

https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ignl/community_and_living/Residents-Hub.aspx

There are termly networking events to improve connectivity organised by the Community Engagement team. The activities and events taking place are promoted in a timetable and posted on the Family Hubs website. Information is available within our Children's and Family Centres, this includes information of activities and networking events taking place across the borough, for example at The Ideas Store. Information can be found on the Local Offer and the Family Hubs website.

Tower Hamlets is a diverse borough, with many different faiths which are to be valued and celebrated. There is an active Inter Faith Forum that meets every two months, the forum has a steering group which includes faith organisations working together to celebrate the contribution made by different faiths organisations and the role they have in supporting families living in the community. The forum facilitates greater communication and understanding between the different faiths across the borough. Further information of their work can be found here [Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum \(faithintowerhamlets.org\)](http://www.faithintowerhamlets.org)

Within the Early Help Service and in response to the war in Ukraine, the Resettlement and Migrants Team was formed to respond to the needs of families and adults who have fled war within their own country. The team offer

		<p>advice, guidance and direct intervention with refugees, people who are seeking asylum and migrants who arrive in the borough and reside here to ensure that families are enabled to connect with community services, drop ins, activities and receive additional support when needed. The team provides opportunities for families to meet other families from other cultural backgrounds, integrate and strengthen links within the community.</p> <p>We are developing a case closure summary tool which would seek evaluation feedback from those families that we have supported to gauge how knowledgeable they are about services available if they needed support in the future and the resources available within their local community.</p> <p>Our employees are in diverse background and has well knowledge the needs in the local community at a locality level as some of them are also residents in the borough.</p>	
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	Communities	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
5	<p>We are shifting decision making about local services and facilities towards families and communities.</p> <p><i>A mature area has regular and detailed data which is used to inform joint needs assessment and decision making that responds to community need at the community/neighbourhood/locality level. Families and communities are engaged in shaping how help is provided locally and there is evidence their views influence decision making.</i></p>	3	<p>The development of Family Hubs has included families and communities' views to help shape the service offer as part of the first pilot hub; parent forums also provide feedback and individual family feedback is sought as part of their family support plan. We are also look at how joint leadership of the locality can be integrated, with a joint accountability framework.</p> <p>We recognise the importance of reporting on key outcomes and are in the process of gathering data which we will continue to report on to inform our service planning internally and externally with partners i.e., numbers of families accessing the early help service, support needs, number of early help assessments and number of family plans.</p> <p>As discussed, we have developed an Early Help Partnership Board valuing the rich contribution of our partners and the collaboration that can take place when working together. The EHPB has shared ownership with shared decision-making taking place in meetings. There is a shared Early Help Strategy in place for 2022-2025 setting our vision and developments across the Early Help service, it is recognised that 'Early Help is everybody's business'. We have an agreed set of shared principles and behaviours and planning to establish a shared Workforce Development and Quality Assurance</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To roll out Family Hubs across the whole borough, within the other three localities, learning from the initial pilot. 2. Gather data performance reports internally and engage in further discussion with partners on their data sets – working together to provide an analysis on level of need and service provision.

			Framework and Early Help practice guide.	
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	Leaders	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
1	<p>There is a senior strategic group accountable for the Early Help System and the partnership infrastructure evidences a focus on early help, whole family and wholesystem working.</p> <p><i>A mature area has strong partnership arrangements that enable partners to take collective responsibility, share risks and jointly invest in early help, whole family and whole system working. Strong partnerships also evidence that leaders at different levels across the Early Help Partnership focus on building productive relationships with partners and trust one another.</i></p> <p><i>All themed initiatives such as serious violence, child poverty and homelessness are co-ordinated and seen as interdependent and are supported by strong data governance arrangements. Leaders speak with one voice on the importance of early help, whole family and whole system working and ensure this culture is embedded through senior and middle management and the front line and staff at all levels are effectively involved in shaping and developing improvements.</i></p>	4	<p>The Early help Partnership Board (EHPB) provides governance across the early help system and is accountable for the delivery of the Early help strategy for the Borough. The key areas of development each has a sponsor that provides strategic steer and drive and reports to the EHPB.</p> <p>A number of targeted services have been co-produced and funded by the LA and CCG with further Interventions planned with other partners.</p> <p>A joint commissioning approach has been agreed and is overseen by the EHPB. A shared Workforce development approach has also been developed to better coordinate early help interventions across the partnership.</p> <p>The merger of the Early Help Hub and MASH is accelerating the one front door approach across the early help system. Information sharing agreements and information systems to support coordination, monitoring and oversight are being actively developed.</p> <p>The LA's divisional SLT has strategic oversight of the direction of travel for the Early Help system. The SLT also provides strategic steer for the Resettlement and Migrants Team, Children with Disabilities and SEND, the Youth Council and Children in Care Council, Family Hubs.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of an Integrated Leadership Group for the management of the Early Help System in localities. 2. Local leaders to reiterate and drive the adoption of the one front door approach and the adoption of the one front door process for all enquiries and referrals.


	Leaders	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
2	<p>Our system is balanced, so that more appropriate support is provided for children and families earlier to avoid unnecessary or costly statutory intervention in the children's social care system.</p> <p><i>A mature area draws upon local and national evaluation to show the impact of early help on outcomes for children and families and reducing demand on statutory services. Investment and commissioning decisions prioritise whole family and whole system working, and evidence-based support. This is evident in a shared Early Help Strategy which is a product of joined up thinking across the partnership.</i></p>	3	<p>The development of Family Hubs serves as a strategic initiative to enhance awareness and comprehension of the available early help services catering to families with universal, universal plus and Level 1 and level 2 support needs, aligning with the LBTH continuum of needs stated in the threshold guidance. The merger of the Early Help Hub and MASH creating a single front door further strengthens our strategic approach, enabling families, residents, and partners to access the early help system and the appropriate services for children, young people, and families when required.</p> <p>Initiatives such as 'Social Workers in Secondary Schools' (SWISS) has seen enquiries into MASH from schools fall by 95% with those families working with Early help services instead. Maturation of targeted intervention has seen a reduction in the number of cases 'stepped up' to statutory services.</p> <p>The 'acknowledgments' list partners involved in the co-production of the early help strategy, although there is recognition this can be expanded further in future iterations.</p> <p>Our overarching objective is to implement earlier interventions and proactively prevent re-referrals for persistent needs, thus reducing reliance on costly specialist services.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procurement of EIF approved programmes for HLE, Parenting and infant feeding. 2. Developing a monitoring and oversight mechanism of the early help system to assess take up and ensure services are directed to the earliest possible intervention.

	Leaders	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
3	<p>Partners have agreed a shared set of measures at family, cohort, demand and population level, including quality of whole family practice and family voice, which collectively represent the effectiveness of the Early Help System. The performance against these measures shows that outcomes for families are improving.</p> <p><i>A mature area has a shared set of measures owned by all partners who take collective responsibility for contributing to positive change. Population measures cover the whole population of the area e.g., Primary school attendance rates. Cohort measures cover a specific subset of the population e.g., primary attendance rates of children in families who received a specific service. Demand measures are those which measure activity in the system e.g., child in need per 10,000 population. Family measures track progress in outcomes for individual families e.g., child attending school at least 90% in last three consecutive terms. All outcome measures are used to generate an enquiring and learning culture, with high support and high challenge. This enables shared responsibility for improving outcomes, recognising that no one organisation delivers a specific outcome on their own.</i></p>	3	<p>We plan to facilitate a data sharing forum with partners to progress discussions on their performance measures, current data sharing practices within the Supporting Stronger Families initiative and identify any existing gaps in data analysis.</p> <p>As part of this effort, we will update or establish data sharing agreements with our partners to collect relevant data sets related to the services they provide.</p> <p>This will enable us to accomplish two goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) identify families' needs at an earlier stage, and ii) conduct data analysis to assess the level of need in the borough. Our objective is to collaboratively develop a set of shared Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that can be adopted across the early help system via the Early Help Partnership Board approval. <p>To measure our effectiveness in supporting families, we will integrate an outcomes framework into the new Early Help Assessment form. This will provide a structured approach to evaluate the outcomes and impact of our interventions.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish data sharing forum and tasks and finish groups for local leaders. 2. Develop shared KPIs. 3. Develop measuring systems and feedback mechanisms.

	Leaders	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
4	<p>There is a culture of using evaluation and evidence to inform the development of the Early Help System and the quality of whole family working. Where appropriate to local and individual needs, evidence-based services are used.</p> <p><i>A mature area has services that are evaluated, and evidence is collated to show the local impact of early help with particular evidence gathered on the impact on groups in the community with protected characteristics. Evidence based interventions are those where an evaluation has been conducted which shows a causal impact on child outcomes.</i></p>	3	<p>The EH coordinator oversees quality assurance of early help services across the LA. With the development of family hubs, the ambition is for consistent QA practices to be incorporated across all early help interventions by partners across the local area.</p> <p>An audit cycle for early help is now in place and synchronised with social care to provide regular feedback and learning opportunities to strengthen practice and understanding as well as evidence impact of interventions on children and families.</p> <p>There are some existing services available to parents and carers such the Parenting service that offer evidence-based group work parenting programmes such as Triple P, Triple P, Triple Family Transitions and Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities (SFSC). Parenting Programmes in Tower Hamlets</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embed Outcomes based accountability framework to evidence outcomes of intervention. 2. Work with partners to agree and adopt QA framework. 3. Embed regular cycle of learning and analysis of impact of interventions on protected and targeted groups.

<p>5</p>	<p>Working towards a shared culture, principles, practice framework and set of processes within the Early Help system is a standard feature in all commissioning processes and decisions.</p> <p><i>A mature area ensures good early help practice forms part of the standards for commissioning of all services. Early help practice is regularly reviewed through contract arrangements and is a critical step in ensuring it is embedded more quickly. Commissioning processes are developed and agreed that encourage and support the application of local voluntary, community and faith groups with relevant community knowledge as service providers.</i></p>	<p>3</p>	<p>As part of the Family Hubs development, we have sought information of commissioned services and aiming to gather information of all partners delivering services to families within the borough. This is imperative to ensure that partners are included within developing our early help service offer and that all partners are aware of one another's work within the community.</p> <p>There is a strong VCS voice in the EHPB ensuring synchronisation and opportunity for coordination of early help services. The refreshed commissioning approach overseen by the EHPB places an emphasis on community value, existing provision (in the local area) and developing the wider early help workforce.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree our practice framework – Learning and Development 2. Agree on how to adopt into the Family Hubs and working processes. 3. Embed commissioning approach.
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	Data	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
1	<p>We have regular data feeds from all parts of the partnership to support whole family working. These are open feeds and underpinned by strong data sharing agreements.</p> <p><i>A mature partnership shares data feeds, including police, housing, social care, education and homelessness, council tax and where possible health. They make good use of open data feeds (the whole population rather than confined to the cohort) to allow for the quick identification of issues for referred families, along with needs and predictive analysis, to understand the whole community and predict individual risks. They explore the use of the Digital Economy Act to underpin data sharing agreements.</i></p>	3 Chosen descriptor	<p>The SSF team has been strengthened with the addition of a Senior data analyst. The technical capabilities in addition to strong leadership within the team will permit the development of the existing 30 data feeds into the data warehouse (SENTINEL) with new data feeds from key partners.</p> <p>The development of a monthly outcomes-based accountability review cycle will allow the analysis of data held within SENTINEL to inform wider service decisions.</p> <p>There are several actions agreed that would help improve regular data feeds as part of whole family working across the partnership. We would aim to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set an action to collate data, this has already started within our own internal teams. 2. Agree data sharing protocols by convening an information governance working group. 3. Review SENTINEL, the purpose of using the data lake and the future possibilities of improving data gathering for better joined up information sharing. 4. Agreeing a data strategy across the service and partnership 5. Coordinating this work with a dedicated Data team 	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain key datasets SEND and Substance Misuse. 2. Complete the corporate data warehousing initiative. 3. Update data sharing agreements.

			<p>We have made considerable progress in implementing a corporate data warehouse and this is being accelerated into other areas of the business with planned completion by Q4.</p> <p>We have obtained the key datasets for EL2 and Homeless Applications etc. and have contacted the appropriate areas to collect SEND and Substance Misuse data but this is not yet complete.</p>  <p>Data Strategy.pptx</p>	
2	<p>Our case management system allows all partners to securely access all relevant cases and record wholefamily assessments.</p> <p><i>Shared case management systems are key to transparent, seamless ‘one journey’ whole family working. They should be underpinned by the shared practice framework (see ‘Workforce, descriptor 3’). On the journey to achieving one case management system, the area may have used a data warehouse/lake to make all assessments accessible as an interim measure.</i></p>	3	<p>All Early Help services will use the same case management system as social care, MOSAIC, from September 23. All partners will also access the same system to complete and contribute to ‘Early Help Assessments.’</p> <p>This will enable better information sharing across one case recording system of early help and specialist intervention. This will enable practitioners a view of the child’s journey if there are times when step up or step down to services are required. Training sessions for Early Help workflows in Mosaic, are being planned and internal staff will be able to access these prior to going live with the new recording system for Early Help.</p> <p>The newly merged EHMASH front door team provides us with an opportunity to review referral forms and pathway into services, using</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete implementation and migration of Early Help functions onto MOSAIC. 2. Refresh of Early Help Assessment to incorporate whole family assessment and feedback from partners. 3. provide partner access to case management system and EHA as appropriate.

			on universal multi agency enquiry form for families with any level of support need.	
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	Data	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
3	<p>Our case management system allows us to record all issues affecting the family and outcomes in a quantifiable way and run reports on these.</p> <p><i>A mature area quantifies issues that could previously only be captured and monitored in a qualitative way (such as parenting needs or parental conflict). This enables the partnership and analysts to understand which issues are affecting families and how these interact with other issues and outcomes. Embedding quantitative reporting should commence from notification through to closure and should be checked by supervisors at closure.</i></p>	3	<p>At Present, Early Help services use EISi for early help case recording and Holistix for Early Help Assessments. There are a series of reports available to track the assessment and case progress across the two systems. Presenting issues, reasons for referral, triage outcomes and interventions are categorised according to the TFOP criteria and local needs/services; thus, allowing analysis on trends and particular needs such as parenting.</p> <p>Operational oversight through the collation of issues allows locality managers to adapt to needs by moving specialist resources around the borough to where there is the most prevalence. Partners contributing through the Early Help Assessment also score progress as well as recording the details allowing tracking of progress across multiple aspects. SSF requirements implemented within MOSAIC.</p> <p>With the implementation of MOSAIC Early Help assessments and reviews will be recorded in MOSAIC and the Holistix (where current EHA's are recorded) System decommissioned.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish regular reviews with Early Help delivery partners to analyse Local Areas data. 2. Develop full suite of comprehensive reports to track individuals across the Early Help and social care journey.

	Data	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
4	<p>We have an effective data governance board that is accountable for our progress on data transformation. It supports us and our partners to unlock and resolve issues with data sharing and direct how we use data both for performance and analytics and how we consult on system changes that would impact across the partnership. Data are used by the partnership to support resourcing, planning, whole family working and early intervention. An identified member of the Children's Services Senior Leadership team has responsibility for driving forward actions from this board.</p> <p><i>Data Governance Boards should be either a stand-alone board, or part of a wider partnership board. The board should help drive the data transformation journey and road map. It should provide direction on how data should be used to ensure effective services and help unblock any data sharing issues. Representation should be at a senior level from across the partnership.</i></p>	3	<p>The expansion of the EHPB remit to encompass the 'Early Help system' has provided opportunity for this existing board to be accountable for our progress on data transformation. It has the right membership of senior leaders across the local area to support resourcing, planning, whole family working and early intervention as well as driving adoption of data sharing agreements and shared KPIs.</p> <p>The EHPB will act as the data governance board with a supporting working group responsible for the implementation of measures and report to the EHPB on a quarterly basis starting September 23</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create roadmap for EHSG data workstreams.

	Data	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
5	<p>We have a system that allows us to pull together all data, analyse these data and ensure practitioners can see results.</p> <p><i>Data warehouses and data lakes provide the opportunity to bring all data together in one place and automate matching across partnership data. This in turn will allow analysis of these data, which could be in this system or in a separate system. It is important that the results of this analysis and any matched data are visible to practitioners to inform their work with families.</i></p>	3	<p>Sentinel is the data warehouse system used by the Supporting Stronger Families team to gather data sets from our partners, currently we can gather data from Police, DWP, Housing benefit, Council Tax, Children's Social Care (statutory and Early Help targeted intervention).</p> <p>We recognise that there are gaps in our data sharing and would like to discuss this as part of a data sharing forum with partners to agree purpose of data sharing across the partnership and produce data sharing agreements going forward.</p> <p>Work has been done to rebuild the family composition, but further work needs to be done and this has not been rolled out yet.</p> <p>Regarding the data warehousing refer to priority 3 of question 1.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to improve the Sentinel system.

<p>6</p>	<p>We are using data to inform performance across the Early Help partnership, demand and resourcing(including commissioning), operational delivery and workforce development.</p> <p><i>A mature area uses data and analytics effectively with senior leadership, across the partnership and at a low tier authority level (where appropriate). These data and analytics are used to inform what is commissioned, resourced and in future planning (in terms of volume of staff/skills/resources required by practitioners in all services across the partnership). Processes should be in place to ensure and continuously improve data quality to ensure these data and analyses are robust.</i></p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Early Help is currently addressing some issues with both the quality-of-service data and the enhancement of their management reporting.</p> <p>We have introduced a weekly data quality report that is circulated to managers to improve accuracy and confidence. We have already seen improvements in data quality and historic data issues have been addressed and resolved.</p> <p>Monthly performance surgeries with the Director of supporting families provides senior leaders with oversight of performance data and analysis of trends and outliers.</p> <p>The statutory key performance indicators continue to be reported on for the purpose of leaders and for the DfE to improve service provision, operational delivery and workforce development. As part of the merger of Early Help Hub and MASH there will be set of key reporting measures agreed alongside the statutory KPI's to provide an overall view of the level of need presented to the new 'front door'</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to improve data quality. 2. Develop shared reporting across all EH teams. 3. Embed actions from analysis into team and service plans for future service enhancements.
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	Data	Self-assessment score 0 to 5	What is working well and what evidence do you have?	What are you prioritising next?
7	<p>We have developed innovative analytical products. This could be needs analysis, place-based analysis, individual or family level risk analytics, apps or systems to improve information available to practitioners and partners, quantifying qualitative case notes or other. documentation or any other product or system that has changed/improved our ways of working.</p> <p><i>A mature area continues to learn and develop how they use data to keep up with demands, changing services and improve the offer to families. Data are used to evaluate services, improve their effectiveness and continue to create/increase efficiencies.</i></p>	3	<p>The Early help service has an embedded 'Outcomes Based Accountability' framework which is used as a continuous service improvement tool. Monthly reviews identify trends and gaps in service delivery. The analysis and discussion, along with local context, help business areas to ensure the service offer adapts to meet evolving community needs.</p> <p>Strategic and operational KPIs help to evaluate service objectives as well as operational processes, using data to make the case for refinements and additions. For example, feedback from SSF quality assurance managers led to changes to the case recording process to better identify cases that met eligibility criteria. Case note categories on the management information system were created to quantify potential eligible families based on qualitative data in case notes.</p> <p>KPIs that are regularly not hitting targets are investigated to identify blockages in the business process, improving workflows.</p> <p>We are currently working on 'Sentinel's ability to present family progress data to practitioners.</p> <p>Our Early Help Hub does an initial qualitative screening of families that informs an initial risk scoring of families. Our needs analysis also helps us to identify and address strategic risks.</p>	<p>Priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalise the process to allow 'Sentinel' the ability to present family progress data to practitioners, moving to self-service model of business intelligence. 2. Better use of 'Sentinel' scoring models to identify additional families. 3. Continue to refine Power BI dashboards for senior leaders and team managers to provide interactive exploration and analysis of Early Help data.

			<p>However, we do not widely use automated risk scoring models as a support tool for caseworkers, this is one of the potential longer-term development areas covered by our Business Intelligence Plan.</p> <p>We have started the development of a Power BI Management Information dashboard and this ongoing development is being regularly and incrementally improved on a weekly basis.</p>	
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