

CORE OFFER BUDGET FOR EARLY HELP MODEL

WHY DOES THE COUNCIL HAVE TO PROVIDE THIS SERVICE AND WHAT DOES IT NEED TO COVER?

The Children Act 1989 places a duty under S11 for all agencies to co-operate to protect children and a duty on Local Authorities to provide support to children in need of help and protection. Working Together 2015 states that Local agencies must work together to promote an Early Help model for children and young people who need additional support.

It is the responsibility of the Local authority to promote interagency co-operation and establish the process of Early Help as part of a continuum of need for services to offer services prevent needs escalating to reduce the need for children and families requiring specialist services. The Local Authority must work with partner organisations to co-ordinate early help and ensure there are sufficient early help services available to meet local needs.

Darlington's early help model supports families who have additional needs in accordance with the LSCB thresholds of need document. An assessment is used to analyse family needs and seek multi agency solutions to support families and meet emerging needs early. Early help services are currently provided through Children's Centres and co-located multi-disciplinary Teams known as Early Intervention Teams. There is also Specialist Family services and the use of the Troubled Families programme is used to offer a higher level of support. Currently the Council supports families with 0-5's via Children's Centres, families with school age children including attendance issues, children not in employment, education or training and those at risk of family breakdown, children at risk of child sexual exploitation or going missing from home.

Children's Centres

The Childcare Act 2006 Section 5A places a duty on Local Authorities "to make arrangements so that there are sufficient Children's Centres, so far as reasonably practicable to meet local need."

The Act (Section 5C) also places a "duty on local authorities to ensure there is consultation before any significant changes are made to children's centre provision in their area.

A Children's Centre is defined in the Act as a place or group of places:

- Which is managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements with the local authority with a view to securing that early childhood services in the local authority's area are made available in an integrated way

- Through which early childhood services are made available (either by providing other services on site or by providing advice and assistance on gaining access to services elsewhere) and
- At which activities are provided for young children
- Take steps to identify parents and those expecting a baby in their area who are unlikely to take advantage of early childhood services available and encourage them to do so
- Children Centre is subject to external inspection by Ofsted

The Act also states that local authorities should not close an existing children's centre site in any re organisation of provision unless they can demonstrate that, were they to decide to close a children's centre site, the outcomes for children, particularly the most disadvantaged would not be adversely affected and will not compromise the duty to have sufficient children's centres to meet local need. The starting point should therefore be a presumption against closure."

The Guidance also emphasises that local authorities should allow adequate time for responses actively encourage parents from disadvantaged groups to participate, and demonstrate in their decision how they have taken consultation responses into account.

Family Information Service

Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 obliges local authorities to run a service providing information, advice and assistance about childcare and other activities of benefit to parents, children and young people up to the age of 20. There are also regulations attached to Section 12 and Section 27 of the Act – *The Childcare Act 2006 (Provision of Information to Parents) (England) Regulations 2007* and the *Childcare Act 2006 (Provision of Information) (Wales) Regulations 2008*. Both of these statutory instruments provide a detailed outline of the type of childcare information that local authorities are required to provide to families including: contact details and registration information, the cost of childcare, the times it is provided and its suitability for disabled children. The current service in Darlington is offered by four staff and provides information and advice on a one to one basis on a wide range of services covering both children and adults, these include information on free funded 2,3 and 4 year old information. SEND Local offer, SEND mediation, school admissions advice, special educational needs and disability advice. The information for adults is provided on care homes as well as voluntary and community organisations.

Family Support: The Local Authority also has a duty to promote school attendance.

A local authority must:

- Make arrangements to identify children not receiving education (section 436A, Education Act 1996);
- send a written notice to a parent whose child of compulsory school age is not receiving suitable education, followed by a school attendance order if they do not comply with the notice (section 437, Education Act 1996); if exercising its power

to prosecute a parent for a child's non-attendance (section 446) the local authority must consider whether to apply for an education supervision order (section 447);

- publish a code for penalty notices to address poor attendance and administer the penalty notice regime according to the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and subsequent amendments;
- improve attendance where schools report absence to them according to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;
- investigate the whereabouts of pupils who have poor attendance and are at risk of being deleted from the schools' admission register (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006); and
- Comply with all its statutory obligations under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Child performance and employment

A local authority has responsibility for administering and enforcing requirements and protections for those below compulsory school leaving age taking part in employment or performances (Part 2, Children and Young Persons Act 1933, Part 2, Children and Young Persons Act 1963, Children (Performances) Regulations 1968).

Young People not in Employment, Education and Training

Local Authority duties under the Education and Skills Act 2008

A local authority in England must ensure that its functions are (so far as they are capable of doing so exercised so as to promote the effective participation in education or training of persons belonging to its area to whom the part applies with a view to ensuring that those persons fulfil the duty (to participate in education and training) imposed by section 2 (Paragraph 10, Education and Skills Act 2008).

A local authority in England must make arrangements to enable it to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of persons belonging to its area to whom this part applies but who are failing to fulfil the duty imposed by section 2 (Paragraph 11, Education and Skills Act 2008)

A local education authority in England must make available to young persons and relevant young adults for whom it is responsible such (support) services as it considers appropriate to encourage, enable or assist the effective participation of those persons in education or training (paragraph 68, Education and Skills Act 2008)

The government has raised the participation age (RPA) so that all young people in England are now required to continue on education or training for longer.

Local authorities must make available to all young people aged 13-19 and to those up to age 25 with an Learning Difficulty Assessment or Education, Health and Care plan, support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training.

In addition, the Education and Skills Act 2008 placed two RPA-related duties on local authorities with regard to 16 and 17 year olds:

- Local authorities must promote the effective participation in education and training of 16 and 17 year olds in their area with a view to ensuring that those persons fulfil the duty to participate in education or training. A key element of this is identifying the young people in their area who are covered by the duty to participate and encouraging them to find a suitable education or training place.
- Local authorities must make arrangements - i.e. maintain a tracking system - to identify 16 and 17 year olds who are not participating in education or training. Putting in place robust arrangements to identify young people who are not engaged in education or training or who have left provision enables local authorities to offer support as soon as possible.

Current services provided by the Family Intervention Team (FIT):

Troubled Families

The Troubled Families programme is a Government scheme under the Department for Communities and Local Government with the stated aim of helping 'troubled families' turn their lives around. The programme initially intends to change the repeating generational patterns of poor parenting, abuse, violence, drug use, anti-social behavior and crime in the most troubled families in the UK.

Darlington delivers its core response to the programme via a centralised service located in the Family Intervention Team (FIT). Funding is provided through a central Government PBR grant.

The FIT also delivers an Edge of Care service to prevent children and young people entering the care system and intensive support to other families who do not necessarily meet the criteria for Troubled Families or Edge of Care.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) happens when a child/young person is encouraged, or forced, to take part in sexual activity in exchange for something.

- The reward might be presents, money, alcohol, or simply emotional attention.
- It can happen to any child or young person.
- It might seem like a normal friendship or relationship to begin with.
- It can happen online or offline, and without the young person being aware of it.

Darlington Borough Council and Barnardos deliver a jointly resourced project with input from the Police and Crime Commissioner that works directly with children and young people affected by CSE as well as raising awareness of CSE with partner agencies.

Therapeutic Social Workers

This resource alongside additional Educational Psychology services replaced the Looked After Children CAMHS service that was previously provided by TEWV and funded by the Council. The service also provides specialist support services to children

and young people who are on the 'edge of care' and to residential staff, foster carers and prospective adopters.

Edge of Care and other intensive support for children, young people and their families

Where there is an assessed need to help prevent entry to care or offer a range of intensive interventions that do not fit the criteria for Troubled Families or therapeutic interventions, the FIT works alongside area teams to develop plans and interventions to meet those needs.

HOW DOES THE CORE OFFER BUDGET MEET THE COUNCIL'S OBLIGATIONS?

It is proposed that there will be a realignment of all the Early Help services including, children centres, early intervention teams, specialist family support and FIT into a single service under a single management structure to ensure efficiency of services and that families are offered support at the right time in their lives and from the most appropriate professional. The offer will include the statutory requirements of a children centre, meet the requirements of the council's commitment to the troubled families initiative as well as the requirements from Working Together 2015.

DOES THIS DIFFER FROM THE CURRENT SERVICE?

The new Early Help Service will consolidate the two current services to develop a single co-ordinated Early Help Service targeted at the most vulnerable children on the Early Help Service to the 0-19 age group and their families. This service would be targeted at early work with those children and young people who are most vulnerable and have a high level of additional needs, where parental factors influence family life, and for those that are at risk of being looked after or escalation into specialist services

The proposed Operating model is:

Children Centre delivery in Darlington will be a hub and spoke model with a centrally based Children Centre which will deliver activities and programmes to enhance the life chances of the under 5 years. It will also serve as an advice hub to ensure the council continues to fulfil the statutory requirements to deliver universal access, information and signposting to all parents with children under the age of 5. Other delivery sites will be sought to cover Redhall, Maidendale, Skerne Park, Mount Pleasant and Dodmire areas of the town through outreach. This will allow services to be delivered in the most efficient, flexible and cost effective manner. Further planning will take place to assess the identified needs of those areas to determine how and where services will be delivered. Services will be provided on a weekly planned basis using accessible community buildings and are likely to include some group work programmes and some work with children and families on a one to one basis.

A range of service will be offered which will include Early Years Parenting support, advice and guidance, focus on improving children's school readiness and supporting parents aspirations through enhancement of life skills and employability skills as well as improving the health and life chances of 0-5 years.

The service will be delivered by staff qualified in early years, however, the service will continue to focus on the use of volunteers to support delivery currently there are 28 volunteers delivery a range of programmes.

The service currently has 79% of those children under the age of 5 registered with one of its Children Centres. It is anticipated that this number will be maintained by the new service model. The number of children who have sustained contact with the children centres is currently 938 children of which 58%(546) are defined as in greatest need (living in 30% area of deprivation, have been or are Looked After Children, access a 2 year old funded place, or have been subject to a common assessment). Currently 90% of the 546 children live within the 30% most deprived areas. Under the new operating model it is anticipated that the current service provision will be able to be maintained albeit delivery points will differ.

The Early Help team will become a centralised team with a focus on those children and families with poor school attendance, at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment and training) and children for whom family breakdown is imminent. The team will adopt a whole family approach ensure that any parental factors such as Domestic violence, drug and alcohol issues, are signposted to appropriate service and support given using evidence based interventions this model also includes those families who meet the Troubled families Criteria. The Early Help Team will also offer specialist support to those young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation. The service will be delivered to those families who are deemed to be in need of additional support via the Local Safeguarding Board threshold document, the threshold document will need to be reviewed with partners to deliver an Early Help Pathway to ensure that there is clear shared understanding of the Early Help model for Darlington which will not only include services offered by the Local authority but other agencies and partners including both statutory and voluntary agencies.

The proposed core offer will take a whole family approach seeking to support approx.550 families). Currently the teams within the scope of this model work with approx. 750 families however, the efficiencies of a single team approach could result in more robust coordination of services and a reduction in the time frame for intervention

The service will also deliver the outcomes required via the Troubled Families programme and work alongside other service areas with young people deemed to be on the 'edge of care'. The programme has identified 950 families to work with through to 2019/20. At any one time there are about 140 families being worked with.

The multi-disciplinary team will require a range of skills to meet the outcomes required for the children and their families including knowledge of school issues, housing, employment issues, working with children and young people aged 0-19 and parental issues of mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse, specific therapeutic interventions.

The service will also provide therapeutic interventions to children looked after, and support and training to foster carers, prospective adopters, adoptions on the edge of breakdown, residential workers and social workers. There are 29 young people currently being directly supported by the service and this is expected to remain or grow in line with the demand.

The Core Offer for social work has been modelled on current demand for specialist statutory social work services. The Early Help Service will perform a critical role in providing support and help to children and families early to reduce the risk of increased demand for specialist services and achieve better outcomes for the most vulnerable. Detailed plans for the Early Help Model will be developed in consultation with staff, partner agencies and service users over the coming months.

The refocusing of these teams will seek to achieve the following:

- reduce the number of referrals that require statutory intervention
- impact on the number of looked after children in Darlington
- continue to reduce the number of young people from the 30% most deprived areas who are NEET
- increase school attendance
- parenting support and programmes to maintain children within their families
- meet the requirements of the troubled families programme
- support young people at risk of CSE
- improve the emotional resilience of young people looked after and on the edge of care

Family Information Service

It is proposed to reduce this service to 2 staff members (from 4). It is anticipated that there will be minimal impact on service delivery however there will be a greater emphasis on use of digital media to provide information to customers and the service will be relocated to the Customer Service Centre to ensure information is readily available to the public. The advice and guidance provided will remain and the information on the SEND offer will continue

WHAT IS THE CORE BUDGET MADE UP OF?

Early Help Model 2019/20 - £1,380,539 (Net of income and grants)
Gross £1,779,954

Includes £101,907 of overhead.

TF grant – 2020

£399,415