

Report of: Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Executive	30 April 2020	All

Delete as appropriate:	Exempt	Non-exempt
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SUBJECT: Review of targeted early help services – post consultation

1.	Synopsis
1.1	This report summarises the findings from the review of the council’s targeted early help offer for families and the proposed new approach for developing a more seamless offer for families and their children.
1.2	It outlines what the new service structure would look like at 90% of the current targeted early help budget (a saving of 10% agreed).
2.	Recommendations
2.1	To approve the new proposed approach and service structure for targeted early help for families with children over 5, to create a more seamless targeted early help offer from pregnancy into adulthood.
3.	Background
3.1	Islington strives to be the best place for prevention and early intervention; the proposal, whilst delivering savings, will continue to invest over £3million in targeted early help provision for children and families who most need it.
3.2	A targeted early help saving of £428k (10%) was approved in this year’s budget. Members and senior leaders were assured by what the detail of the offer would look like at 90% of current budget as any changes proposed maintain the current high standards of provision and support for families needing some extra support.
3.3	From May 2018, a review of the councils targeted early help offer has been underway. This review aimed to achieve better outcomes for families, supporting children and young people to have the best start in life – a key council objective articulated in our ‘Building a Fairer Islington’ corporate plan. We consulted with young people and

	families, council frontline practitioners and partners (e.g. Early education settings, children’s centres, play and youth providers, schools, health colleagues, police, voluntary and community settings). We have drawn on a wide range of evidence of need, what works well, gaps and opportunities to identify what model and structure would enable a more seamless offer of support for families, from earliest help in universal settings to targeted family support.
3.4	The review aimed to reduce duplication for children and families, reduce families “bouncing” between services, create clearer points of contact and secure better engagement with families whose needs mean they do not currently require support from specialist services.
3.5	The review findings (research and extensive feedback) evidenced the following principles to guide and underpin the development of the new model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsiveness and flexibility - being in the front door/universal settings – providing a team around the family/worker approach for universal services and families who require targeted support. • Graduated enabling approach – that builds on resilience and empowers families, enables communities and partners and ensures that there is scope for conversations to access the full range of universal and targeted support and services available in the local area. • Focused on outcomes for the whole family, whole population and individual family level outcomes • Consistent approach – this will include whole family, family led, motivational practice: trauma informed, relational practice. Ensuring a consistent and high quality skill base across the early help workforce with recognition that there are still requirements for specialisms across the age ranges. • Accessibility – ensuring services are community based – are where families are, based in localities, ensuring the messaging normalises rather than stigmatises access to help, and ensuring that advertising makes the services visible and accessible.
3.6	The review explored targeted early help as a whole, including Bright Start family support (for families with children under 5), Families First (for families with children 5-18), Islington Families Intensive Team (for families requiring intensive parenting intervention to improve their capacity to support their adolescents) and Targeted Youth Support (youth support for adolescents and their families).
3.7	Families First consists of three teams, one delivered in-house and two delivered by Family Action. This contract was extended until June 2020 to enable a seamless transition into the new offer when we bring the delivery back in house.
3.8	The proposed new service structure, which insources externally provided services to improve quality and consistency, combines the staffing resource of Families First and IFIT to provide a broader offer that better meets the needs of families, requiring support ranging from short interventions to intensive support.
3.9	The proposed new structure and approach builds on the strengths of the Bright Start model, with a graduated approach to engagement, embedded within universal services and working closely with universal colleagues in health and early years. The proposed new structure does not make any changes to Bright Start family support, apart from a proposal to re-evaluate job roles in Bright Start, as relevant, to create parity across Bright Start and the new proposed “Start Well Family Support” service, both of which will operate in a localities model.
3.10	The proposed changes do not alter Targeted Youth Support at this current time either. Work is due to start shortly to consider the most effective offer of support for vulnerable

	adolescents and therefore propose that Targeted Youth Support remains the same until the wider look at the adolescent offer has concluded.
3.11	The proposed changes would directly affect Families First and Islington Families Intensive Team (IFIT). We are proposing reconfiguring these teams into a new offer for families with children over 5 – “Start Well Family Support”, which will have the same reach to families but in a more varied way, rather than assuming that all families need a caseholding Family Support Worker. This model proposes 3 locality Start Well Family Support teams, in line with the council’s vision for community based accessible services for residents. A Start Well Family Support Manager will be responsible for the overall team in each locality. Each team will contain Family Support Practitioners who case hold families; Community Outreach and Engagement Workers who will engage families in universal settings and provide short pieces of intervention, a Senior Practitioner and a Deputy Family Support Coordinator. The senior and management staff in each locality will be responsible for building relationships with, wrapping around, and upskilling universal settings, voluntary and community sector organisations in their locality. They will also be responsible for commissioning parenting programmes that are relevant to their locality and piloting Family Group Conferences within early help.
3.12	Whilst IFIT receives very positive feedback from families and partners, this service is very costly as case holders provide intensive support for a very small caseload of families. The reshaping of this high cost service and broadening the remit will enable us to get greater value from every pound of council spend as workers will be able to work with a greater number of families and provide varying levels of support depending on need.
3.13	This will align with and create more seamless transitioning between services for under 5s (Bright Start family support), over 5s (Start Well Family Support) and adolescents (Targeted Youth Support). This will also lay the foundation for communicating and coordinating the broader offer of support and services for over 5s under the Start Well Family Support umbrella and Targeted Youth Support Services.
3.14	The saving requirement is secondary to the more flexible and effective support this proposed new structure will enable, the intensity of which will respond to the individual needs of families. There will be new roles mirroring the current model in Bright Start and Targeted Youth Services that recognise some families want light touch support or information, rather than full assessments and 6-month support plans.
3.15	It will also develop new responsibilities that broaden roles, such as stronger links with universal partners, to provide consultation and support to colleagues delivering earliest help in universal settings. This maintains the relationship based approach where the early help service wraps around the professional that holds the relationship with the family rather than the family being passed on.
3.16	The proposed changes to the current service focus on maintaining reach and enhancing the current high standards of provision and support to vulnerable families, while addressing current gaps in service provision. It is anticipated that through a more cohesive and coherent offer, greater integration of the current early help provision, and through greater engagement with partner agencies, the saving can be met without compromising levels of reach and quality.
3.17	The proposed changes require a formal staff consultation, which was initiated on 16 th January 2020 and concluded on 21 st February 2020.
3.18	Two of three Families First teams are currently contracted out to Family Action. The contract will end on 30 th June 2020 and the service is being brought back in-house. Insourcing this element of the targeted early help offer will make best use of council resource, enable the council to be more responsive to demand and the skills and

	functions we require from the targeted early help workforce and improve consistency of support families receive. Due to the end date of this contract we are keen to dovetail with the restructure. Hence, the tight timescales proposed for implementation.
3.19	As the Joint Board proposal for the review was agreed on 29 th October 2019, timescales for consultation and implementation were proposed, and discussions with Family Action proceeded. As set out above the contract for Family Action will draw to a close at the end of June 2020.
3.20	Families' feedback has been a vital part of the review and have influenced the proposed changes. There is no legal requirement to consult publicly on the proposed structure as there is no reduction in the offer to families.
3.21	<p>A small family support team (1 senior practitioner, 1 family practitioner, 1 education support worker) will be based in New River College, working with children, young people and families who attend NRC, alternative provision, or who are at risk of being excluded from mainstream provision.</p> <p>The small team provides some whole family case holding and some practical hands on support directly to children and young people and is funded through an additional £150k provided directly by NRC. The team will be managed by one of the Start Well Family Support Managers.</p>
3.22	<p>The alignment of Bright Start (under 5s), Start Well Family Support (over 5s) and Targeted Youth Support Services will be underpinned through a shared workforce development resource. This will incorporate a training plan that develops our workforce to understand and meet the needs of the Islington population through a consistent approach, ensuring Bright Start and Start Well Family Support are all delivering to the same trauma informed, motivational practice model.</p> <p>The Workforce Development Programme will be closely linked to the Islington Safeguarding Children's Board multi-agency training and development plan. Training will enable practitioners to identify and respond early to the needs of all vulnerable children; including unborn children, babies, older children, young carers, children with SEND and so on. It will strengthen family support capacity across the partnership, building a multi-skilled workforce equipped to identify and support families with a range of issues.</p>
3.23	The consultation with the service highlighted the importance of the role of employment in tackling poverty and working with families to improve outcomes for children. The revisions to the employment offer have been reversed and the new service will see the family support offer retain a manager with oversight for employment, x2 Employment Advisors seconded by DWP and x1 Employment Advisor directly employed by the council. Further to this, we will be ensuring that all staff are trained in employment conversations to improve the reach to families and communities in Islington, the service will be trained by Adult Community Learning to ensure that employment is the golden thread of our delivery to families.
3.24	2.5 Play and Youth Support Workers posts have been created, they are new roles which will have their key relationship with youth and play provision across the borough and will provide a rapid response to families, to meet families needs at the earliest possible stage. Based in community venues where visible and families can easily access. Delivery of group work programmes according to need in their locality area will be provided.
3.25	The need for emotional and mental health support for children in the offer was recognised. The Psychologically Informed Consultation and Training (PICT) service will remain and will still offer consultation to the new service in relation to adult mental health needs and be a conduit between early help service and the Adult Mental Health

	Trust. In the new model there will be a CAMHS worker appointed who will be available for three days a week. The CAMHS offer will act in a similar way to that of the PICT practitioner, with a focus on children and parenting support. The worker will also work closely with the partners within the councils Social Emotional and Mental Health offer.
3.26	<p>Parent Champions are well established in both Bright Start and Families First. It is an aspiration of both Bright Start and Start Well Family Support to strengthen the voice of children/young people and parents in shaping and developing the family support offer, and as part of this a hope to expand the participation work to develop young people's champions.</p> <p>The Start Well Family Support Participation Lead will link closely with the Parent Involvement Development Officer in Bright Start to create a peer network of parent champions across the offer and to lead on ensuring the voice of families is reflected in shaping the offer.</p>
3.27	The proposal is to operate this new model at 90% of the current budget, continuing to invest over £3m in targeted early help, maintaining reach and improving the quality and flexibility of the offer. We are convinced through the discovery phase and design of the service that the numbers of practitioners and managers in the new structure are what is needed for families.
4.	Implications
4.1	Financial implications:
	<p>The current agreed savings for Early Help is £428k (£100k in 20/21 and £328k in 21/22) (just over 10%).</p> <p>Savings against these services were modelled at approximately 10%, 15% and 20%. Included within Early Help are services funded by the former Troubled Families grant.</p> <p>It was decided that 10% savings would be applied and therefore whilst ensuring reach we have been able to create the following across the offer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employment Support 2. Children's social and emotional mental health support 3. Youth and Play universal support workers 4. Innovation grant per locality to support the areas in developing new ways of working, including family group conferencing models in early help
4.2	Legal Implications:
	<p>The statutory provisions set out in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 require that the welfare of children is paramount and that they are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives, unless compulsory intervention in family life is necessary.</p> <p>The Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance states that the provision of early help services should form part of a continuum of support to respond to the different levels of need of individual children and families.</p> <p>The Council's Organisational Change procedure has been followed in respect of the staff restructure.</p>

4.3	Environmental Implications
	<p>There are no significant environmental implications from the new proposed approach and service structure. The shift to three locality teams may reduce staff travel, having a positive impact.</p>
4.4	Resident Impact Assessment:
	<p>The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.</p> <p>A Resident Impact Assessment was completed on 19th August 2019 and the summary is included below. The complete Resident Impact Assessment is appended.</p> <p>Throughout the review, consideration was given to the likely impact on residents and staff.</p> <p>Extensive consultation with and feedback from families, staff and partners was undertaken and this has shaped the principles underpinning the proposed new approach and service structure.</p> <p>The council role in assessing and supporting families in need of early help support is underpinned by 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018 statutory guidance.</p> <p>Implementing a saving of 10% is unlikely to have a negative impact on residents and the new structure and approach should improve the offer to residents.</p> <p>The proposed changes aim to improve families' knowledge of, access to and quality of, support they receive when they face challenges that would benefit from additional support. The proposed new structure creates a more flexible offer of support and one that provides a graduated approach to engagement, recognising individual and individual families' needs. This new structure aligns with recent changes in Disabled Children's Services, that will wrap specialist consultation and support around workers, so families with disabled children are not stigmatised but also get access to support that meets their needs.</p> <p>The review has focused where possible on the retention of staff, this has meant that there is only 1 redundancy through the service redesign.</p> <p>Possible redundancies have been kept to a minimum and will not adversely affect staff with protected characteristics. All staff will be treated fairly and in accordance with council HR reorganisation procedures.</p>
5.	Reason for recommendations

5.1	The council strives to be the best place for prevention and early intervention to enable residents to thrive and children to have the best start in life.
5.2	The conclusions of the review and the proposed structure align with Fairer Together ethos and particularly with the Start Well agenda. The new service model will form part of the Start Well consultation discussions with partners and will align with the future locality areas, with an aspiration to co-locate with key services. The new service model aims to scaffold around communities and partners, to embed a prevention and early intervention ethos, to ensure that families are supported at the earliest point.
5.3	Local authorities are facing increasing financial pressure. In February 2019, the council agreed a targeted early help saving of 10% subject to more detailed proposals as outlined in this report. Over £3m will continue to be invested in targeted early help services for families. The changes proposed intend to deliver a more seamless, higher quality, more flexible and graduated support offer to families.

Appendices

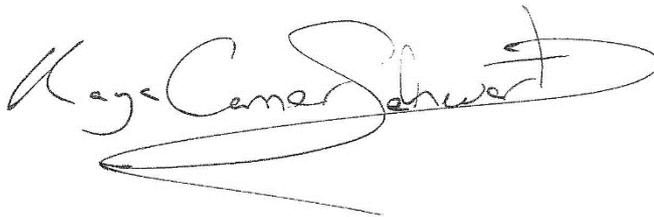
- Resident Impact Assessment

Background papers: none

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

20 April 2020



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