

Title of Report:	Update report Early Intervention & Help
Purpose of Report:	To provide members with an update in relation to the work being carried out by GCC Early Help and Targeted Support Services.
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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update CFOSG on the work underway to develop our early/family help offer as part of the wider programme of work to improve Childrens Services. It follows on from a previous overview report and also provides evidence of the impact of our family support work.

2.0 Introduction:

Early Help and Targeted Support services within GCC continue to develop and impact on the lives of children and families countywide.

Within the service area we have multiple disciplines and roles including- Early Help Co-ordinators, Community Social Workers, Family information service, Early Help Triage, Family Support workers, Triple P facilitators and Family Group conference co-ordinators.

We are also responsible for delivering on the Supporting Families programme and the Reducing Parental Conflict (DfE) programme.

The Children’s Social Care Reform 2023: Stable Homes, Built on Love: Implementation Strategy and Consultation, identifies a meaningful and effective help for families at an early stage as the foundation for effective social care. This is providing the backcloth to the improvement and development programme now underway. The recent pause in the Children and Family Hub contract was due, in part, to the need to ensure our proposals align with the national policy direction, local need and the children’s social care transformation work.

3.0 Strategic updates:

The Early Help Overview Document previously considered by CFOSG outlines our service offer, with this report primarily focussing on areas of development.

Early Help Systems

We have recently established an Early Help Sub-Group as part of the Children’s Wellbeing collation, with membership drawn from across the partnership. This sub-group seeks to have oversight and provide direction for the development of several areas of the wider Early Help system.

The sub-group has several working groups which seek to advance the following areas:

- **Data sharing maturity** across agencies through the development of new SISA’s and DPIA’s between services allowing for better use of data in the development of services and community responses.
- The continued development and implementation of the **Graduated Pathway of Help and Support**, which is the assessment framework in place for all children outside of statutory

services across our Early Help system. So far, we have secured a governance structure for the Pathway through the subgroup and will shortly be embarking on consultation with partners regarding the current pathway and paperwork to understand development needs. The final piece of work for this group will be the possible development of a digitised pathway in response to the feedback given, making the sharing of assessments and plans for families smoother and aiming to reduce the number of times they must re-tell their journeys.

- The development of an **Early Help Strategy** for Gloucestershire using the Early Help System Guide, which the group completed as part of the requirements for the Supporting Families Program for DLUHC as the foundations for this document.
- Final workstream, which is new, will be refreshing **Gloucestershire’s multi-agency levels of intervention document**, focusing on the individual needs of the child or young person. This will help to provide clear guidance as to when the need for a strategy discussion has been met and improve the consistent application of thresholds. This is an important element within our multi- agency safeguarding and family support arrangements, to ensure we provide support at the right level at the right time – the potential for over intrusion being an important consideration alongside drift and delay.

The development of this governance structure through the subgroup reporting into the Children’s Wellbeing Coalition will be key in ensuring that our Early Help system development has coherence and drive.

Supporting Families (SF)

The Supporting Families (SF) programme (previously Troubled Families) began in 2012, The programme is funded through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) the programme received a further commitment of £700 million nationally to fund the programme for a further 3 years (2022-2025). The refreshed programme is supported by an enhanced outcomes framework.

There are 2 aspects to the Supporting Families Programme, the delivery of intensive family support and the development of our wider Early Help networks. Intensive family support work is monitored through a payment by results system whilst the Early Help development work focuses on building strong multi-agency networks as evidenced through strong working practices and factors such as effective data sharing.

SF Payment by Results (PbR) Targets

Our PbR targets were set at the start of the current funding round for The Supporting Families Programme (2022-2025) and are as follows.

Year 1: 487 families,

Year 2: 789 families,

Year 3: 975 families.

These targets are for families successfully worked with, with all identified needs met at the point of closure and these positive outcomes maintained for a period of 6 months with no re-referral.

We are currently in year one and at the point of this update (15.02.23) have submitted 406 claims, with 81 claims (16%) remaining to submit by 31st March 23. We expect to meet the target by year end.

The national program will this year be celebrating 10 years of delivery. Since commencement in 2012, the programme has focused on supporting vulnerable families through whole family work to help them achieve positive and sustainable outcomes. The hard work and dedication of those delivering the [programme in LA's and their partners has led to successful outcomes for 650,000 families. In Gloucestershire we have consistently been a high performing LA meeting our targets year on year.

Parents Relationships Matter- (Reducing Parental Conflict- DfE program)

The recognition of the impact of parental conflict on children has been steadily increasing over the past few years and in Gloucestershire's early help services we are seeing an increased number of referrals in which harmful parental conflict is a significant factor in children's lives. Responding to this need requires a skilled and trained workforce and close working arrangements with Domestic Abuse services to understand and respond appropriately to the continuum of need that exists between parental conflict and domestic abuse. DWP have been providing RPC funding to LAs since 2019. Between 2019-2021 this was a relatively small amount of funding and was specifically ring fenced for work force development at the time.

In 2022, the Reducing Parental Conflict programme received further funding from DWP for the period 2022-2025. This new round of funding came with a greater breadth of options for how the programme budget is used, with a continued focus on the development of resources and training to support practitioners and parents to address poor relationship quality in families where it is having an impact on the wellbeing of children. In Gloucestershire, the Reducing Parental Conflict Programme is rebranding and adapting the training we provide to reflect a more strengths-based approach to working with parents. The programme has changed its name to Parents Relationships Matter-Gloucestershire to reflect some of these changes.

Below is a short brief on the current offer through this programme.

RPC - Training for Community Practitioners Internal & External

We continue to offer 3 training opportunities for practitioners wishing to increase their skills and knowledge in working with parents experiencing relationship conflict and its impact on children:

- ½ hour webinar
- 3 hour online interactive multi-agency training
- 2 half days of training to enable practitioners to develop skills in using the One Plus One digital resource with families.

Numbers of delegates are increasing month on month with the latest training dates being fully booked.

Month	Course	Delegate Numbers
October 2022	One Plus One Digital Interventions	6
November 2022	RPC	18
	One Plus One Digital Interventions	9
December 2022	RPC Practitioner Training	16

	One Plus One Digital Interventions	17
January 2023	One Plus One Digital Interventions	18 FB
February	RPC Practitioner Training	18 FB

Community Practitioners Workshops

On completion of training modules community practitioners are being offered continuous professional development (CPD) online workshops which are provided every 6 weeks to embed knowledge, skills in the use of the resources. These workshops will also enable practitioners to share good practice and identify any barriers in their work to improve parental relationships.

Community Partners Engagement Group

A ***Trainers and Champions Forum*** is being developed for key individuals leading on parental relationship quality work across Gloucestershire, this group will support in the delivery and roll out of the programme plan.

Countywide launch planned of 'Parents Relationships Matter Gloucestershire' Programme

Building on the Reducing Parental Conflict training – this will be an awareness campaign launch which will incorporate communication to our partners around the change in the language we use. We will be aiming to move away from talking about 'parental conflict' towards a strengths-based approach which will refer to 'improving the *quality* of family and parental relationships'.

The programme will be called '***Parents Relationships Matter – Gloucestershire***'.

The launch will include an Online Conference planned towards the end of February 2023, which will provide a range of training and information events over the 4-day conference period. Practitioner training and resources will be publicised and distributed using posters, leaflets, and a social media campaign. We aim through the conference to start a conversation and spark interest across Gloucestershire around the impact and importance of working with parents to improve the quality of relationships where conflict between parents is frequent, intense, and poorly resolved.

4.0 Delivery: Assessing Impact

Our direct delivery service, comprising of: Early Help co-ordinators, Partnership Managers, Community Social Workers, Family Information Service, Early Help Triage workers, Triple P practitioners, Family Group Conference service and Families First Family Support Teams are consistently achieving positive outcomes for families. Their impact is being monitored through KPI's for the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) and quarterly data reporting on re-referrals into statutory services.

For the CIP, we report on re-referrals to statutory services during the previous three-month period i.e., for December we will look at all families closed to Early Help during October, November and December and then establish which of those families were re-opened to Childrens social care within a 6-week period:

Reporting month	% of EH episodes closed within the last 3 months who have been referred to Social Care in the last 6 weeks	
	Target	Actual
March 22	20%	5.9%
April	20%	7%
May	20%	6.8%
June	20%	6.8%
July	20%	6.1%
August	20%	6%
September	20%	4.9%
October	20%	6.6%
November	20%	7.5%
December	20%	6.2%

The following data set is reported on a quarterly bases and is looking at outcomes over the longer term to understand whether families receiving a Family Support Early Help offer escalate to CSC.

Two sets of data have been analysed to gain insight into the impact of interventions with families and re-referrals into services. The first being all children who had a Family Support Early Help episode close between August and Sept 2022 and then 6 months later whether they had been re-referred to either Family Support or Social Care. This data gave us the following:

All Early Help episodes closed between 1/08/22-01/09/22. (LOI 3 and 4)			
Total children closed to family support	238		
Remained open to SC throughout	43		
Total children closed to both SC and Family support	195		
Not open to EH or SC 6 months later	178	91.3%	
Re opened within the 6 month window	17	8.7%	
Breakdown of re referrals			
Re opened to SC- CIN- Stepped up by Families First	1	5.9%	
Re opened to SC-CIN- Front Door Referral	1	5.9%	
Reopened to EH	15	88.2%	

In calculating the % rates for re referrals, we have discounted the children that remained open to Social Care throughout the period of Family Support involvement. These children were closed to Family Support but still open to Social Care at the point of this analysis. These will have been children who were referred for a short-term piece of work alongside a Social Care intervention.

- There were 195 children closed during this time frame - of these 178 children, had not been re-referred for services (91.3%) in the 6 months after closure.
- 17 children had been re-referred (8.7%)
- Of those 17 Children:
 - 2 children were re-opened to social care (11.8%)
 - 1 of the 2 children was referred by a community practitioner and 1 was stepped-up by family support workers during their intervention due to escalation in need.
- 15 children re-opened to family support (88.2%)

The second cohort we scrutinised were children stepped down from Social Care to Early Help. This report doesn't allow us to report on children at the point of closure, therefore we looked at those children referred to Early Help as a stepdown between Feb 22 and March 22. This would enable us to assume a period of 6 months support and a period of 6 months closure before then checking their status in Feb 23 to identify those that had been re-referred. We only considered step downs not referrals for work alongside an open Social Care intervention.

Step-down from SC referrals received between 1/2/22-1/3/22			
Total referrals received	104		
Not open to any service	90	86.6%	94.3%
Remains open to EH only	8	7.7%	
Re-opened to SC	1	0.9%	
Re-opened EH	5	4.8%	
of those 6 reopened.			
Re-opened to SC- CIN	0		
Re-opened to SC- CP	1		
Re-opened to SC- CLA	0		
Breakdown of re-referrals			
Stepped up by C&FC	1		
Front door referral	5		

- There was a total of 104 children stepped down from social care during this 1-month period, Feb-March 22.
- Looking at the same cohort of children a year later 90 of them had closed to services within the year, a further 8 remained open to Early Help.

Of the 104 children

- 98 (94.3%) children were not re-referred.
 - 6 (5.7%) children were re referred
- Of the 6 children
- 5 were opened to Early Help
 - 1 opened on a CP plan.

Across both data sets of the 3 children re-opened to Social Care, 2 of these rereferrals were made by Family Support staff during the intervention as needs escalated.

The re-referral rates overall continue to read as low, there are, as we would expect, some families for different reasons that need to remain open to services to ensure the children are safe and well.

We hope to shortly be able to enhance our reporting to encompass the impact of our Triple P parenting interventions, Family Group conferencing service and advice and guidance services for lead professionals within the community which we can bring to a future meeting if helpful.

5.0 Conclusions:

It's an exciting time for Early Help services across the country, with a national policy focus on intervening earlier with families in order to avoid high-cost services in the future. The Childrens Social

Care Reform 2023 puts a strong emphasis on 'Family Help' services within communities, drawing on the strengths within family networks to support change. We have a real opportunity with the extension of the Children and Family Centre contracts and development of 'Family Hubs' to focus interventions where there are required, in the heart of communities, whilst maintaining a strong family support presence to continue to deliver and build upon the impacts evidenced above.

There is a lot of development activity within the Early Help arena as set out in this report. The tracking data set in Section 4.0 goes some way to show the impact of these services in reducing demand to those high-end, high-cost statutory services. It starts to highlight the areas where we need to continue to focus services and capacity, to continue to intervene successfully with families and communities.

The recently establish Early Help sub-group will be key to the continued development within this area and will provide a voice across the partnership to ensure collaboration in the next phases. Not least the development of the Early Help strategy, which will become the umbrella for several strategies to sit beneath, with multi agency agreement.

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