

**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**



Early Intervention and Prevention Partnership Strategy

2021 - 2023

Working collaboratively across partnerships to ensure that all children and young people in Wokingham are the best they can be whilst being happy, healthy and safe

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Foreword from the Executive Member for Children’s Services, Councillor UllaKarin Clark

Welcome to Wokingham’s Early Intervention and Prevention Partnership Strategy. The strategy illustrates our commitment to all of our children and young people. Wokingham is recognised as being a good place to live and for bringing up children. Our aspiration is to maintain this whilst improving the quality of life for our children, young people and their families.

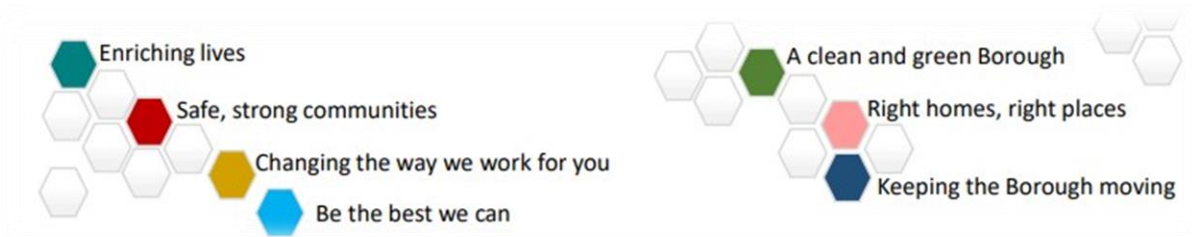
The Early Intervention and Prevention Partnership Strategy is a partnership approach outlining our early intervention offer for collectively improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Our Community Vision sets out our ambition for our people and the place of Wokingham. The Community Vision together with the Children and Young People’s Partnership Plan sets out our framework and common purpose in supporting children, young people and families at the earliest point of need with prevention at its heart.

Community Vision

Our vision for the borough is to be *“a great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business.”*

See [Wokingham Borough Community Vision](#) (hosted on the Wokingham Borough Council website).



Foreword from the Director of Children’s Services and Chair of the Children and Young People’s Partnership, Carol Cammiss

On behalf of the Children and Young People’s Partnership, I am pleased to lead the multi-agency commitment to early intervention and prevention, which sits within the overall vision of Wokingham Children’s Services to be:

“a Borough where all our children and young people feel and are safe, are well cared for, emotionally healthy, resilient and achieve their potential, regardless of background.”

The Children and Young People’s Partnership is the strategic group that will oversee the progress of this strategy and the difference it makes to the lives of children, young people and their families.

Leaders across the partnership have come together to pledge their renewed focus to early intervention and prevention to ensure that children and young people’s needs are met early and effectively with all practitioners taking an active role to promote the welfare of our children and young people.

As partners have been working on developing this strategy, the country has been hit by an unprecedented global pandemic. In supporting our children and young people and their families through the crisis, we have seen some really good examples of innovative and shared ways of working. However, it has also demonstrated more than ever that a shared partnership approach to prevention and early intervention will be imperative to support our children and young people as the impact of the COVID landscape becomes clearer to us as a systems-wide partnership.

Our Children and Young People’s Partnership Plan priorities are:

- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- Contextual Safeguarding
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Thank you to all those who have contributed in the development of this strategy and your commitment to our children, young people and their families.

Executive Summary

In Wokingham all our children, young people and families matter. This strategy sets out how all those working with children, young people and their families will work together to ensure that children and young people thrive and families are supported.

The Early Intervention Foundation defines Early Help as:

“...taking action as soon as possible to tackle problems for children and families before they become more difficult to reverse with a focus on conception, early years, adolescence and early adulthood”.

In Wokingham, we believe that providing Early Help is effective in promoting the welfare of children and young people at any point in a child or young person’s life, from pre-conception through to adolescence.

Our approach is defined by **“...taking a strengths based and solution focussed approach to supporting children and families. This requires a system wide commitment to early intervention with early help and intervention being everyone’s business.”**

Any professional or agency coming into contact with a child, young person and family should be able to identify need and undertake an Early Help Assessment in the context of meeting need at the point of presentation.

This strategy and the priorities has been informed by the views of children, young people, families and multi-agency practitioners along with data and performance that helps us to target support where this is most needed.

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Our Priorities

Priority 1

Meeting the needs of children and families.

The Early Help Assessment to be rolled out across agencies as an assessment of need within a wider offer for early intervention ensuring that children, young people and parent/carers know where to go to get information, advice and support.

Priority 2

Understanding the impact of early intervention on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Establish an early intervention and prevention recording system for use across the Partnership.

Establish and implement an outcomes framework and data set for early intervention and prevention, which evidences impact.

Co-produce the Quality Assurance Framework for Early Help and undertake multi-agency audits of Early Help and Intervention.

Review the impact of the Wokingham Neglect Strategy.

Priority 3

Co-production.

We will listen to and understand the lived experience of children, young people and their families to design our services to better meet need.

Priority 4

New ways of working.

We will design our services and ways of working to ensure that early intervention is embedded and focused on more vulnerable groups such as young people with emotional and mental health needs; support for children and young people on the edge of care; children and young people with SEND; and strategies to reduce parental conflict.

We will build on good practice and demonstrate our learning and the impact of early intervention.

1. Introduction

Our ambition for early intervention and prevention is *“...to ensure every child has the best start in life, by supporting families to have access to good quality information and advice, with equity of access to universal and targeted services at the point of need.”*

This will be supported by schools, health, Police, public health, social care and the voluntary sector working together on prevention, early intervention and building resilience.

This strategy is set in the context of our beliefs and values for working with children, young people and their families.

We believe that:

- Children, young people and families should live in flourishing communities.
- The vast majority of our children and young people should grow up in their own families.
- All services in the local area should work together so that children and young people get the best possible help at the right time and in the right place.
- Help should be provided in a coordinated, easy to access way by multi-agency practitioners using the Early Help Assessment framework and Team Around the Family approach.
- Help provided takes account of the family’s circumstances and the child or young person’s views and lived experience.
- Children in Need and in need of protection will receive swift access to services to safeguard and promote their welfare.
- Families will be supported to enable Children in Care to return home. Where this is not possible we will provide swift access to permanency and look to family-based care as the preferred option.
- Young People in residential care will enjoy stability and we will carefully plan to meet the young person’s needs for family-based care in conjunction with the wishes and feelings of the young person, their families and carers.

Helping children and families - Our Achievements

The 2015-2018 Early Help and Innovation Strategy set out Wokingham’s vision, partnership approach and framework to supporting children and strengthening families. Much has been achieved in the past few years contributing to the majority of our children and young people enjoying happy and healthy childhoods.

Our key achievements are:

- The successful integration of our Children’s Centres and Health Visiting Teams, providing co-ordinated support to children and families.
- The development of the Integrated Early Help Service enabling seamless support for children, young people and families with additional needs.

- Developing a targeted offer within our Children’s Centres to meet the needs of vulnerable children and their families.
- The development of an Early Support Panel to enable the needs of young children with SEND to be identified.
- Integrating the Families First approach within Wokingham’s Integrated Early Help Offer.
- Delivering on our commitment to develop a multi-agency strategy for tackling neglect, with Early Help Assessments being a critical feature of the framework and approach.
- Developing the integrated Duty, Triage and Assessment function with partners, including the Police and Health.
- Enabling children, young people and their families to provide feedback on the quality and effectiveness of our Early Help Service.
- Developing a culture of restorative conversations.
- Embedding the Signs of Safety approach as our practice framework.

2. Purpose/Aim

In Wokingham all our children, young people and families matter.

Our ethos is to enable children and young people to be safe and feel safe, enjoy and achieve, experience good health and wellbeing and live happy and successful lives. Our ways of working are to enable children to be supported by communities and families, providing early intervention when required.

We believe that by offering support early we can promote the welfare of children and young people, contributing to improved outcomes.

Where children and young people need safeguarding they will receive swift support and intervention within a model of support that seeks to enable families to safely parent their children.

Our **Partnership approach** is defined by:

- Prevention.
- Strengthening families and promoting resilience.
- Early identification of need.
- Need being met by the right service, at the right time and in the right place.
- Providing co-ordinated early intervention within a Team Around the Family approach.
- Our collective responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and their families.

Our **Principles for Early Help** are:

- We will promote approaches that enable community and individual resilience.
- The child/young person is at the centre.
- Everything we do *WITH* and not for and not to.
- We recognise and build on the strengths of families.

- We work restoratively with children, young people and their families.
- We will support children and families by having a shared assessment and shared plan.
- We provide targeted, focused support to those with multiple needs.
- Everything we do promotes better outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- We strive for safe and effective practice across the whole system.

3. National and Local Focus for Early Help

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and the Children Act (2004) place a statutory duty on all organisations to work together to provide Early Help and support to children, young people and their families.

Children, young people and their families have different levels of need, which often change over time depending on their circumstances.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) identifies specific groups of children who would benefit from Early Help. Professionals should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for Early Help for a child who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs.
- Has special educational needs.
- Is living in poverty.
- Is in temporary or unsuitable housing.
- Is not attending school.
- Frequently goes missing.
- Is a young carer.
- Is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour.
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance misuse, adult mental health issues and/or domestic abuse.
- Is showing early signs of neglect.

Estimates show that approximately 2 million children in the UK are living in challenging family circumstances, including children whose lives are affected by parental drug and alcohol dependency, domestic abuse, poor mental health and poverty. It is essential that all children have the best start in life and develop well into their adulthood. Without the provision of early intervention, some children and young people will be at risk of, or will experience significant harm.

Nationally and locally, the number of children becoming subject to a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan is increasing, along with the number of Children in Care.

Substance misuse is one of the few social issues that impacts comprehensively on modern society and levels of alcohol and illegal drug misuse in children and young people remain of significant concern. Consequences of substance misuse range from non-attendance and poor attainment at school, poor health, committing crime to support 'habits' and also increased risk of being a victim of violent crime, county lines and sexual exploitation. In addition to this, many children and young people who live with

substance misusing parents and carers are suffering its ill effects. They are often neglected, impacted upon by domestic violence and are at an increasing risk of misusing alcohol and illegal drugs themselves. Young people do not start misusing drugs or alcohol to become addicted on purpose and many will never end up becoming dependent. However, for a significant number of young people, casual and/ or social use may result in regular use or addiction.

Young people with substance misuse issues are more likely to be involved in substance misusing activities when grown up. Research suggests that between 30% and 40% of moderate/heavy teenage alcohol and cannabis users would develop drug/alcohol misuse problems as adults while the remaining 60%-70% would experience natural remission (even if not treated). The proportion is however higher for teenage Class A drug users (up to 95% of teenage Class A drug users continue to use drugs in adulthood). Young people do not start misusing drugs or alcohol to become addicted on purpose and many will never end up becoming dependent. However, for a significant number of young people, casual and/ or social use may result in regular use or addiction.

In the absence of concrete evidence on long-term effectiveness of young people's treatment, the authors of The Department for Education cost-benefit analysis adopt a scenario-based approach. They find that if the number of those who are likely to develop substance misuse problems as adults is reduced by 2.8% - 5.6%, the long-term benefits of treatment would offset the cost of treatment (assuming that the immediate benefits are excluded from this analysis). With a slightly higher reduction in the number of those who would have long-term drug related problems 7% - 10% reduction – the long-term benefits of treatment would exceed the cost of treatment.

There is evidence that supporting children and families at the earliest opportunity has a significant impact in improving outcomes for children and young people. Children's wellbeing is most acutely influenced at the place level, in their homes, at school and in their neighbourhoods. It is also where they are most likely to come into contact with services and support mechanisms designed to improve their lives.

The economic and social case for preventing social problems from emerging in the first place, rather than fixing them after they have already occurred, is well made. It also shows the need for early intervention if and when problems do arise to stop them from becoming entrenched.

The Early Intervention Foundation (2016) estimated that the cost of 'late' intervention in England and Wales has reached approximately £16.6billion per year and in 2017 reported a "significant gap between what is known to be effective from peer-reviewed studies and what is delivered in local child protection systems." The £16.6billion is spread across different public agencies at national and local level, including local authorities, the NHS, schools, welfare, Police and the criminal justice system.

By investing in early intervention and prevention we will be able to improve children's well-being; create a society that drives social mobility and equality of opportunity; and support our economy, investing early to save costs in the longer term.

Providing help at an early opportunity empowers people to regain control of their circumstances and can help transform the lives of vulnerable children and young people.

Our Local Context

Our approach to early intervention is set in the context of our vision, ambition, values, principles and priorities as described in Wokingham's Children and Young People's Partnership Plan and the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership

The Wokingham Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has been replaced by the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership. This follows the national change in the move from LSCBs to Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements. One of the shared priorities of the Partnership is Early Help.

Berkshire West partners are strongly committed to a shared responsibility to safeguard and protect children and young people. All partners are committed to ensure all children and young people can live safe, happy and positive lives and achieve their potential.

How we work together

Leaders across the system have committed that we will:

- Listen with care to our children and young people and to each other.
- Hold each other to account through respectful support and challenge.
- Collaborate and co-operate with each other to improve outcomes for children and young people.
- Spot problems and difficulties early, problem solving together, recognising we have shared responsibility for our children.
- Identify risks in our system and mitigate them together.
- Be efficient and timely in our responses to each other and to needs arising from our local communities.
- Recognise the uniqueness of each place.

4. The Wokingham Level of Need Model

Wokingham has agreed a clear model to enable a common understanding of levels of need, which is illustrated and described in [Wokingham's Threshold Guidance](#).

The model sets out the mechanism for practitioners to undertake an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and the type and level of Early Help services to be provided; the criteria, including the level of need, for when a child/young person should be referred to local authority Children's Social Care for assessment; and for specialist services.

The Levels of Need model is a vital tool underpinning the aspiration to provide early intervention in the lives of potentially vulnerable children and young people.

Many agencies, organisations, parents, carers and other family members are involved with supporting children and it is important that they receive the right services at the appropriate time.

The model provides guidance in relation to levels of need. This should enable any practitioner coming into contact with a child or young person to confidently recognise need and begin a conversation about how to meet the needs of the child, young person and family.

Our model of help and support enables children, young people and their families to receive support at the earliest opportunity, stepping up and down the Continuum of Need.

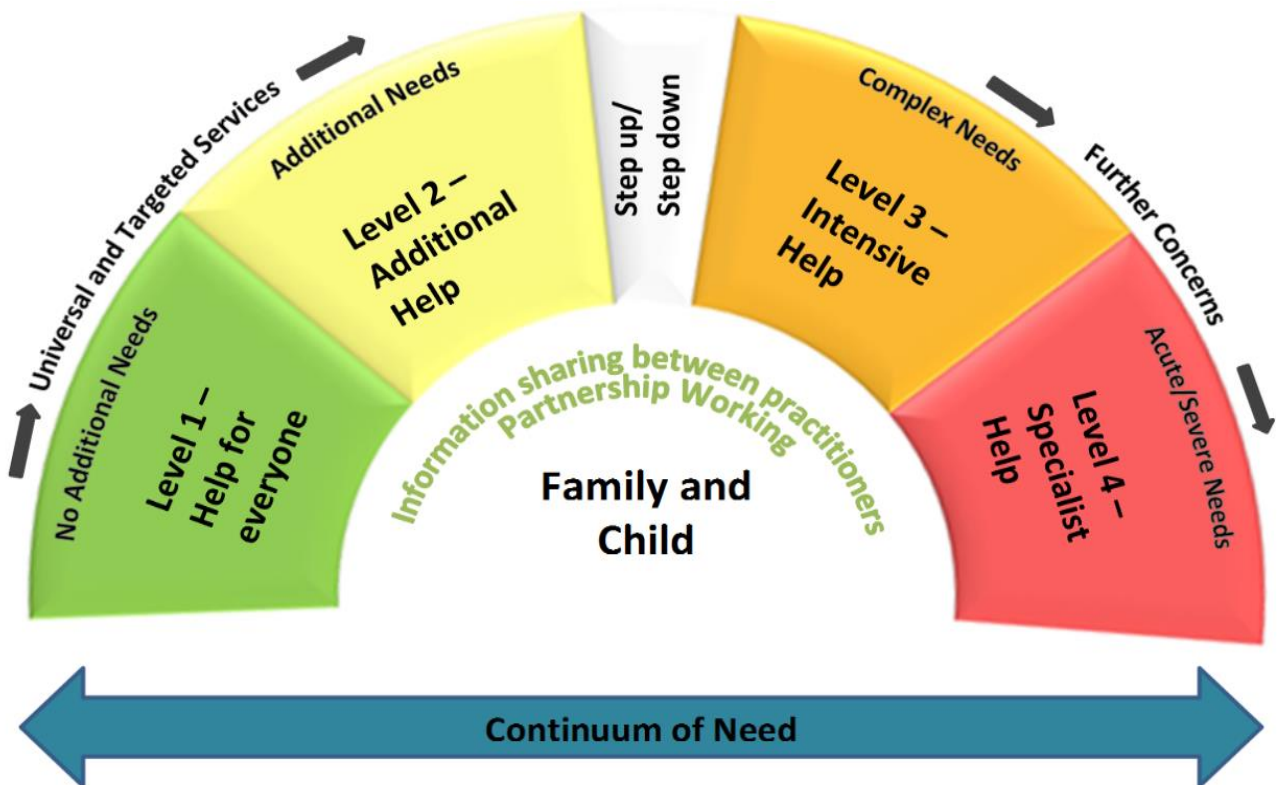
Lead Professionals and agencies undertaking Early Help Assessments will be able to support children and families at the point of need within a Team Around the Family approach. A confident, competent and compassionate multi-agency workforce, which is knowledgeable about children and young people's development and identifying families in need, is critical to our Early Help Offer.

Levels of Need

Our framework follows the 'windscreen' model illustrated below. It is a model of practice which aims to assist practitioners and managers in assessing and identifying a child's level of need, what types of services/resources might meet those needs and the process to follow in moving from the identification of need to the provision of services. It is important to say that each child is an individual within their own context and realise that each child's situation is unique and specific to them. The model provides a guide to support professional judgements in determining the next course of action to meet those needs.

Our approach is underpinned by the following principles:

- Children and young people in levels 2 to 4 also need to use universal services, for example education, health and care.
- Children and young people's needs can move from one level to another and it should not be necessary for those needs to be captured more than once.
- Children and young people can be at different levels for education, health and care within the Continuum of Need diagram.
- Children and young people should be enabled to move quickly and effortlessly to the required service response without necessarily going through each level.
- Families should only have to tell their story once.
- Families should be given a copy of the Early Help Assessment.
- Children, young people and their families have a right to have their voice heard – and this should have a strong influence on what happens next.



Continuum of Need

The terms 'Step Up' and 'Step Down' are commonly used to describe children moving between levels of need and are used within the guidance to describe the process by which children's needs can change.

Children's and young people's situations and needs can change unexpectedly and this means that practitioners should be familiar with the Continuum of Need so that if/when a child's needs change due to a reduced or increased level of concern, they do not fall between the services. Instead, children are held safely in the transition from one service/step to another.

Wherever possible, a successful intervention should result in a safe Step Down to universal services.

Level 1: Help for Everyone

Children, young people and their families who receive universal services have no additional needs; all their health and developmental needs will be met by universal services. These are children who consistently receive child-focused care giving from their parents or carers.

Level 2: Additional Help

Children with additional needs (including disabilities), who may be vulnerable and showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect. Their needs are not clear, not known or not being met. These children and their families need some additional help so that their children can develop, learn and achieve their full potential. They may be living in a situation where the worries, concerns or conflicts are becoming more frequent, or over an extended period. In order to resolve the issues, these children may require additional support, advice, direction and sometimes planned intervention or additional resources.

Level 3: Intensive Help

Children and families who require significant or complex personalised support, often from several agencies working together, to help them reach their potential. The child may be dealing with multiple longer-term issues such as a significant disability, anti-social or challenging behaviour, neglect or poor family relationships, long-term problems with education or health. They need support from services to ensure that the impact of these significant issues are minimised as much as possible. This is the threshold for a statutory assessment led by Children's Social Care under Section 17, Children Act 1989.

Level 4: Specialist Help

Children who are living in circumstances where they are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm, where the young person themselves may pose a risk of serious harm to others, or where there are complex needs in relation to disability which may require a more specialist intervention. Children and young people will be referred to Children's Social Care and managed under Section 47, 20 or 31 of the Children Act 1989. This will also include children who have been remanded into custody and statutory youth offending services.

Duty Triage and Assessment Team

Wokingham's Duty, Triage and Assessment (DTA) Team acts a single 'front door' for children in need of additional support and/or protection. The team works closely with parents/carers and other agencies such as schools and GPs in order to make timely decisions about who can help and signpost accordingly.

Co-located within the team is a partnership of professionals from agencies including the Police, health, Children's Social Care and Integrated Early Help Service. The professionals work together to share and analyse information to build a picture of the child's experience, so that proportionate and timely decisions can be made about the service required to ensure that children and young people receive the right support, at the right time, by the right professional.

The DTA Team provides an opportunity for practitioners to be able to discuss the needs of children, young people and families with a Social Worker.

The function of the DTA Team is to determine:

- The level of need based on the available information.
- Whether the need can be resolved by advice and information sharing.
- Whether the need can be met by universal and targeted services.
- Whether the need can be met by the Integrated Early Help Service.
- Whether the child is a Child in Need or a child in need of protection.

Early Help Hub

The function of the Early Help Hub is to bring together multi-agency partners to consider the needs of children and families by triaging the request for support and ensuring that the most appropriate service is supporting the child and family. The aim of this approach is to support and strengthen families to prevent an escalation to specialist and statutory intervention.

The multi-agency Early Help Hub meets on a weekly basis to identify the most appropriate Early Help service(s) for children and families who need support, but do not meet the threshold for statutory social care. Children, young people and families are referred to the Hub via the Duty, Triage and Assessment Team following receipt of a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).

The Early Help Hub comprises of: Children's Social Care, the Integrated Early Help Service (including the Youth Offending Service and Children's Centres), SAFE (Support for young people Affected by Crime), young carers, support for adult carers, the Education Welfare Service, Primary CAMHS, community engagement, Foundry Pupil Referral Unit and ASSIST (Autism Support Service).

Early Help Framework

The Early Help Assessment (EHA) is a tool to enable early and effective assessment of children and young people with additional needs. It is a holistic, consent-based assessment of need, which records, in a single place and in a structured and consistent way, the key factors in a child's life that point to them having additional needs.

Undertaking an assessment using the EHA as soon as there is an indication of additional needs contributes to supporting and strengthening families through a clear and common understanding of need.

Our Partnership Early Help Offer

Universal services are available to all children, young people and families. These include access to GPs, Midwifery, Health Visitors, School Nurses, community health services, early education, schools, colleges, voluntary and community sector organisations and local council services such as Children's Centres and Community Mentors.

The range of services can be found in the [Wokingham Services Directory](#) (hosted on the Wokingham Borough Council website).

Integrated Early Help Services

Wokingham Borough Council provides an integrated Early Help Offer comprising of Children's Centres, the Early Help Support Team, youth provision and the Youth Offending Service.

Children's Centres

Children's Centres are integrated with Health Visiting and deliver a range of universal and targeted services for children from pre-birth to the age of five.

The Children's Centre offer includes: stay and play sessions; supporting young children to be 'school ready'; and targeted support groups including young parents, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community support and supporting parents with mental health issues and domestic abuse.

The group work offer also includes Incredible Years, Triple P, adult learning and return to work programmes. The service works with a range of partners including Midwifery, Health Visiting, Schools, Early Years, parishes and the voluntary and community sector.

Early Help Support Team

The Early Help Support Team provides whole family interventions using a Signs of Safety and restorative approach, providing targeted support. The team uses a strengths-based, outcome-focused approach to prevent children and young people from experiencing harm and neglect, domestic abuse, learning and emotional difficulties and social isolation. The team works with the family, schools and other agencies to provide wrap-around support that could include individual and whole family support, as well as group work programmes and access to specialist services.

At a targeted Early Help level, practitioners within the Early Help Support Team act as Lead Professionals and develop a Team Around the Family plan with other multi-agency practitioners. The service also provides support and intervention to children and young people subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan.

Youth Offending Service

The Youth Offending Service is part of the Integrated Early Help Service, providing Early Help and preventative multi-agency interventions to prevent young people becoming involved in exploitation, anti-social behaviour and crime.

Families First

Families First is the Wokingham approach to the national Troubled Families initiative.

The approach provides targeted support and intervention for families with multiple needs, including crime, anti-social behaviour, non-attendance at school, unemployment, mental health and domestic abuse. The key outcomes from the approach are:

- Improving attendance or enabling children and young people to attend school.
- Helping young people into education or training.
- Reducing involvement with criminal offences and anti-social behaviour.
- Helping adults back to work.
- Helping families affected by domestic abuse and violence.
- Helping parents and children with a range of health and emotional/mental health needs.

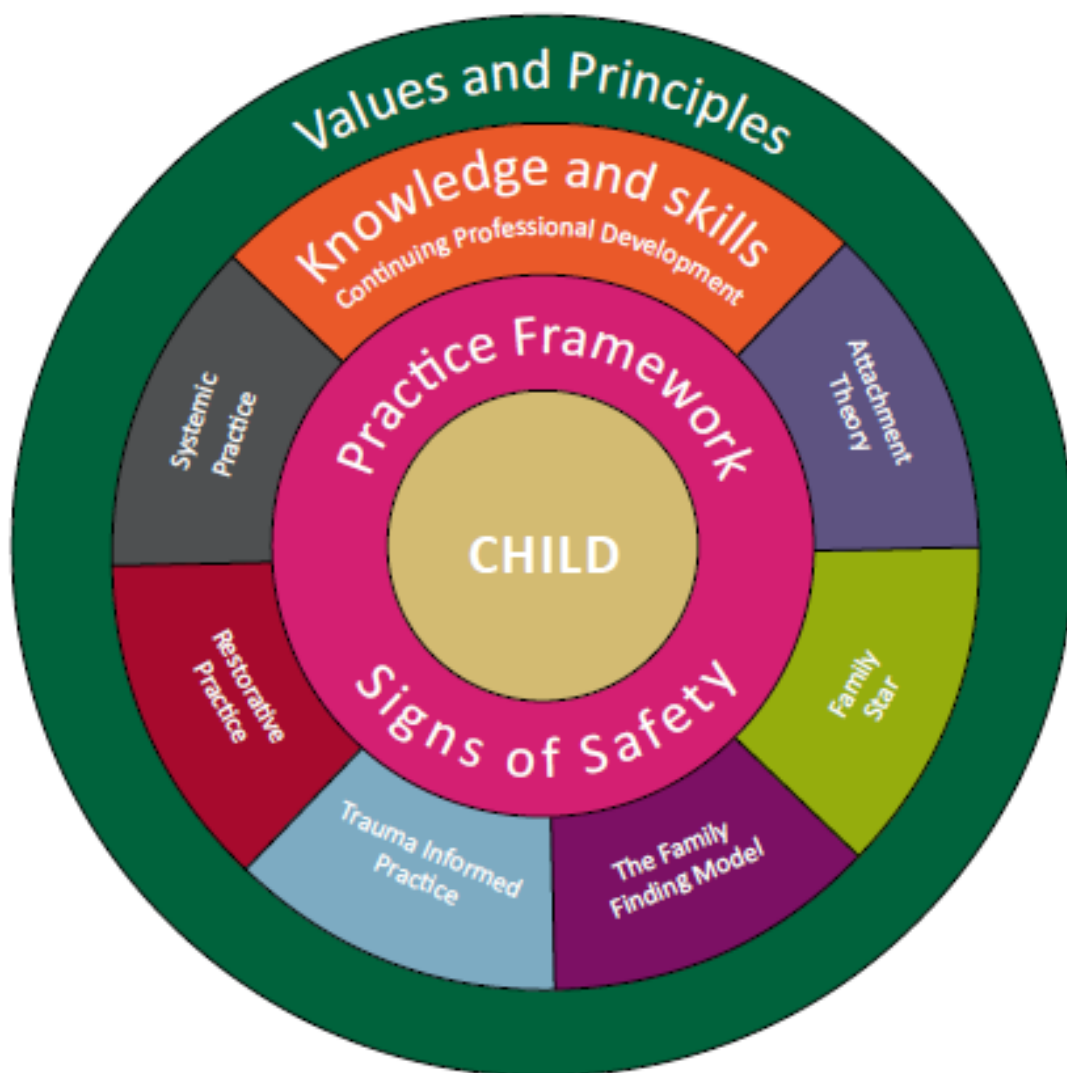
Serious Violence and Exploitation

Wokingham is in the early stages of adopting an approach to reducing serious violence and exploitation which involves active collaboration across agencies working with children and the communities they live in. This whole systems approach looks at violence as a preventable consequence of a range of factors, including adverse early life experiences, or harmful social or community experiences and influences. Early intervention will play an important role in helping to address some of the root causes of violence in the community and prevent individuals becoming

involved in and being impacted by serious violence. Early Intervention will support the development of community responses that focus on making places safer for those who are vulnerable, ensuring inclusivity and opportunities for all regardless of background and needs.

Wokingham will learn from the experience of others and evaluate and adopt approaches that have been successful elsewhere.

5. Wokingham's Practice Model for Children's Services



The Practice Model is underpinned by our values:

- Improving outcomes for children, young people and families is our priority.
- We have high aspirations for every child.
- We are responsive to need and performance information, managing resources effectively and efficiently.
- We highly value and support our Children's workforce across the partnership.

- We work in partnership with professionals, children, young people and families to achieve our collective aims for children and young people.

Wokingham Children’s Services and partners have adopted the Signs of Safety approach as their overarching practice framework. Signs of Safety is a way of working that supports families who need help raising their children and keeping them safe. It is a relationship-based way of working that puts the child, their parents and connected people at the centre and gives them every opportunity to come up with their own ideas and solutions.

Signs of Safety is underpinned and enhanced by knowledge and understanding of Attachment Theory, Systemic Practice, Restorative Practice, Trauma Informed Practice, the Family Finding Model and use of the Family Star – all of which complement and deepen our ability to use the Signs of Safety approach to enhance outcomes for children.

6. Our Case for Change: Our Population

Our case for change is built on an understanding of our needs and our population.

Wokingham is a small unitary authority with a population of approximately 168,000 (ONS mid-year population estimate).

Wokingham’s population is expanding and the demographic and complexity of needs is changing. The Borough is undergoing a phase of significant housing development with 13,500 new homes planned to be built by 2026.

The population is expected to increase over the next five years, with the proportion of 10-14 year olds increasing at a higher rate than the national average. There are fewer under-fives, but a marked increase in the number of children aged 5 – 9 years.

Children in the Borough

Under-25 year olds make up almost a third of the population of Wokingham (30.2%) and under 18s just under a quarter (23.5%). Both figures are higher than for England as a whole (29.9% and 21.4%, respectively). Between 2017 and 2021 the population of 10-14 year olds grew faster than any other age group in the Borough. Children and young people are a significant part of our community and their importance for the success of the Borough cannot be overestimated.

Wokingham Under-25 Population Estimates (*mid-year 2019*):

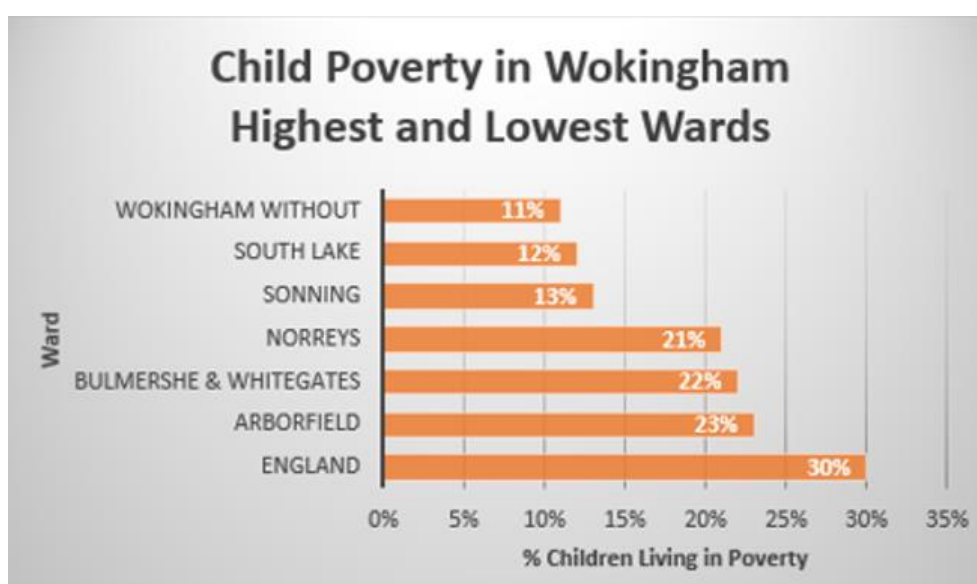
Age Group	Male	Female	Total
0-4	5,092	4,809	9,901
5-9	6,364	5,986	12,350

10-14	6,135	5,743	11,878
15-19	5,079	4,917	9,996
20-25	4,027	3,603	7,630
Total	26,697	25,058	51,755

Child Poverty in Wokingham

The level of child poverty is low in Wokingham (17%) compared to the whole of the United Kingdom (30%) and although no individual ward exceeds the UK figure, there do exist large discrepancies between the lowest and highest areas of child poverty in the Borough.

(Source: www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2019. Figures for 2017/18)



Our Schools

Wokingham has 68 mainstream schools with 7 resource bases educating 27,212 nursery, primary, middle and secondary school pupils of which:

- 39 are local authority maintained primary, middle and secondary schools.
- 24 are mainstream academies, including 2 academy free schools.
- 1 is a local-authority maintained special school.
- 1 is an academy free school.
- 2 are pupil referral units.
- 1 is a local-authority maintained nursery school.

99% of children under 5 access Early Years provision graded 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.

89% of children attend a Wokingham school with an Ofsted rating of ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ – above the national average.

89.5% of children attend a secondary school with an Ofsted rating of ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’.

88.5% of children attend a primary school with an Ofsted rating of ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’.

20% of Wokingham schools have an ‘Outstanding’ judgement.

Educational Achievement

Summer 2020 assessments were cancelled due to Covid-19 situation. DfE announced that it will not publish School Performance data for 2020 and also mentioned that Ofsted, Department for Education regional teams and local authorities, should use data from previous years when assessing school performance.

Children and young people in Wokingham do well in national exams and tests, compared to their peers in the South East and England. With the exception of A Levels, in 2019 Wokingham pupils outperformed their South East and national peers at all educational stages. While further work is taking place in data quality, data currently available indicates the following:-

Achievement and Attainment 2019	Wokingham	National	South East
EYFS - % Good level of development	77	72	75
Phonics - % Met the required standard of phonic decoding	84	82	82
KS1 - % Achieving Expected Standard in Reading	80	75	77
KS1 - % Achieving Expected Standard in Writing	74	69	71
KS1 - % Achieving Expected Standard in Maths	81	76	77
KS2 - % Achieving Expected Standard in Reading/Writing/Maths	74	65	66
GCSE - Average Attainment 8 score per pupil*	50.8	46.7	47.9
GCSE - % Achieved 9-5 grades in English and Maths (new in 2017)	52.6	43.2	46.2
GCSE - % Achieved 9-4 grades in English and Maths (new in 2017)	72.8	64.6	67.3
GCSE - Average Progress 8 score**	0.25	-0.03	-0.01
A-Level - % Achieving 3A*-A grades or better	9.7	13	11.8
A-Level - % Achieving AAB grades or better at	17.7	21.3	20.3

A-Level - % Achieving AAB grades or better, of which at least two are in facilitating subjects	12.8	16.5	15.3
* Attainment 8 measures the achievement of a pupil across 8 qualifications including mathematics (double weighted) and English (double weighted), 3 further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measure and 3 further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE approved list.			
**Progress 8 score of 1.0 means pupils in the group make on average a grade more progress than the national average; a score of -0.5 means they make on average half a grade less progress than average.			

Social Care

Wokingham has a lower proportion of children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan or in the care of the local authority than the South East, statistical neighbours and England. Despite there being an increase in demand over the past 36 months, which has seen Child Protection Plans more than treble and begin to approach comparator figures, Children in Care figures remain significantly lower.

Social Care Benchmarking

	Wokingham (End Jan 2020)	South East	Statistical Neighbours	England
Children in Care/10,000	28.4	53.0	47.0	65.0
Child Protection/10,000	39.4	41.4	35.0	43.7
% Children with 3+ Placements Moves in the Past 12 months	5.7% (6 of 106)	12.0%	12.8%	10.0%

Wokingham is a good place to live and bring up children with access to high quality education, positive aspiration, good quality housing, green spaces, good employment and wellbeing. The health of children, young people and families in Wokingham is generally better than the England average.

The right environment, opportunity and conditions for children and young people to have a best start and develop well are significant.

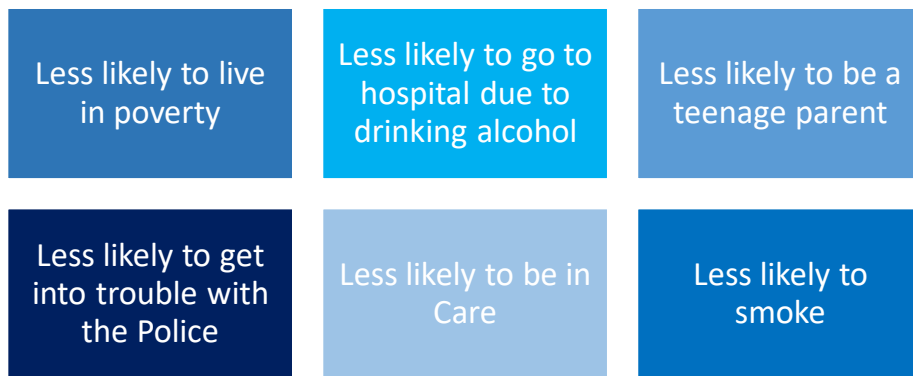
7. Our Case for Change: Our Needs

Most of our children and young people achieve good outcomes and go on to lead successful lives as adults.

Children and Young People in Wokingham are more likely to:



And are less likely to:



75.3% of all Reception-year children in Wokingham achieve a good level of development.

Overall school attainment is good with the majority of young people (70.9%) achieving at least 5 A*-C GCSEs (including English and Maths), however young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds tend to do less well. Young people claiming Free School Meals are more likely to achieve 5 A*-C GCSEs (including English and Maths) than the national average.

The proportion of pupils eligible and claiming Free School Meals is 5.3% (2018), which is significantly lower than the national average (14.1%).

Absence from school is better than the national average, with 4.1% and 4.6% respectively. 5.5% of young people were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). This is similar to the England average.

The overall number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (*or previously a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN)*), has grown since 2015 from 730 to 934 (March 2019), with the number expected to increase.

10.8% of primary and secondary children and young people were identified as having a special educational need, which is below the England average.

The most prevalent needs of children and young people supported by an Education, Health and Care Plan were:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder: 41%
- Social Emotional and Mental Health: 19%
- Moderate Learning Disabilities: 10%
- Specific Learning Disability: 9%

There are a further 2,316 children and young people in Wokingham schools, including independent and non-maintained schools, who benefit from SEN support (May 2019), of which the majority (65.2%) are male, with 34.8% female.

The January 2019 School Census highlights the most prevalent needs of children and young people with SEN support being:

- Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties (SCLN): 21%
- Social Emotional and Mental Health: 18%
- Specific Learning Disability: 17%
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 13%
- Moderate Learning Disabilities: 11%

As at 31st March 2019, 287 children and young people were supported by the Disabled Children's Team. The most prevalent needs of the children and young people were:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder: 31.1%
- Physical Disability: 13.6%
- Severe Learning Disability: 11.5%
- Moderate Learning Disability: 10.5%

13.7% of 15 year olds in Wokingham stated that they had a long-term illness, disability or medical condition that had been diagnosed by a doctor. This is in line with the England average.

Young people in Wokingham are less likely to regularly drink alcohol or use drugs compared with the England average. 4.4% of all 15 year olds in Wokingham were reported to be drinking alcohol at least once a week (2014/15). This is better than the England average of 6.2%. Hospital admissions due to alcohol in young people are about half the national rate.

The rate of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System (10-17 year olds in 2018) is 178.7 per 100,000, which is better than the England average.

Challenging Trends and Opportunities

Whilst the majority of children and young people in Wokingham will grow up healthy, safe and secure, there are some children and young people who need additional support and early intervention. In particular, children from poorer and disadvantaged backgrounds often do not enjoy the same success

as their peers. Our approach seeks to ensure that every child and young person has high aspirations and achieves to the very best of their ability.

Locally, the proportion of children who access 2 year old early education and childcare funding is lower than the England average. In Wokingham, on average 66% of children access early education and childcare funding (2019/20) compared with 68% nationally (January 2019, DfE). The national and local take-up has decreased since 2018 from 72% (national) and 69% (local) of children accessing early education and childcare funding.

Whilst the majority of children and young people in Wokingham tend to enjoy positive emotional health, those who do not are more vulnerable to self-harm. The rate of young person's admissions as a result of self-harm in Wokingham is 823.9 per 100,000 population (2017/2018), which has risen in recent years and is significantly worse than the England average of 648.6 per 100,000.

Children and Young People Referred to Children's Services - Assessment Factors

The national Child in Need (CIN) Census enables analysis of the factors that are prevalent in the needs of children, young people and their families who are referred to Children's Services compared to the England average.

Children, young people and their parents/carers have multiple needs and as such the following data recognises that one referral may demonstrate numerous and multi-faceted need.

In Wokingham:

- Domestic abuse featured in 62% of Children's Services assessments with the England average being 50.6%.
- Mental Health featured in 43.5% of Children's Services assessments with the England average being 38.9%.
- Neglect featured in 23.6% of Children's Services assessments with the England average being 18%.
- Drugs featured in 21% of Children's Services assessments which is comparable to the England average.
- Emotional harm featured in 20.8% of Children's Services assessments which is comparable to the England average.
- Alcohol use featured in 19.8% of Children's Services assessments with the England average being 18.3%.

(CIN Census 2018/19)

A Manifesto for Children, Office of the Children's Commissioner (September 2019) includes the projected rate of children and young people aged 0-17 years who are likely to be living in families where there is alcohol/substance misuse, domestic abuse and severe mental health needs - or a combination of these factors.

In Wokingham, the potential prevalence of children and young people affected by these categories of familial need is:

- Alcohol/substance misuse: 2.94%, 1,140 children and young people
- Domestic abuse: 4.89%, 1,890 children and young people
- Severe mental health needs: 9.69%, 3,750 children and young people

The Manifesto estimates that there are 5,370 (13.86%) children and young people living with any one of the above factors, with the estimated prevalence of children and young people living with two or more factors equating to 1,140 children and young people (2.93%) and 330 children and young people potentially living with three or more factors (0.85%).*

**Note: the figures within the Manifesto report are not derived from actual data, but a projection from a national study combined with additional predictive modelling.*

The partnership opportunity for early intervention and prevention is to close the gap on inequality in all forms including:

- Safe, stable and secure care.
- School readiness.
- Academic and vocational attainment.
- Employment.
- Health and wellbeing.
- Prosperity.

Our key learning from this analysis is:

- The need for robust early assessment and support.
- The need to target our provision to those that need help most.
- The need to target our action in areas where children and young people may not achieve as well as their peers.
- The importance of multi-agency working to support families and safely prevent the need to refer to specialist services.
- The impact of parenting capacity and ‘toxic trio’ on the lives of children and young people.

8. Voices of Children, Young People and Their Families

Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership and leaders are fully committed to keeping the child and young people at the heart of all that they do. Partners want to see the lived experience of children and young people making a tangible difference to all aspects of safeguarding, including Early Help.

Children have said that they need (*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*)

Vigilance	To have adults notice when things are troubling them.
Understanding and Action	To understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon.
Stability	To be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them.
Respect	To be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not.
Information and Engagement	To be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans.
Explanation	To be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not been met with a positive response.
Support	To be provided with support in their own right, as well as a member of their family.
Advocacy	To be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views.
Protection	To be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination - and the right to special protection and help if a refugee.

Views of Children and Young People

The Wokingham Community Resilience Project undertook a survey of how people, including young people, feel about living in Wokingham. There were 1,710 respondents to the survey, of which 21% of were young people.

Young people have said they would like:

- More education and awareness about knife crime.
- More information and a range of youth activities.
- Access to creative workshops.
- Areas such as parks where gangs do not congregate.
- To feel safer at night in the town centre.
- More support regarding social media and cyber bullying.
- Support for young people who self-harm.

Adults have said:

- Show young people we care by giving them dedicated spaces, areas and activities - then they may care about their community.
- More activities for 12-17 year olds.
- Community Officers to enable young people to feel safer.
- More to do that is affordable and keeps young people safe.

Make Your Mark 2019

Make Your Mark is the annual ballot of young people aged 11-18 years, enabling young people to have a vote on issues that matter. Young people have a choice of ten themes to vote for, which are categorised as UK Topics and Devolved Topics. Young people locally were generally more concerned with devolved topics.

UK Topics	Devolved Topics
Protect the Environment	End Knife Crime
Tackling Hate Crime	Mental Health
Votes@16	Curriculum for Life
Welcoming Refugees	Child Poverty
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child	Street Harassment

Wokingham achieved a 13.7% turnout for UK Topics, representing 2,236 young people who voted for UK Topics; and a 16% turnout for Devolved Topics, representing 2,773 young people who voted for Devolved Topics.

The top five issues as voted for by young people were:

- Protect the Environment
- End Knife Crime
- Curriculum for Life
- Mental Health
- Child Poverty

Parental Views

During March 2019, a Strategic Review of Early Help was undertaken, which included parental views about Early Help.

Parents and Carers said:

- Very helpful to develop strategies at home.
- The help and training has been invaluable and has given me a support network and skills to help the whole family.
- We are better able to plan and organise our lives and make our lives run more smoothly.
- More co-ordinated support.
- Earlier intervention.

- Listening to parents and children and what they want and need before making any judgments. Helping all agencies to co-ordinate and work together. Ensuring interventions are early enough.
- Help and advice of where and who to contact.
- Reassurance I was doing the right thing, help, support to guide through the maze of getting anywhere. It is really difficult not knowing what all the processes are.
- Advice, someone to talk to...a support group.
- Emotional support, structure.
- Keep young people safe, advocate and support young peoples' voice to be heard by all, bring professionals together and be solution-focused. Ongoing parenting courses that are relevant and work for my family.
- Advice, guidance, experienced assistance.
- Tools and helping mechanisms to encourage self-help.
- Answers to my questions, information on what support is available.
- Advice and guidance as felt I had tried all methods to help my children's behaviours.
- A hub of professionals who can triage a support plan to give mental health services to families and schools.

9. Co-Production and Collaboration: Partner and Practitioner Insights

The Strategic Review of Early Help explored partner and practitioner insight into the service offered by Wokingham Borough Council's Early Help Service.

Responses suggested that early intervention and prevention is a multi-agency approach, working with children, young people and their families as issues arise. The approach should be defined by joined up working with schools, Police, health and the voluntary sector.

A system defined by an effective early help approach whereby partners work together to share a strategic approach, operational direction and a review of quarterly intelligence which is reported on as a whole, providing an overview of all Early Help services.

Commissioned services should be specified to work with the complex needs of families, as well as an ongoing focus on children's emotional and mental health.

10. Learning from Practice: Early Intervention Case Studies

Case Study 1:

A referral for Early Help was received in relation to a family with four children all under ten years old, including a child with disabilities. Both parents had additional needs of their own, including physical needs which impacted on their ability to consistently meet the needs of all of their children. Two of the children had behavioural needs which the parents and school found concerning.

The family was living in a home that was overcrowded and the home conditions impacted on the health of the child with disabilities.

Multi-agency working within a Team Around the Family approach enabled the family to think about the future and consider what would make a positive difference. Ensuring that the parental needs were met enabled parents to feel supported and have more time for their children. This in turn reduced the behavioural issues of the younger children.

Parents were also enabled to reconnect with their family and friends who provided a listening ear and wider network of support.

The family was supported to move to a property that was better maintained and more suitable to the needs of the child with disabilities.

Case Study 2:

A referral for Early Help was received in relation to a large sibling group of six children and their parents. The age of the children ranged from 2 to 16 years, with two teenagers not being in school or college. Parents were ostracised from the local community and had been involved in and subject to anti-social behaviour within their community. The younger children had identified needs in relation to speech and language and had missed some immunisations and developmental checks.

Effective family support and a wider assessment of need identified that the youngest child would benefit from accessing early education childcare funding. A trusting relationship between professionals and the mother enabled the mother to feel confident in registering her child in a nursery, which in turn positively impacted on the child's speech and language development. This, in turn, led to parents engaging with health professionals to allow the developmental checks to take place and the child and older children catching up on their immunisations.

Direct work with the older children enabled the children to re-engage in school and education and consequently their attendance increased. The sixteen year old succeeded in gaining GCSEs, enrolled into college and has aspirations for the future.

Wider family working and effective working with the Police and the Community reduced the level and impact of anti-social behaviour.

11. Governance

The Children and Young People's Partnership will oversee the progress, exception reporting and achievements of this strategy.

Measures of Success

We will know we have made progress when:

- Children, young people, their families and our communities are resilient.
- Everyone who works with children and young people is able to identify issues early, enable families to find solutions and provide advice and help.

- Parents, children and young people tell us that they feel safe and supported and understand why we are involved - and that early intervention has made a difference to their lives.
- Multi-agency practitioners feel confident in recognising needs and coming together as a Team Around the Family.
- More children and young people are supported at an early intervention level without the need for onward referral to specialist services.
- Evidence-based practice continually informs how we work with children, young people and their families.
- We collectively understand the impact and outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- We learn from and act on the lived experience of the child, young person and family.

Performance Measures

Our key performance measures which demonstrate that early intervention is making a difference are:

- An increase in the number of children and young people being supported within early intervention.
- The majority of children and young people being safely supported at an early intervention level, with no need for referral to specialist services.
- Less children being subject to repeat referrals.
- Less children being in need and in need of protection.
- Children, young people and their families feeling that the support has made a difference to their lives.
- Development of a partnership reporting mechanism which demonstrates improved activity and outcomes for Early Help.

Early Intervention and Prevention Action Plan

An action plan for this strategy has been developed and is being continually monitored by the Early Intervention and Prevention Task and Finish Group. If you would like more details, please contact kelli.scott@wokingham.gov.uk or hayley.rees@wokingham.gov.uk.