

Chair's Report

Children's Services Scrutiny – Work Programme: Early Help Scrutiny

Scrutiny topic: Impact of Early Help on preventing escalation to statutory services

Our role as a scrutiny committee:

- To ask questions about decisions that have already been taken;
- To ask whether these decisions are good enough;
- To make recommendations to further improve what the council (with partners) are doing.

Focus: Access and Effectiveness

Section 4 of SID: The local early help offer

- Early help offer: Families First; IFIT (Islington Family Intensive Team)
- Parenting Programmes
- Evidence of what works

Section 5 of SID: Partnership working

- Interagency working (ie. Family Action; Parent Employment Partnership)
- Inter-departmental working
- Work with schools and other partners (ie. Police and health)

Key questions

- Is Families First reaching the right families, those families who, without the additional support, are more likely to require statutory intervention?
- Do parents get the right help when they need it? And do parents feel this help is beneficial?
- How do we know Families First is making a difference?
- Do we know Families First is reducing demands on statutory services?
- Are parenting programmes working?
- Is Families First an effective use of resources? Is it value for money? Are we going to save money/avoid costs in the future?

Work programme for early help scrutiny

Additional documentation:

- Families First Service Specification
- Finance report
- Families First evaluation (TBC) – we have previously provided the committee with the early impact evaluation of Families First. We have commissioned a follow up evaluation which is currently in progress and we will share the findings with the scrutiny committee if we receive the final report in time.

9 March 2015: Witnesses		
Who	Organisation/remit	Area of focus
Elaine Sheppard	Family Action – VCS organisation contracted to deliver part of the Families First geographical offer	Families First model of delivery – how do they engage with families – proportion that are self-referrals, how closely the profile of families receiving a service match the profile of needs , what sort of families do they engage with, are these the right families? , how does the service work with universal services including schools?, reducing stigma, impact of service
Lucinda Hibberd-French	Deputy Service Manager, Islington Children's Services - responsible for the Families First Service	Safeguarding – identification of need – importance of and effectiveness of system addressing continuum of need, step up and step down from statutory services. Families First work re: Domestic Violence .
Mairead McDonnell	Deputy Head Newington Green School	Change in way school works in providing early help to children and parents and co-ordination with other services, including Families First and CAMHS; difference it makes for students.
Win Bolton/Michelle Tolfrey	Camden and Islington Mental Health Foundation Trust	Parental mental health service in IFIT, Families First and CIN

28 April 2015: Witnesses		
Who	Organisation/remit	Area of focus
Lambeth Early Help Service	London Borough of Lambeth	To provide a comparison with the way another borough delivers early help, the way they work with partners, tackle the issue of getting the balance between being non-stigmatising and yet reaching those families most in need of support, key challenges they face, impact of services, what works, plans to develop their service
Ellen Ryan	Islington Learning and Working (ILW) Manager, LBI	Employability/poverty - Parental Employment Partnership – partnerships between ILW, Children's Services and Jobcentre Plus to set parents/adult children on the pathway to employment
	CASA Islington Community Alcohol Service	CASA works with families First but also deliver separate pieces of work specifically around substance misuse .
Families?		To find out about families' experiences of support from Families First and IFIT, whether the support was what they needed and at the time they needed it. Whether we are delivering our Early Help Pledge. And what difference the support has made to families. How could the service be more effective?

Visits (to take place between March and May)		
Who	Organisation/remit	Area of focus
Family Intervention Workers	Islington Families Intensive Team (IFIT), LBI	Family Intervention Workers provide intensive outreach support and challenge to (usually workless) families who with young people aged 10-18 years. The families are at high risk of eviction, children are not attending school, and/or are involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. Find out methods of engaging with families, challenges of working with families with complex needs, the difference their support makes
Family Support Workers	Families First	Find out methods Family Support Workers use to engage with families, challenges of working with families with complex needs, the difference their support makes
Parents/families	At Families First site	To find out about families' experiences of support from Families First and IFIT, whether the support was what they needed and at the time they needed it. Whether we are delivering our Early Help Pledge. And what difference the support has made to families. How could the service be more effective?

- **12 May 2015: Draft recommendations**
- **6 July: Final Report**