

**7<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**8**

**Early Help Strategy**

**Ward(s):** All

**Portfolios:** Cllr. Stacie Elson. Children’s

**1. Aim**

- To provide an update on the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Supporting Families programme 2022 and Beyond, the Walsall’s Early Help Partnership and the Walsall’s Early Help Strategy 2021- 2024.
- To provide an overview of the focus between now and March 2025.

Early Help aims to ensure that vulnerable families who need support get it, at the right time, in the right way and that we continue to deliver locally based support for families, led by key Early Help practitioners and local partners, who know their locality and more importantly the local families and are best to who work with children, families and carers to build on their strengths and tackle problems as soon as possible.

Early intervention with the right support should prevent the needs of vulnerable families from escalating and reduce the demand for statutory intervention.

**2. Recommendations**

1. For the direction of travel for the Early Help Partnership to be supported
2. For progress and achievements to be endorsed

<b>3</b>	<b>Report detail – know</b>
	<p><u>National framework:</u> The Department for Levelling Up, Housing &amp; Communities (DLUHC) national’s framework sets out how all local strategic partnerships have to work as part of the Early Help System <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/107111/Supporting_Families_Early_Help_System_guide_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf">Supporting Families: Early Help System guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>.</p> <p>This framework sets out the expectations around the network of services, processes and interactions that aim to help children, young people, and their families at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p><u>Early Help System Guide:</u> In March 2022 the DLUHC refreshed the guide outlining the national vision and descriptors for a mature Early Help System, the guide also provides a self-assessment tool to support discussion, reflections and action planning against key areas that influence the effectiveness of Early Help.</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Families Voice &amp; experience</li> <li>2. Workforce</li> <li>3. Leaders</li> <li>4. Communities</li> <li>5. Data</li> </ol>
	<p><u>Early Help Strategy 2021-2024 an overview:</u> since the launch of the Early Help Strategy in 2021 the partnership via the multi-agency steering group has focused on 4 overarching priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Priority One:</u> Culture &amp; Practice - Ensure our Early Help partnership and the way in which we work together is fully understood and that together we achieve better outcomes for families.</li> <li>• <u>Priority Two:</u> Smart use of data – Share local data to understand the needs of our children, young people and their family.</li> <li>• <u>Priority Three:</u> Resilient Communities: Use local resources in the most effective way.</li> <li>• <u>Priority Four:</u> Voice: Children, Young People, Parents &amp; Carers are heard.</li> </ul>
	<p><u>The DLUHC Supporting Families programme 2022 and beyond:</u> the Early Help Partnership is responsible for delivering the Supporting Families programme, launched in March 2021 and builds further on the previous Troubled Families programme which commenced in 2015.</p> <p>The programme is aimed at providing targeted interventions for families with complex interconnected problems and is directly associated to the delivery of the partnership approach at level 3 within the continuum of need above.</p> <p>The Supporting Families programme has 10 areas of priority need categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Education</li> <li>2. Early Years</li> <li>3. Health</li> <li>4. Drugs &amp; Alcohol</li> <li>5. Family Relationships</li> <li>6. Abuse &amp; Exploitation</li> <li>7. Crime Prevention and Tackling Crime</li> <li>8. Domestic Abuse</li> <li>9. Secure Housing</li> <li>10. Financial Stability</li> </ol>
3.1	<b>What has been done?</b>
	<p><u>Early Help System Guide:</u> the local Strategic Early Help Partnership is expected to complete an annual maturity self-assessment indicating how mature the partnership feels it is against a set criterion of measures. To support the self-assessment this year Walsall Early Help Partnership joined Sandwell Council and Children’s Trust to complete a peer review to help inform the self-assessment.</p> <p>The feedback from Sandwell Council &amp; Children’s Trust delivered to the ADCS West Midlands Network was extremely positive, they felt Walsall had a mature system that is well established, they saw strong evidence that developments are having an impact where needed and that there is a commitment to continuous development. The overall score they gave to the partnership was 5 out of 5.</p>

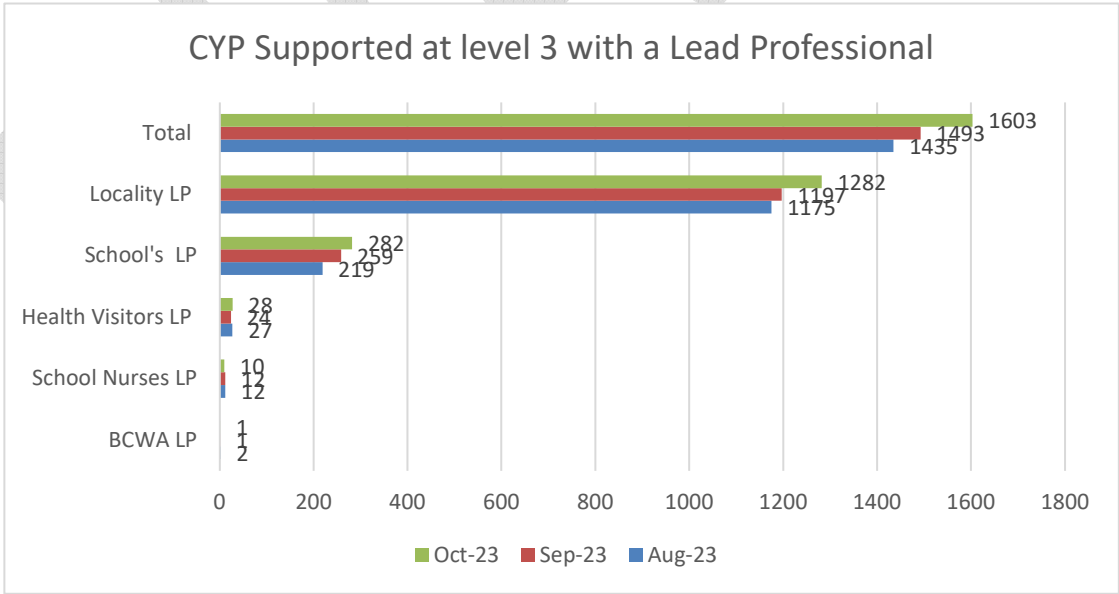
	<p>This provided the partnership with time to reflect on how far it had travelled over the past 3 years. The annual maturity self-assessment was completed, and the partnership gave itself an overall score of 4 out of 5, recognising that there is still work to be done and outcomes to be achieved.</p> <p>The partnership recognised the strengths specifically around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families voice and experience, having an established mechanisms to gather feedback from parents/carers, children and young people and that families could see the feedback was listened to and acted on, families also report that they were part of decision making and felt confident in sustaining the positive changes made, but also knew where to get help in the future should they need it, they felt more connected to their local community and what it offers.</li> <li>• Workforce, partners see themselves as part of the Early Help system and report how this has strengthened over the past 12 months.</li> <li>• Communities, the partnership includes and respects the voluntary and community sector and capacity in communities is building.</li> <li>• Leaders, there is a strong well established Early Help Steering Group, a practice model across the system and partners work well together.</li> </ul> <p>The partnership also recognised however there is more needed to do to ensure the mature model is reached, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders, work is needed to ensure the system is balanced and that support is provided to children, young people and their families at the earliest opportunity, avoiding unnecessary or costly statutory interventions, including level 3 Early Help</li> <li>• Leaders &amp; Data, work is needed to have an agreed shared set of measures at family, cohort, demand, and population level.</li> <li>• Data, work is needed to ensure we have a regular set of data measures and feeds from all parts of the partnership to support whole family working.</li> <li>• Data, case management systems allow partners to securely access all relevant records and whole family assessments.</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Early Help Strategy:</u> The strategy and associated action plans are ambitious, designed to transform the ways of working and the provision of early support to families in Walsall and in doing so, improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people reducing the need for acute or specialist services. The partnership monitors the action plans and hold annual reviews of direction travelled.</p>
	<p>The strategy is due for review; however, the focus is very dependent on key strategic changes to the national and local landscape for Early Help, including the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Josh McAlister <a href="http://www.gov.uk">Independent review of children's social care: final report - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a> and the</li> <li>• <a href="http://publishing.service.gov.uk">Children's social care stable homes built on love consultation (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Given the potential changing landscape the Early Help Partnership have suggested that a 12-month interim strategy is developed whilst we further understand the impact of change. The focus of which will be around:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Data – to ensure case management systems are accessible to all partners working with families and that all partnership data allows us to quantify all</li> </ol>

- issues affecting the family and report on all issues and outcomes/impact in a quantifiable way.
- 2) Communities – to ensure we are building capacity in communities and harnessing the talents of parents, carers and young peoples lived experiences to help and support each other.
  - 3) Workforce – we continue to invest in our wider workforce, embed our shared practice framework and improve practice through quality assurance methods.
  - 4) Family Voice – to ensure families are better connected to their local community and have their own support network at a local level.
  - 5) Leaders – to work specifically with secondary schools, to strengthen relationships, have an agreed quality of practice measure and that secondary schools become part of and represent the Early Help Partnership and system.

The DLUHC Supporting Families programme 2022 and beyond: launched the refreshed priorities and outcome framework in October 2022. The Early Help Partnership produced a practitioner’s priority and outcome framework guide and held 4 separate training and awareness days where in excess 400 partners attended, learnt about the new priorities, worked through case studies, and were provided an information package and relevant guidance, some partners also agreed to join a workgroup to take forward some practice review, including the need to refresh to early help assessment, plan and review.

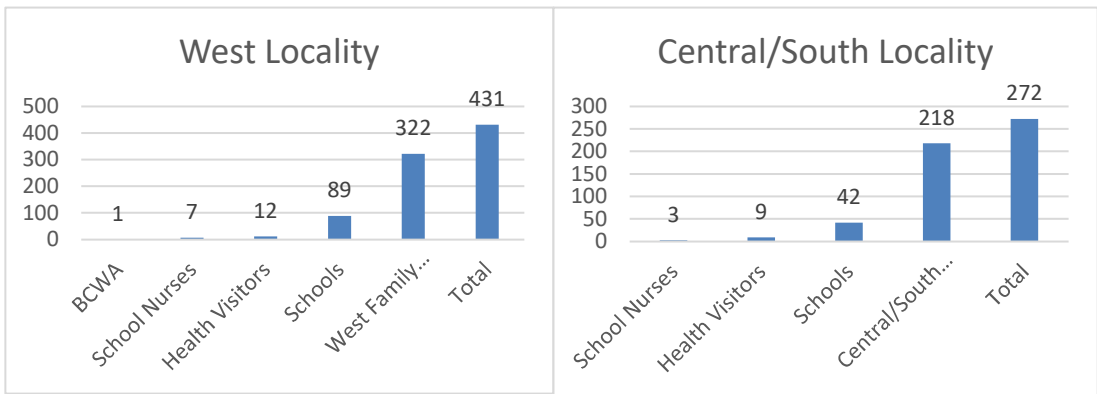
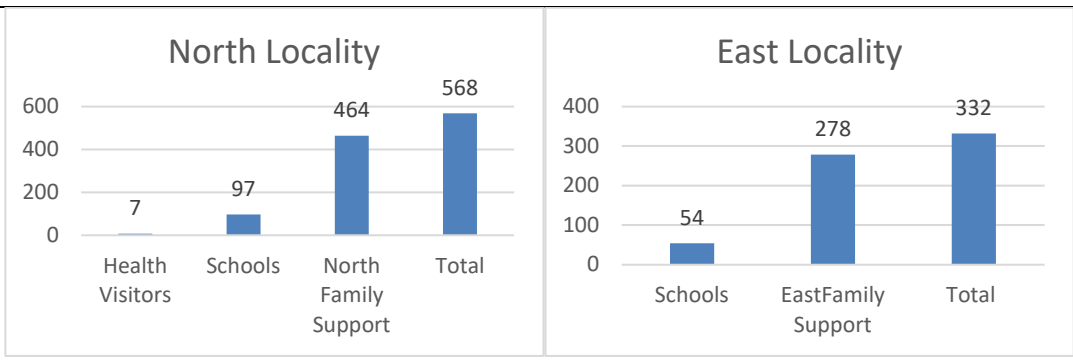
**3.2 Who is getting support through Early Help: Performance data as of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.**

As you can see in the graph below the number of children and young people being support through Early Help (local authority and partnership) is increasing month on month.

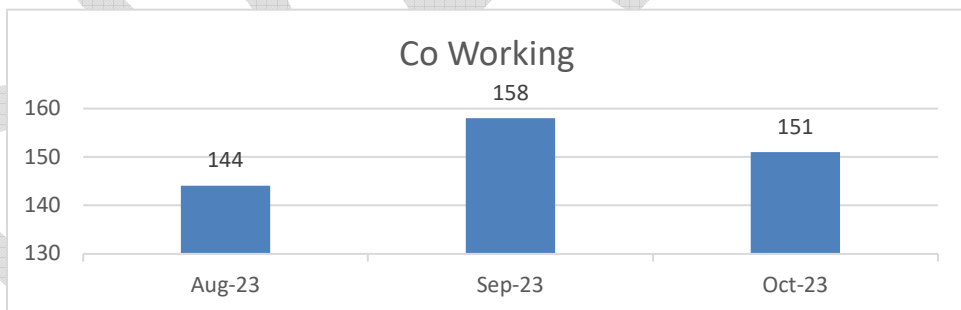


Whilst Childrens Services Early Help Family Practitioner remain the main lead professional it is reassuring to see that partners are increasing their roles and responsibilities as part of the Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) statutory guidance.

The charts below show the demand at a locality level:



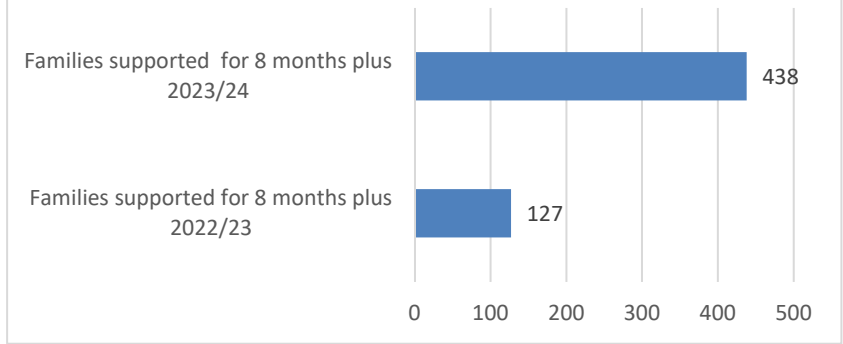
Early Help Family Support Practitioners in addition to their lead professional role also 'co-work' with other Lead Professional's or Social Workers where a child, young person and/or family require a specific intervention. The graph below shows the number over the past 3 months of children and young people being 'co-worked'.



The request for 'co-working' is currently being analysed to further understand the needs of families and barriers of partners unable to deliver the interventions directly.

Since the introduction of the new Supporting People Outcome Framework which details the outcomes to be achieved for families, we are seeing a significant increase in the length of time families are being supported, we are also seeing an increasing complexity of needs for families.

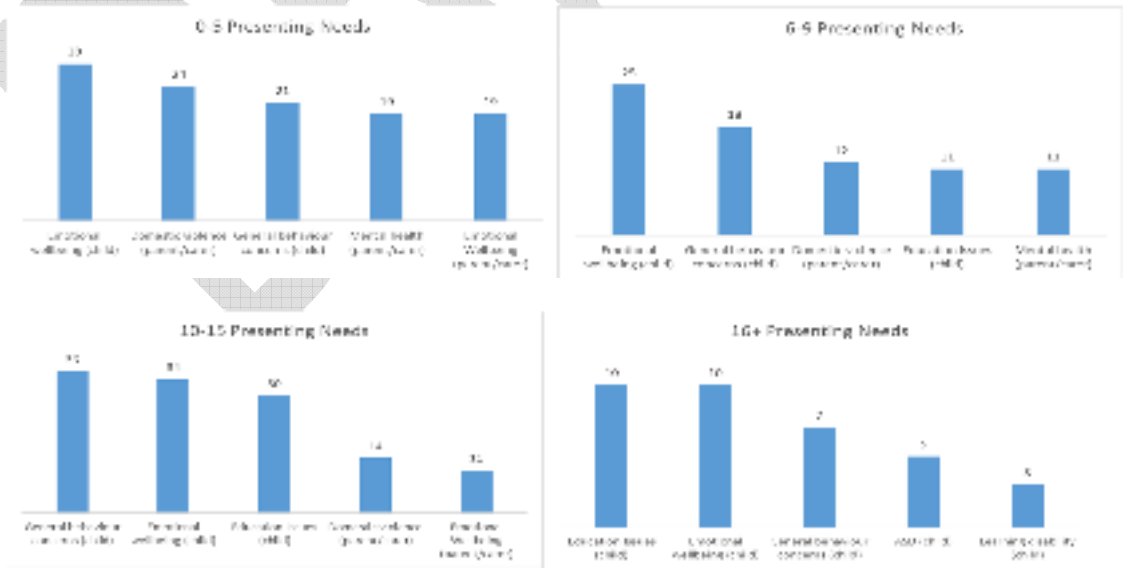
### CYP Supported



Top 5 Presenting Needs October 2023	Top 5 Presenting Needs October 2022
1) Emotional wellbeing (child)	1) Emotional wellbeing (child)
2) General behaviour concerns (child)	2) Domestic abuse (parent/carer)
3) Education concerns (child)	3) Emotional wellbeing (parent/carer)
4) Domestic abuse (parent/carer)	4) General behaviour concerns (child)
5) Emotional wellbeing (parent/carer)	5) Education concerns (child)
	6)

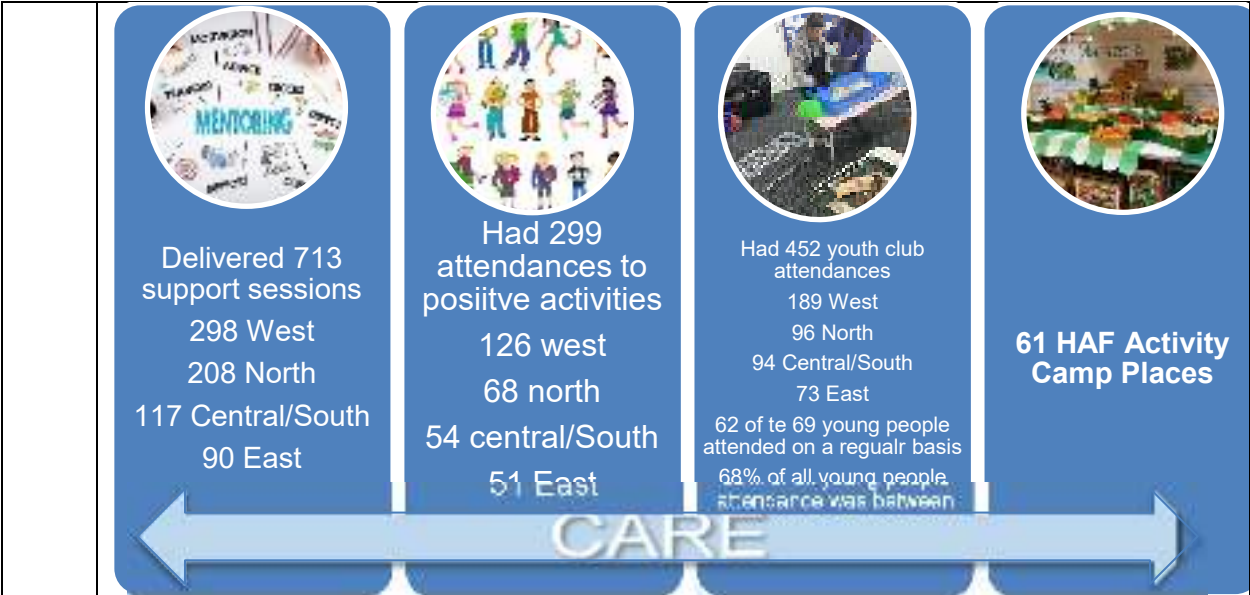
Whilst the top 5 needs remain the same compared to October 2022, the order of the priority of needs have changed slightly.

To monitor the needs of children and young people the Early Help scorecard for 2023/24 now monitors the ages and needs of children, to enable the offer to be consider across the partnership:



The data information above and the Early Help scorecard provides a good overview of need, however, it is recognised that further work is required to help the partnership measure and understand needs across the system, outcomes, and impact. This is a priority for the next 12 months, and will be a focus within the refreshed interim

	<p>strategy, the data and KPI's also forms part of the peer review currently being supported by Lincolnshire local authority, detailed below.</p>
<p>3.3</p>	<p><b>How well are we doing, how do we know?</b></p>
	<p><u>Early Help Strategy:</u> achievements to date have been significant, the work completed by the Early Help Partnership includes the development and implementation of new ways of working, additional support for families, based on family's feedback and continues to strengthen the partnership.</p> <p>Please see appendix A for a full update on priorities, action to date, impact, and next actions.</p>
	<p><u>Meeting the needs of children, young people, and families:</u> Since the refresh and relaunch in November 2022 of the new priority needs and outcome framework the Early Help Partnership has seen a significant increase in both families being referred, the complexity of families requiring help and support along with the length of time families need support to make positive and sustainable change, however the partnership continues to strengthen and together it continues to be creative within the resources to pilot a range of interventions in order to meet the growing needs of children, young people, and their families. Over the past 12 months we have piloted several new approaches including:</p> <p><u>Community Activities Reducing Exploitation (CARE) Pilot</u> - in 2022/23 Early Help secured £965,744 a 12-month funding from the Department of Education (DfE) Better Integrated Care Fund, also known as the Respite Innovation Programme following a successful bid by the Early Help Partnership, with Walsall being 1 of 7 local authorities who successfully secured the grant.</p> <p>The CARE project was designed around a specification to deliver an innovative short-break model for young people aged 10 plus in academic school year 6 and above with SEND (diagnosed or undiagnosed) who were showing early signs of potential vulnerabilities to exploitation but who were below Children's Social Care or EHCP threshold, whilst also supporting young people through difficult transition time from primary to secondary education, who at the time often lacked support due to no EHCP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has been a successful pilot, supporting 69 young people who have participated in weekly and weekend term time youth clubs, provided by The Inspire Group and Street Team, who were bot commissioned to provide this service.</li> <li>• the holiday food club activities (HAF)</li> <li>• 1 to 1 mentoring support.</li> </ul> <p>A summary of activities include:</p>



A full evaluation report is available with an on-line summary report.

The pilot has been so successful the partnership has been able to continue to deliver the programme this financial year, with lessons learnt from the original pilot we have been able to reduce significantly the cost associated without reducing the support to the young people and their family, having incorporated it into the Early Help model of delivery. We are currently supporting and working with both Street Teams and Inspire to ensure the provision is available to young people in 2024/25.

Transition Pilot: In 2022/23 the partnership became concerned about the number of young people in year 7 who were at risk of being excluded from school and wanted to work together to see how, with early intervention this could be avoided. We all know the move from primary to secondary education can be stressful for any young person however for those young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), those with social, emotional, or mental health difficulties it is especially difficult and causes additional worries and anxiety, we also know if the transition between primary school and secondary school is not well-managed, children end up feeling isolated and vulnerable. Their emotional health suffers and so does their academic performance, behaviours escalate and often these young people are at risk of being suspended or having a 'managed move'.

Therefore, we worked with 10 'feeder primary schools' and 2 secondary schools to develop a team around the child model of support.

A well-planned transition between primary and secondary phases will help remove any barriers to learning and enable young people to reach their full academic potential as well as feeling less isolated, transition is also not just a focus for the first term, the support should last well into year 8 and beyond.

The partnership in 2023 was recognised by the LGC and were successful in getting to the final of the LGC 2023 awards for the Children's Services category, whilst we did not win the feedback from the judges recognised the work the partnership have done, the feedback received:

*"Competition this year was extremely tough, you should be proud that your council reached the list of finalists at the most prestigious award in local government, specifically in the **Children's Services** category. The judges commented on the*



	<p><i>tenacity and sheer excellence demonstrated throughout the entire shortlist, subsequently, you should feel immensely proud. The partnership approach was strong and far reaching. Well Done !”.</i></p>
	<p><u>The local authorities Early Help Family Support:</u> Early Help service based within the locality Family Hubs are critical to the whole family delivery and have three main aims:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver - a core and pro-actively targeted Early Help offer.</li> <li>• Influence – empower and enable partners / leveraging the power of universal services e.g., health visitors, school nurses and enable and empower families to self-help.</li> <li>• Co- ordinate – harness the power of communities to develop a comprehensive offer around place</li> </ul>
	<p>Support to staff: it is recognised that family practitioners are seeing their work load increase, as well as the need to support families for longer, to support their wellbeing and to ensure feedback is obtained by the teams an annual staff survey is completed which helps us to focus on actions required within the service, team plans and interventions for the year ahead, as well as supporting staff’s emotional health &amp; wellbeing etc.</p> <p>In 2022 Early Help staff set some key message/focus for us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening the Partnership – this will improve significantly with the introduction of the Family Hub Model.</li> <li>• Face to Face opportunities – so training being delivered, whole service away day planned January 2023.</li> <li>• Early Help Process – new launch, stops duplication, gets help to families sooner and holds partners accountable.</li> <li>• Supervisions – refreshed policy, working group and implementation plan.</li> </ul> <p>We were able to go back this year and celebrate the achievements together to address their key messages/focus.</p>

## Reflect from 2022 - What Have We Done?

- We have been busy over the last year and have all worked hard to support our families, we have also:
- Finally re-opened all 4 localities and have a range of key partners co-located with us
  - Agreed access to 10 community spokes to deliver 121 work intervention, most families etc
  - Secured 2 dedicated Early Help Police Officers
  - Secured dedicated Early Help Health Visitors (increasing the LP role already)
  - Obtained approval for partner Lead Professionals to have access to mosaic
  - Developed a clear outcome framework for early help
  - Secured a Young Carers Practitioner to support and lead on this area of work
  - Delivered attachment & trauma training
  - Trained YP to carry out quality assurance visits for HAF
  - Redesigned the EHA, TAF etc, reviewed and updated 6 months later in collaboration with teams
  - Worked with partners to develop and launch Family Hubs
  - Held Service Away Days – time to reflect, set the scene for the next academic year, as well as meeting up and having fun
  - Held a workforce focus group and consultation activity which changed mosaic to have clearer, more streamlined worker input and was selected to keep the super-ability policy
  - Piloted a new supervision and APC approach which will now be rolled out
  - Launched new early help mosaic workflows and forms to improve other areas of activity
  - Increased our parenting offer and team and reviewed all our critical meeting programmes to be aligned and become informed
  - Moved further forward with our parental relationship enquiry and RPC offer with the help of a new RPC Lead
  - Developed the volunteer offer and so enabled the offer and support even further
  - Piloted a range of interventions to transition project, secured funding for CYP & delivered the CARL
  - Got through to the LGCF finalist awards, recognised for the work we do, the creativity of our teams
  - Introduced a performance form for Car Hubs to use and collaborate at a local level
  - Launched 121 Platform – well received by partners at a local level
  - Supported partners, predominantly primary schools to take the LP role – this has increased by over 300%
  - Secured a volunteer programme and successfully recruited 25 volunteers (and seen 2 secure permanent employment)
  - Secured dedicated Family Advice Practitioners to be co-located in Family Hubs
  - Delivered successful HAF and increased the partners delivering

The 2023 survey recently completed children's services staff told us:

Key Reasons why you stay with Walsall Children's Services	What can be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making a difference</li> <li>- Direct work with children and families</li> <li>- Career progression</li> <li>- My team/the culture in the team</li> <li>- Enjoying my job</li> <li>- Feel invested in Walsall</li> <li>- Home/life balance</li> <li>- Close to home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Career pathways</li> <li>- Diversity at manager level</li> <li>- Capacity (paperwork and complexity)</li> <li>- Better support to help managing work – ref to clinical supervision</li> <li>- Admin support</li> <li>- Communication</li> </ul>

Our Early Help staff have told us:

Positives	Areas of improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved communication</li> <li>- Partners taking LP role</li> <li>- Partnership Officers - help with developing links</li> <li>- Access to partners in localities – integrated as part of hubs</li> <li>- Improved relationship with education/schools/WHG</li> <li>- Better info on need in each locality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Duplication</li> <li>- Communication between partners</li> <li>- Referral pathways – easier + better understanding</li> <li>- Better understanding of the offer</li> </ul>

There were also some key messages from staff that came through the survey/health check:

### What staff have told us and What we need to do?

- Resource toolkits
- Admin support
- Paperwork & duplication
- Complexities of families
- Workload v covering other peers v time spent with CYP
- Connectivity/pathways with key partners – easier and better understanding
- Wellbeing & time to reflect
- Training
- Power BI & performance information
- Better understanding of 'the partnership offer'

- Develop our 2023/24 academic year service and team plans
- Work commenced to pull together a comprehensive toolkit & resource pack
- Pilot with North locality around a dedicated admin support
- Recently updated the EHA, TAF etc in collaboration with practitioners, review in 6 months
- Agreed average workload of between 18 – 20, looked at demands, needs of families, staffing ratios within localities and agreed a whole service review and way of working to meet demands. i.e., Central & South require support from Family Practitioners
- We will work with key partners to have clear pathways, inc; health visitors, school nurses, CAMHS
- Work with you to consider a wellbeing activity for Early Help inc. Considering protected reflection time each month
- Develop our 2023/24 training plan including domestic abuse
- Work with BI Hub to amend our Early help scorecard, ensure Power BI is available for all
- Update our website, focused on the practitioner's section, have the Early Help Partnership offer clear with pathways, information, advice, useful resources

Through a recent review of the needs of children and young people and the demand for each locality we have reprofiled the staffing structure and completed a skills matrix to provide further training and support required to meet the needs of families and to provide all staff with the opportunity to further their knowledge and career prospects.

#### 3.4 Continuous Learning Opportunities

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement and to challenge ourselves on the impact of Early Help, we have approached the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to seek further support from Lincolnshire, an outstanding local authority. This has been approved and we are currently working with Lincolnshire to complete another peer review, where an independent review of the Early Help offer, the strength of the partnership, the gaps and barriers can be identified to help us improve in specific areas.

The focus of support we have specifically requested is around:

- the development of the adolescent offer
- engagement with secondary school
- overall impact of Early Help
- the supporting family's payment by results claims

An initial meeting has been held with Lincolnshire and 5 future days have been agreed between now and the end of January 2024 to complete the peer review.

	<p><u>Early Help Partnership Practice Week:</u> In February 2024 the partnership will be holding their first multi-agency practice month, this provides an opportunity for practitioners and managers to ‘zoom in’ and have a ‘wide lens’ view to observe practice, observe direct work with children, young people and their families, attend meetings, team meetings across the partnership and to get an understanding of how services run on a day to day basis, a real opportunity to spend time with all practitioners and teams within their respective service areas.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Financial information</b></p> <p>The DLUHC Supporting Families programme is a payment by results with claims being sent by the local authority on a quarterly basis with the DLUHC having a risk-based approach to assurance checks, targeting tailored assurance visits.</p> <p>For a successful claim to be made the local authority must evidence that all of the outcome framework measures have been met and sustained for a 6-month period after the family have ceased received the support, no further referrals to key services should have been made and specifically education attendance, attainment has to be evidenced. For each successful claim Supporting Families pay £800.</p> <p>Walsall have predicted a claim ratio of</p> <p>2023/24 85% (643 families) 2024/25 100% (936 families)</p> <p>As discussed in this report, families are being supported for a longer period since the new priorities and outcome framework has been introduced, this is putting pressure on the number of families that can be claimed.</p> <p>The Supporting Families grant £1.4m (which includes payment by results) funds a range of ongoing committed activities across Early Help and Children’s Social Care.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Reducing Inequalities</b></p> <p>Effective and timely Early Help that improves parental relationships, family function and learning behaviours in children can help prevent or reduce a range of issues that result in or exacerbate inequality including exclusion from school, parental conflict, youth offending, and children reaching a crisis requiring interventions by social workers.</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Decide</b></p> <p>The Early Help partnership within its review has set out the key priorities for 2022 to 2024 based on the needs of families and the changes to the Supporting Families framework. Whilst there is no decision for scrutiny to be made around the priorities, scrutiny is asked to support the direction of travel and endorse the achievements made so far.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Respond</b></p>

	<p>The Early Help partnership is responding to the needs of local families and to the Governments Department for Levelling Up, Housing &amp; Communities Supporting Families programme, the Early Help Steering group oversees the delivery of the strategy and has this as an agenda item for update reports to be taken quarterly.</p> <p>Achieving and evidencing the outcomes secured for families and in turn meeting the payment by results target continues is a significant focus and one that is critical to the Early Help service.</p> <p>Preparing for the significant increase set by the department for the ‘target’ number of families successfully supported and have continued to sustain the outcomes for a 6-month period after the support has ceased is critical. With the overall target set for Walsall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023/24 at 757 families</li> <li>• 2024/25 at 936 families</li> </ul> <p>For the first 2 quarters for 2023/24 we have been able to successfully claim total of 186 (98 in Quarter 1, 88 in Quarter 2) 25% of our overall target.</p> <p>We are currently auditing approximately 200 in preparation for Quarter 3 claims.</p> <p>A senior management performance group has been developed to have oversight of the claims, we have also employed a dedicated officer who ‘audits’ the closure process to ensure evidence of need, support and outcomes achieved are clear and measurable to support the claims and to ensure we meet the criteria set, a new ‘end of intervention’ process has also been introduced. This process is having a positive impact however claims are still down and there remains a financial risk given the length of time families are being supported by the Early Help Partnership.</p> <p>As part of the PBR process we can include Children’s Social Care, whilst this has been a smaller percentage that has been claimed previously the same process is being adopted as for Early Help, it is envisaged this will help to add further to the potential claims for quarter 3 and 4 for the current financial year and will be monitored monthly.</p> <p>In addition, a new process has recently been introduced for the Young Carer Assessments in preparation for 2024/25 claims.</p>
	<p><b>Review</b></p> <p>A review report to scrutiny can be scheduled for 12 months, detailing the achievements, barriers, the changes to the early help process and payment by results.</p>

**Background papers**

Early Help Strategy 2021- 2024

Josh McAlister [Independent review of children's social care: final report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/independent-review-of-childrens-social-care-final-report-2021-2024.pdf)

[Children's social care stable homes built on love consultation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/childrens-social-care-stable-homes-built-on-love-consultation-2021-2024.pdf)  
[Supporting Families: Early Help System guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\).](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/supporting-families-early-help-system-guide-2021-2024.pdf)

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## Appendix A : Update on the Early Help Strategy and associated Action Plan 2021- 2024

### Priority One :

We set out to	We have achieved	Impact	What we still need to prioritise
<p>Redesign the Early Help Assessment, Plan &amp; Review to enable improved understand of presenting needs of our children and young people and to have a timely and smart outcome focused support plan in place.</p>	<p>In collaboration with families and partners we have completed this and relaunched in November 2022 the new early help assessment and team around the family support approach.</p> <p>In 2023 we have completed a review, made some amends to the documentation.</p>	<p>A strength-based approach to assessment, the team around the family support and outcomes achieved are clear and measurable.</p> <p>Families are at the heart of the support they feel is required.</p>	<p>Refresh the Early Help Practice Guidance and tool kit available for all lead professionals (or Family co-ordinators as they will be known from April 2024).</p> <p>We are looking to commission a provider to support the re-write of the practice guidance to ensure a common language, reflective, relationship and trauma model is embedded.</p>
<p>Refresh the Supporting Families Outcome Framework to enable outcomes and impact to be measured across the partnership.</p>	<p>The new framework has been launched, with clear priorities and expected outcomes to be achieved. These are now being monitored as part of the Early Help performance scorecard and reported to the steering group on a quarterly basis.</p>	<p>Partners are clear on the priority needs and outcomes to be achieved with families.</p> <p>Partners are clear on their roles and responsibilities within the delivery of Early Help.</p>	<p>Review the outcome framework between January 2024- March 2024.</p>
<p>Extend further the 'Time to Talk: Partnership, Practice &amp; Progress' to bring together locality-based group of key partners, statutory and voluntary, to share knowledge, pathways, and systems to improve the outcomes for families, ensures quality decision making, sharing of good practice, support and</p>	<p>The locality 'Time 2 Talk' framework is now well embedded and held every 8 weeks, they are well attended, the partnership agrees themes to be discussed, sharing of information and it is evident the partnership working is improving.</p>	<p>40 plus partners in each locality meet termly to understand family's needs in the local area, consider gaps in provision, share good practice, knowledge and look at commissioning opportunities.</p> <p>The themes of discussions so far include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• January – Finances 'Cost Of Living Crisis' speed dating with DWP, Money Home Job, WHG, Walsave, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners.</li> <li>• Feb – East Locality - Working with Fathers - Presentation with Claire Jervis.</li> </ul>	<p>To work with the BI Hub key locality data, aligned to priority 2 to fully understand the needs of localities. Data from the whole partnership to help inform further the local offer, planned focus work to be included in the interim strategy 2024-2025.</p>

<p>guidance across the partnership.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May – Adolescent Drop in, networking session.</li> <li>• June – Neglect, presentation with Becky Warren, Kellyanne Perry, Morag Manson, Malcolm Moore.</li> <li>• October – West and South internal Mini time to talks, speed dating to get to know our partners better for locality staff.</li> <li>• October – Primary and Early Years Drop in, networking session.</li> </ul> <p>Their approach has supported the commissioning of the CARE (community activities reducing exploitation) project.</p>	
<p>Further strengthen the support to partners to influence and co-ordinate partnership capacity and capability.</p>	<p>The partnership within the localities has and continues to strengthen.</p> <p>The capacity for taking the lead on Early Help roles and responsibilities has significantly improved, specifically with primary schools and we are building on the health visitor roles.</p>	<p>Introduction of Early Help Partnership Officers within each locality to support the wider partnership, this has supported primary schools, predominately to increase their lead professional role by 526%, Health Visitors by 56%</p> <p>New dedicated co-located Early Help Police Officers.</p> <p>Recommissioned in partnership the Domestic Abuse Locality model, where we now have Early Help Practitioners co-located supporting families at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Other co-located partners include, DWP Officers, Housing Officers, School Nurses and The Beacon.</p> <p>The VCS partnership are now a key stakeholder.</p>	<p>Strengthen the partnership with secondary schools and offer to adolescents.</p> <p>Introduce a comprehensive induction programme for all lead professionals.</p>
<p>Review the Right Help, Right Time and lead professional training - to ensure all key elements of early identification and</p>	<p>RHRT guidance refreshed, in consultation with Early Help Steering Group and MASH Management Group,</p>	<p>Lead Professional Training and ACTION (aware, care think – don't – ignore or – do- nothing)</p> <p>Training delivered to over 200 partners, including:</p>	

<p>intervention is understood, and link to other priorities such as neglect.</p>	<p>due to be launch January 2024.</p>	<p>Action training for all front-line police staff in all units, including neighbourhood and serious crime unit.</p>  <p>Wolverhampton Uni Action training – for 4 Early Years classes, future sessions requested.</p> <p>Pool Hayes Academy – Hybrid Lead Professional and RHRT for 20 members of staff on their training day.</p> <p>WHG trades and neighbourhood practitioners.</p>	
<p>Scope out the potential of a bespoke Early Help training programme.</p>	<p>Each year the Early Help Steering Group agrees the focus of training based on the needs of families.</p>	<p>2021-22 Restorative Practice, we trained 60 plus partners, including schools.  2022-23 Attachment and Trauma, we trained 88 Early Help Staff, 19 schools and 9 health staff.  2023-24 Continue with Attachment &amp; Trauma.</p> <p>Feedback from the training has been overwhelmingly positive, with it being rated 100% for quality and effectiveness.</p> <p>Early Years First Words Together – we have worked with the National Literacy Trust to develop a bespoke 121 programme to support attachment and communication delivered to parents /carers in their home over a 5-week period. The First Words Together is an evidenced based model set for delivery on group work, we have been able to show</p>	<p>We have a skills matrix for the Early Help Partnership that is due to be signed off at the Steering Group January 2024, to be introduced April 2024.</p> <p>Training already identified by practitioner for 2024/25 includes Play Therapy, Working with Domestic Abuse Perpetrators, Domestic Abuse awareness, Reducing Parental Conflict, Crime Prevention &amp; SEND Training (all currently being scoped out)</p>



		the need in Walsall for an alternative approach which is in year 1 of its pilot.	
Improve knowledge and self-help opportunities – to provide information, advice and self-learning.	New Early Help website updated	Self-help tips, advice, videos and on-line parenting programmes available.	Website to be updated in line with Family Hubs and the Family Information Service by March 2024.

## **Priority Two**

<b>We set out to</b>	<b>We have achieved</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>What we still need to prioritise</b>
Develop a data sharing platform within localities to create the space and opportunity to look at a range of data sets to inform and to strengthen the earlier identification and support required.	Agreed the implementation of a new database 'Sentinel' allows data gathering and sharing.		
Agree and introduce a standard partnership data set for sharing at a strategic level as part of the Early Help Steering Group performance measures.	Refresh of the Early Help scorecard		Agree KPIs to evident demand, needs and impact.
Agree a partnership auditing framework and opportunities for learning from practice.	<p>Child Journey audits and dip samples are completed on an agreed cycle. Partners and families are included in the audits. Audit findings are shared with the steering group and lessons learnt; barriers considered.</p> <p>Completed a self-assessment against the</p>	<p>Early Years audits have help secured a dedicated Health Visitor model.</p> <p>Multi-agency audits completed as part of Safeguarding Board.</p> <p>Dip samples have helped reduce inappropriate referrals to MASH.</p> <p>Practice has been improved, training needs identified as part of audits and dip-samples completed.</p>	<p>Agree a formal mechanism for quality assurance and audit framework to be launch in April 2024 as part of interim strategy 2024-2025.</p> <p>Mechanisms to share data across partnership are variable with inconsistent use of existing legislative gateways and data sharing arrangements for specific projects.</p> <p>Gradual movement / recognition between agencies of need to share data and finding practical ways of overcoming the issues. The Business Insights team</p>

	Early Help system guide to help focus further work required.	Young people trained to completed quality assurance visits within HAF.	will provide a consistent base to build on and sharing of expertise.
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### **Priority 3**

<b>We set out to</b>	<b>We have achieved</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>What we still need to prioritise</b>
Improve our knowledge base of local resources.	Time 2 Talk locality platform enable local knowledge to be developed and shared	Improved partnership working and support to families.	To be clear of the available resources and early help offer across the system. To have this published and available for all to access.
Utilise and include local communities.	As above		Link into the Family Hub delivery plan and resources to build on resilient communities.
Develop an Early Help Volunteers programme to support families at a local level, supporting the use of local resources and the 'community scaffolding'.	EH Volunteer service implemented.	Two Early Help Volunteer Co-ordinators recruited along with 29 volunteers, including fathers supporting families on a range of issues across the borough.  Celebration event planned December 2023.  2 Volunteers have secured permanent employment, one with Early Help and one in Education.	
Further develop our co-location model with key voluntary and community partners.			
Introduce the Early Help ACTION Campaign, an awareness and training campaign across ALL practitioners in Walsall who work with, support or come		Action training refreshed and is being delivered to a wide range of partners, including police, midwives, schools, housing providers, GP's etc.	

into contact with children, young people and families, including contractors, housing officers, clean & green practitioners, private companies.			
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#### **Priority Four**

<b>We set out to</b>	<b>We have achieved</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>What we still need to prioritise</b>
Work with children and young people to develop a meaningful 'feedback' questionnaire.	Questionnaire agreed and built within mosaic system	Feedback captured and reviewed as part of monthly performance.	Children and young people's forum
Utilise the feedback to help shape services and improve practice across the partnership.	<p>We have consulted with Young Carers , young people and parents.</p> <p>We have a 'In our Hands' Parent/carer forum that meets 4 times a year to consult, collaborate and co-produce with parents/carers.</p> <p>Collate feedback from families that we share across the partnership on a 'feedback wall' platform that considers practice improvement, shares good practice.</p> <p>Collate case studies to improve and inform practice.</p>	<p>A bespoke Young Carers Support Service. A Young Carers Multi-agency Action Group.</p> <p>Raised awareness of young carers across the partnership.</p> <p>Re-developed the SEND Local Offer</p> <p>Designed and secured CARE (community activities reducing exploitation) pilot.</p> <p>LGBTQ bespoke group introduced who have designed a postcard/poster to raise awareness.</p>	

			
Work with parents and carers to develop a meaningful 'feedback' questionnaire.	We have a refreshed questionnaire for parents, carers, children and young people to complete at the end of Early Help support	<p>The feedback is collated monthly and shared as part of the performance board and steering group.</p> <p>Parents have joined the 'In our hands' forum from the feedback.</p> <p>Young people have been recruited and trained a 'HAF quality assurance visitors as part of the feedback.</p>	All Early Help partners/lead professionals to have access to the questionnaires.
Develop, together, a Children & Young Peoples Early Help forum and a Parent/Carer forum.	'In our Hands' parents/carers forum introduced.	As above	Children and young people's forum
Introduce a 'daily conversation programme' where we will consult with children and young people on specific topics.	We have held an annual conversation where we have obtained feedback from children and young people.	The feedback has helped to improve practice, it formed the basis of the Early Help Strategy 2021-2024.	Next annual conversation due December 2023.