
Decision Maker: Care Services PDS Committee

Date: 23rd September 2015

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: CHILDREN'S PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION
STRATEGY 2015-2018

Contact Officer: Rachel Dunley, Head of Service Early Interventions and Family Support
Tel: 020 8461 7262 E-mail: rachel.dunley@bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Kay Weiss Assistant Director, Education and Care Services

Ward: Boroughwide

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 The Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy 2015-18 has been developed for a number of purposes; to evidence the existing and planned preventative and early intervention work undertaken in Bromley, the to bring together all relevant partners both at a strategic and an operational level in order to prevent duplication of services, to focus limited resources where they are most needed in a climate of financial constraint, to look at Bromley and the current needs of its residents, to recognise what Bromley and its partners have already achieved and more importantly what the focus will be for the coming three years.
- 1.2 The strategy requires all partners to focus on not only the 'what' in terms of activity, but also the evidence to support the 'why and how', that is, the impact of the existing and planned interventions and services. This will be critical in order to measure and report on the success of the preventative and early intervention work of all partners.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 The Members of the PDS committee are asked to note and comment on the draft Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy 2015-18.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status:: Non statutory – good practice
 2. BBB Priority:: Children & Young People
-

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: None arising from this strategy:
 2. Ongoing costs: none:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Children's Social Care
 4. Total current budget for this head: £31,814,150
 5. Source of funding: 2015/16 approved revenue budget
-

Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement:: Government guidance -
 2. Call-in:: Not applicable
-

Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): 3236 individuals used the children and family centres in April 2015, 2014 -15 CSC had over 10,000 contacts. At the end of January 2015 - 220 children and young people had a child protection plan.
-

Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: not applicable

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1. This strategy (Appendix 1) has been developed in recognition of the importance of preventative and early intervention work. Whilst most families are able to cope with the challenges that face them with the help of their extended families and networks, some children, young people and families are not as resilient and self-sufficient as others and can require additional help and support at key moments. Historically, the national emphasis has been to intervene when a family is in crisis. Following a number of high profile child deaths the Government commissioned a number of reviews (Munroe [2011], Allen [2011], Child Poverty [2011]...) all of which identified the importance of intervening early and developing preventative services.
- 3.2. It is now widely recognised that there are large social benefits to intervening early, including improvements in behaviour, reductions in violent crime, improved educational attainment, better employment opportunities and more responsible parenting. As with all interventions, it remains essential that services meet local needs, duplication of provision is prevented, and the services available are widely recognised and signposted to in order to achieve their full potential.
- 3.3. Bromley and its partner agencies have for a number of years provided a range of services delivering preventative and early intervention support and whilst some were working closely in partnership, others operated in isolation, increasing the chance for duplication. One of the purposes of this document is to prevent this happening in the future.
- 3.4. Eileen Munroe's review of Child Protection [2011] and Graham Allen's MP review of Early Intervention [2011] both strongly advocated the need for and importance of early intervention and preventative services to address gaps in social care child protection and to provide substantial cost benefits. There is now a strong focus on the cost of failing to intervene early as this can create more problems later on, which are more expensive to cope with, and difficult, or impossible, to remedy.
- 3.5. The cost of failing to provide effective prevention and early intervention is high and it is well documented (see Appendix 2). The cost has been recognised by Government and several attempts made to try to quantify this. The difficulty of evidencing the costs savings in relation to 'what may have happened' remains a challenge. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) are leading on this nationally under the auspices of the Tackling Troubled Families programme. The DCLG are currently exploring how best to develop a cost savings calculator tool as well as collating information from across the country to evidence the cost of supporting families.
- 3.6. The cost of failing to intervene was covered by Graham Allen MP in his Review paper, where it was recognised that "it is more cost-effective to tackle problems earlier, because it is easier to succeed and because if we tackle them later they are likely to escalate and intensify. If a child has one or two early adverse experiences this increases the risk that they will have more of them. This is known as the 'accentuation principle'". *Elder Jr GH and Caspi A (1990) Studying lives in a changing society: sociological and personological explorations. In Rabin AI, Zucker RA and Frank F (Eds) Studying Persons and Lives. New York: Springer. pp201–47*
- 3.7. Following the growth in recognition of the importance of early intervention, Ofsted have now updated their inspection framework to reflect this. The '*Framework and Evaluation Schedule for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and carer leavers*', published 1 September 2015, states:

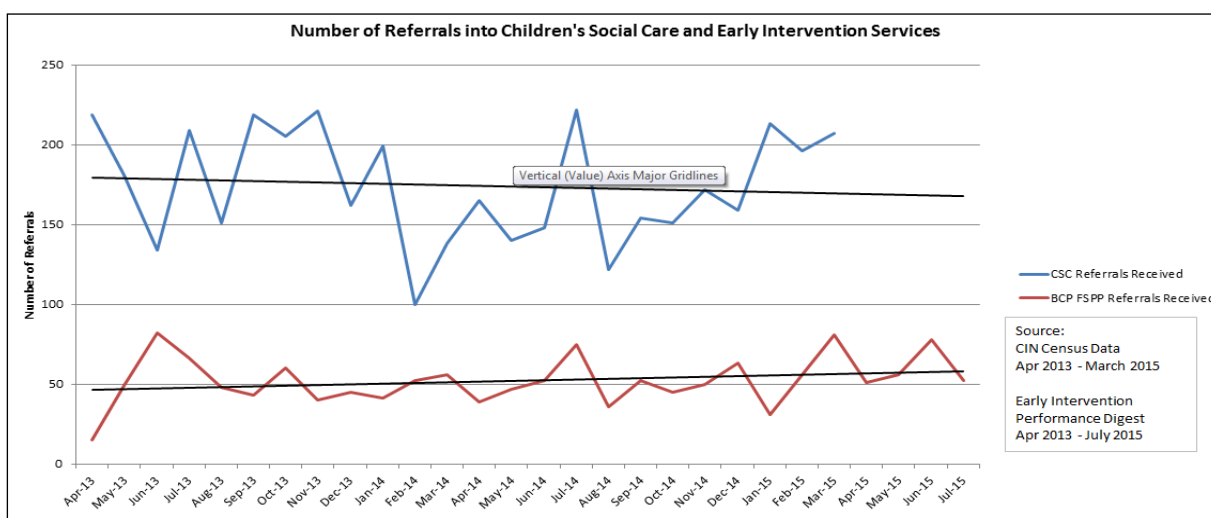
- 3.7.1. That the inspectors will 'Test the decision-making at all stages of a child's journey: **early help**; referral and assessment; children in need; child protection planning; continuing support; the decision to remove a child from home; permanence planning; placement decisions, including work to support return home; leaving care'
- 3.7.2. Under the Key judgement: The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection, a local authority is likely to be judged good if:
 - 3.7.2.1. Children, young people and families are offered help when needs and/or concerns are first identified and, as a consequence of the **early help** offered, children's circumstances improve and, in some cases, the need for targeted services is lessened or avoided. The interface between early help and statutory child protection work is clearly and effectively differentiated...
 - 3.7.2.2. Children who need help and protection, assessments (including **common or early help** assessments) are timely, proportionate to risk, and informed by research and by the historical context and significant events for each case...
- 3.7.3. Under the **Key judgement: Leadership, management and governance**, it states a local authority is likely to be judged good if:
 - 3.7.3.1. Leadership, management and governance arrangements comply with statutory guidance and together establish an effective strategy and good-quality services for children, young people and their families. There is a clear and up-to-date strategy for commissioning and developing services delivered by a suitably qualified and experienced workforce that meets the needs of local children and young people and families. The Director of Children's Services (DCS), the lead elected member and the senior management team have a comprehensive knowledge about what is happening at the 'front line' to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively. They know and understand the difference that help, care and protection are making. They oversee systematic performance management and monitoring that demonstrate rigorous and timely action in response to service deficiencies or new demands. The local authority works with partners to deliver **early help**, protect children and young people, improve educational attainment and narrow the gap for the children looked after and care leavers...
- 3.8. In a climate of increasing financial constraint it is essential to look for ways to effectively focus limited resources where they are most needed. Prevention and early intervention requires long term commitment to reap the rewards. It is possible to extrapolate the savings achieved looking at families who have accessed early intervention and who have not gone on to become users of statutory services or who have been supported to step-down from statutory services. An example is given in Appendix 3.
- 3.9. A strategy to bring together preventative and early intervention services in Bromley is therefore not only informative but essential in terms of achieving at least a good grade in our children's services Ofsted inspection, as well as bringing together all relevant partners both at a strategic and an operational level in order to prevent duplication of services, to focus limited resources where they are most needed in a climate of financial constraint, to look at Bromley and the current needs of its residents, to recognise what Bromley and its partners have already achieved and more importantly what the focus will be for the coming three years.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Childcare Act 2006 places a general duty on the Council to promote the wellbeing of children in Bromley.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As detailed in Section 3, the cost savings remain difficult to quantify accurately due to the nature of early intervention work. In order to demonstrate the cost saving potential, a real life example is detailed in Appendix 3. This shows a potential saving to Bromley of approximately £99,000 on this case alone. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that through joined-up working Bromley provides effective preventative and early intervention services in a coherent, cohesive and collaborative way whilst looking to prevent duplication, reduce the burden on statutory services and achieve the best possible services for residents in a climate of financial constraint.
- 5.2 Whilst it is still early days, there is evidence to suggest that existing preventative and early intervention family support is having a positive impact on the burden placed upon statutory services. The graph below shows a trend of reducing referrals to children's social care, and an increase in referrals to early intervention family support (provided by Bromley Children Project).

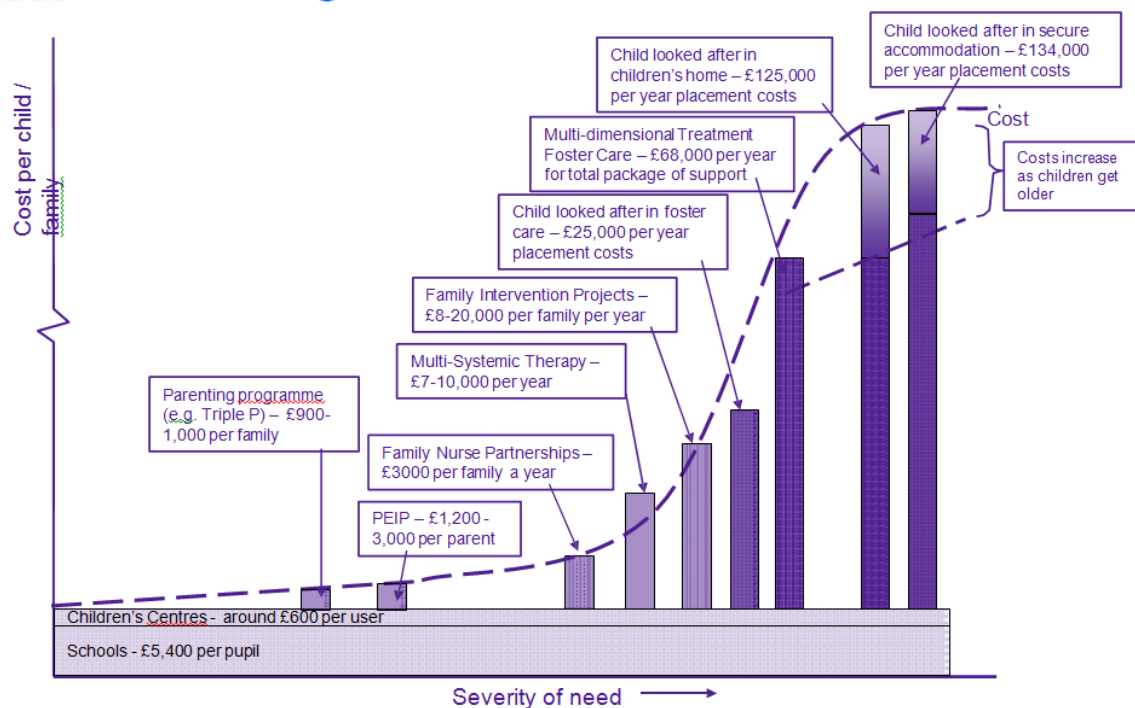


POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Investing in the promotion of preventative and early intervention services contributes to Building a Better Bromley priorities through the support provided to families, both universal provision such as health services, and targeted provision such as employment support.

Non-Applicable Sections:	
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	[Title of document and date]

and intervening too late cost even more..



Department for
Education

Appendix 3

EXAMPLE - FAMILY USING PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES AT A BROMLEY CHILDREN AND FAMILY CENTRE INCLUDING FAMILY SUPPORT WITH ANNUAL COST SAVING

Single mum with two children aged 5 and 7, and a long standing partner (not the father of the two children). Domestic violence by father of the two children whilst they were living together. Drug use by both Mum and her long standing partner and violent behaviour towards other people. The children's attendance at school was less than 85%, and considered as 'persistent absence'.

Several incidents took place in primary school playground with Mum; physically fighting with other parents, challenged for having drugs on her person whilst on school premises. Previously Mum had received several Police cautions and was arrested for the fight in the school playground. Antisocial behaviour extended to other places such as on public transport resulting in her being known to the local police close to the primary school. Mum was banded from the school and unable to attend parents' evenings or wait in the playground.

The family were referred to Children's Social Care and during this period remained supported by the BCP on parenting and improving her self-esteem and emotional wellbeing. She was a very angry person. She engaged with early intervention counselling at the Children and Family Centre via Relate and her children had family therapy due to the violence they had witnessed. Mum reported a noticeable improvement in all the family, and the professionals working with Mum reported a noticeable change in Mum.

Worked with BCP Family Support and Outreach. Embraced assessment and goal setting exercises. Her recognised the need to change, and set herself challenges such as;

- learning to drive
- building her self-esteem so she could join other courses in the Children and Family Centre,
- attended and actively engaged in Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities parenting course, to improve her parenting skills
- ceasing her violent behaviour and drug use, as Mum recognised that this was hurting her children; Mum separated from her long standing partner until this was achieved and she was able to sustain the positive new lifestyle

Mum has now achieved the following;

- the children's attendance is now excellent, achieving 100%
- Mum is no longer banned from the school and relationships have improved and Mum is actively interested in promoting education to her children
- Mum has had no further arrests, cautions or antisocial behaviour incidents
- Mum has stopped taking drugs
- Mum has attended and actively engaged in Job Skills, and Becoming a Volunteer to improve her employability
- has now enrolled at college and has passed Level2 (GCSE) Maths and English which is an excellent role-model for her children; and in September 2014 started an Introduction to Health and Social Work with a view becoming a social worker
- Mum is actively engaging other Mums who have similar backgrounds in her local area to use the Children and Family Centre as a result of her positive life changing experience
- Mum has now passed her driving test

The financial implication of this single parent family not accessing preventative and early intervention services via their local Children and Family Centre could be:

Statutory / late intervention services	Cost for 1 year
Police involvement and custodial sentence for drugs if not /also violence	unknown
Social worker leading potentially to the 2 children being taken into care	£73,306
EWO involvement and possible Court proceedings for Non-Attendance	unknown
Drug and alcohol services for Mum / long standing partner	£4,992
Adult Mental Health Services for both Mum and partner	£5,480
Children's Mental Health Services for both children	£5,480
ASB prosecution	Up to ... £10,000
TOTAL	£99,258