

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 23 rd January 2018
Report Subject	Early Help Hub
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Social Services Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Flintshire Public Service Board (PSB) have commissioned the establishment of a multiagency Early Help Hub in Flintshire (herein the EH Hub).

The EH Hub has been designed to enable the delivery of more timely and appropriate early intervention and support for families with greater needs.

The EH Hub does not replace the high quality early intervention support that already takes place across Flintshire.

Support from the EH Hub is targeted to families with 2 or more ACE's (Adverse Childhood Experiences – see section 1.11).

The development of the EH Hub is closely aligned to the strategic design of Families First. Families First funded projects will support the operational delivery of the Hub.

Over the summer the Hub undertook a 'soft launch' to test proposed procedures and joint working arrangements. During this time referrals from partner agencies, that did not meet thresholds for children's social services, were referred to the EH Hub. A review of the soft launch has taken place which has identified positive outcomes as well as areas of process that can be refined and strengthened. The findings of the review will inform the final operating model for the EH Hub.

The EH Hub now accepts direct referrals from partner agencies and professionals. It is proposed that the EH Hub is formally launched to provide public access in April 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet are asked endorse that EH Hub is formally launched to accept direct referrals from the public in April 2018.
2	Cabinet endorse a formal evaluation of the EH Hub within 12 months of operation. The evaluation will provide an analysis of the resources offered by agencies, how effective there are, and the outcomes that are being delivered.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND
1.01	The EH Hub aims to address key legislative and regulatory requirements and the PSB ambition for better quality, cost effective services that secure good outcomes for all in Flintshire.
1.02	Primarily, the EH Hub aims to address requirements of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 to ensure families have access to relevant information, advice and support as much as possible within their communities to build wellbeing and resilience.
1.03	<p>The EH Hub will also support the Council's ongoing response to four of the twelve recommendations of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) Inspection of Children's Services (2015). Specifically:</p> <p>Recommendation 1: The Council should progress its commitment to develop an early intervention framework that will deliver integrated services and provide early support for children, young people and families.</p> <p>Recommendation 2: The Council should establish effective systems to ensure that thresholds for assessments are consistent across the service and understood by staff and partners.</p> <p>Recommendation 3: Multi-agency arrangements should be established to review repeat referrals and quality assure decision making.</p> <p>Recommendation 5: Children's services approach to risk assessment and risk management to be more effectively shared and understood by partner agencies.</p>
1.04	A proposed model for the EH Hub was developed collaboratively with multiagency partners. The model brings significant service transformation across partner agencies to enable the delivery of more timely and appropriate early intervention and support. The proposed model was agreed by Flintshire PSB in June 2016 alongside an outline implementation plan. An executive sub-committee chaired by North Wales

	Police was established to oversee implementation of the project and reporting to the PSB. A working group of relevant multiagency senior managers has overseen the development, and implementation, of the operational elements of the service.
1.05	Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)
1.06	A key feature of the EH Hub is that service is targeted to support to families where there are 2 or more ACE's. In essence ACE's are traumatic experiences that occur before the age of 18 and are remembered throughout adulthood. These experiences range from suffering verbal, mental, sexual and physical abuse, to being raised in a household where domestic violence, alcohol abuse, parental separation, parental incarceration, mental ill health or drug abuse is present.
1.07	About the Early Help Hub
1.08	The key aim of the EH Hub is to provide the greatest level of knowledge and analysis of all known intelligence and information across the multiagency partnership to ensure all children, young people and families have access to advice and information about relevant early support to build coping skills and address any problems before these become entrenched. For families that are at greater risk of escalating problems, access to appropriate multidisciplinary interventions as a matter of priority.
1.09	Objectives
1.10	<p>The key objectives for the EH Hub are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An improved 'journey' for the child and family with greater emphasis on targeted early intervention and better informed services provided at the right time in line with statutory requirements set out in the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014. • Greater ability to identify potential vulnerability, enabling more preventative action to be taken, dealing with problems before these become entrenched. • Closer partnership working, clearer accountability and less duplication of effort. • A reduction in the number of inappropriate referrals and re-referrals to Children's Services particularly. • Where better information sharing within the EH Hub identifies potential safeguarding concerns, these are actioned in line with relevant procedures.
1.11	<p>What the Early Help Hub does</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage referrals received • In addition to the referrals received, multiagency colleagues will research information held on professional databases/through engaging colleagues in respective agencies to enable the EH Hub to make informed decisions about the appropriate response to family needs • Provide a secure and confidential environment for multiagency professionals to share appropriate information • Identifies repeat referrals which taken in isolation may not appear concerning • Prioritises referrals and responses • Where better information sharing within the EH Hub identifies

	<p>safeguarding concerns, these concerns activate 'first response' social work services to provide immediate protection for a child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate Team Around the Family or other targeted intervention services to provide support to the child, young person or family e.g. priority for extra support provided by Parenting, Flying Start health visitor, a Families First commissioned service (e.g. Action for Children for families with support requirements relevant to mental health and/or domestic abuse) etc. • Activate information and advice provision by appropriate agencies e.g. Family Information Service
1.12	Who is involved
1.13	A team of people who continue to be employed by their individual agencies with a central office in Flint. The EH Hub management is provided through Social Services. Key partners are: Social Services including Team Around the Family (TAF) and Early Years; Youth and Education including youth justice, youth services, Families First, North Wales Police; Flintshire Connects including links to Housing; BCUHB and Flintshire Local Voluntary Council.
1.14	How does it work?
1.15	<p>Every case that has been assessed by the EH Hub is given a RAG rating (Red/Amber/Green) that signifies the levels of concern:</p> <p><u>Red</u>: cases that indicate concerns about child protection will be referred as per local safeguarding procedures to Children's Services, SPOA etc.</p> <p><u>Amber</u>: child in need case or a child or family needing early intervention in order to build coping skills and secure positive wellbeing and referred on for services within one working day.</p> <p><u>Green</u>: child or family needing some form of information and advice in order to build coping skills and secure positive wellbeing and referred on for services within three working days.</p>
1.16	All cases are dealt with under EH Hub procedures which includes team members receiving a notification securely via PARIS outlining the RAG rating, details about the child/ young person/ family and the reasons for referral/presenting issues.
1.17	Team members will research and pass any relevant information their agency holds about the family to the EH Hub manager for analysis. Team members supply information which they consider to be relevant and proportionate to the enquiry. If any agency deems the information they hold on a particular enquiry to be highly confidential/ sensitive or not to be shared with other agencies, they take responsibility to inform the EH Hub manager.
1.18	<p>Our ambition is to reach a position where will not be any 'no further actions' when referrals are made to social services. The response might be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information & advice largely provided by the Family Information Service. • A single agency information, advice & assistance response from a statutory or third sector service. This might include Police, health visitors, youth justice, Families First services, third sector organisations etc. A co-located information officer with links to the third sector based

	<p>in the Hub will help with this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multiple agency response coordinated by a lead worker from Team Around the Family or some specifically commissioned Families First services who work alongside the family to develop a family plan & coordinate interventions from multiple services
1.19	Establishing the infrastructure
1.20	Detailed work has been undertaken to develop:
1.21	<p><u>A single referral form to social services.</u></p> <p>A single referral form has been developed to request support from the EH Hub, for social services 'care and support' and for child protection concerns. The use of a single referral form will save agencies having to use different forms for different situations and concerns.</p>
1.22	<p><u>Process pathways and interfaces with child protection</u></p> <p>The EH Hub does not replace existing child protection procedures. Detailed work has been undertaken to ensure that interfaces with child protection procedures are clear and continue to take precedent. Within the soft launch of the EH Hub, the intelligence gathering within the EH process has evidenced the ability to support early identification of families that require a CP response. This aligns with the aims set for the EH model. The EH process and IT systems in place allow for prompt transfer in order to ensure a statutory response is completed to cases whereby CP concerns have been identified.</p>
1.13	<p><u>Information Sharing Protocol (ISP)</u></p> <p>An ISP has been developed for information sharing under existing legislative frameworks. The ISP has been approved by a North Wales Regional Group which quality assures ISP's across agencies. The ISP is between Flintshire County Council, North Wales Police, BCHUB and Flintshire Local Voluntary Council.</p>
1.14	<p><u>Quality and Performance Framework</u></p> <p>A framework has been developed to assess the performance of the Hub in terms of volume of work undertaken, quality of provision and the outcomes delivered.</p>
1.15	Implementation Progress
1.16	<p>A soft launch of the EH Hub took place between mid-July through to the end of September 2017. Referrals received by the EH during this stage in implementation were cases that had been stepped down by Children's Services following being screened as not requiring a statutory response. Within this period a total of 306 cases were considered, and actioned, by the EH Hub of which 107 involved EHH members having a professional meeting. Having these cases been screened by Children's Services, all these cases, would have previously resulted in No Further Action (NFA) resulting in no service or support being promoted.</p>
	<p>During September and November 9 workforce briefings were held for partner agencies to explain the EH model, the process by which referrals are responded to by the EH Hub and how families will be supported. There were 308 attendees in total at the workforce briefings with significant interest and enthusiasm evident across the multidisciplinary workforce.</p>

	In addition Officers also attended the Heads Federation meeting for secondary schools to provide a briefing on the EH Hub to raise awareness and understanding.
	Since November 2017, the EH Hub has been accepting direct referrals from professionals. The updated single referral form that incorporates the EH Hub has been successfully launched with partner agencies with guidance additionally being provided, to ensure referral quality. Awareness sessions provided to the partner workforce has added professional confidence to utilise the EH Hub.
	Within the EH awareness sessions provided to external agencies, it has been outlined to the multi-agency workforce that the EH Hub process does not negate the child protection procedures already established and known by the partners. 14 cases which, because of intelligence gathering, stepping up to Children's Services for a safeguarding response. This is an excellent outcome for goals of improving child safety and wholly consistent with EH Hub aims and objectives
	A high level review of the soft launch has been undertaken. The review has identified recommendations to strengthen EH Hub processes, as well partnership agreements needed to ensure the long term sustainability of the EH Hub. The review, and its associated recommendations, will be addressed through the appropriate multi agency governance arrangements for the EH Hub.
1.40	Next Steps
1.41	It is planned that from April 2018 the EH Hub is extended to accept referrals direct from the public. This timescale aligns with new arrangements under Families First which will bring a greater range of co-ordinated services that can be deployed through the EH Hub.
1.41	Formal Evaluation
1.42	A detailed evaluation framework has been developed to assess the effectiveness of the EH Hub. North Wales Police have secured national funding to take forward work relating to ACE's. This funding will enable an objective evaluation of the EH Hub to inform the strategic future of the EH Hub locally as well as sharing learning across Wales. It is anticipated that the evaluation will be undertaken in 2019.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The development of the EH Hub has been supported by invest to save funding from Flintshire County Council. Funding has enabled effective project management and additional strategic capacity to support the development of the EH Hub model and its implementation.
2.02	The EH Hub has been designed to bring together existing resources across agencies. This approach is aimed to be sustainable, and to secure better value through aggregation of resources and effective targeting and deployment of support to families in most need. Management oversight

	and support for the EH Hub has been secured within existing arrangements. The high level review of the EH Hub has identified the need for further partnership discussion relating to the long term financial sustainability of the EH Hub. These discussions will take place through agreed governance structures.
2.03	To ensure that there is effective and timely support that can be deployed by the EH Hub work has been undertaken to align projects funded through Families First to the EH Hub. Families First commissioning arrangements are being remodelled to support the strategic intention, and operational delivery of the EH Hub. The Integrated Youth Service has been key in working with Welsh Government, partner agencies and local service providers to secure this position.
2.04	The full cost of operating the EH Hub and the associated cost benefit analysis will form part of the EH Hub evaluation. A base line 'deep dive' into 29 families involved with statutory and voluntary and community sector services in Flintshire identified a minimum average cost of £107,500 per family to support their needs. Using limited and narrow cost data from the Troubled Families cost database and national Unit Cost reports for health, social care and criminal justice, the aggregate suggests at least £3.18million of costs borne by Flintshire County Council, North Wales Police, BCUHB and Flintshire schools from these 29 families. This excludes costs associated with assistance through Supporting People, welfare benefits, hospital admissions, court proceedings and criminal investigations, additional support for children and families through schools, social housing providers, youth services, mental health services and the voluntary and community sector. An outcomes framework has been designed as part of the EH Hub which will provide qualitative data on the benefits realised and associated impact for families.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The EH Hub has been developed in close consultation with partner agencies. Agencies have been involved in the design and development of the EH Hub through an operational project group and a strategic overview group.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	A full risk register is kept live for the EH Hub to ensure that risks are mitigated and effectively managed.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Information about ACE's: www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/88524</p> <p>Contact Officer: Craig Macleod Telephone: 01352 701313 E-mail: craig.macleod@flintshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Contact Officer: Ann Roberts Telephone: 01352 704112 E-mail: ann.roberts@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Public Services Board: Established under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the purpose of Public Services Boards (PSBs) is to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area by strengthening joint working across all public services in Wales. The Flintshire PSB is made up of senior leaders from a number of public and voluntary organisations. Together these organisations are responsible for developing and managing the Well-being Plan for Flintshire.</p> <p>Adverse Childhood Experiences: ACE's are traumatic experiences that occur before the age of 18 and are remembered throughout adulthood. These experiences range from suffering verbal, mental, sexual and physical abuse, to being raised in a household where domestic violence, alcohol abuse, parental separation or drug abuse is present.</p> <p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW): CSSIW has the powers to review Local Authority social services at a local and national level, to inform the public whether services are up to standard, to promote improvement of services and to help safeguard the interests of vulnerable people who use services and their carers. In May 2015 CSSIW undertook an inspection of Children's Services in Flintshire. CSSIW made 12 recommendations for continued service development and improvement.</p> <p>Families First Programme: The national programme providing a vehicle for delivering on the child poverty strategy (WG 2010). (£1.67 million approx)</p> <p>Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014: The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act came into force on 6 April 2016. The Act provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales.</p> <p>Public Health Wales: Public Health Wales is the national public health agency in Wales and exists to protect and improve health and wellbeing</p>

and reduce health inequalities for people in Wales

Team Around the Family: The Team around the Family offer advice, help and support to families with support needs. TAF bring together the support from people and/or organisations to help families. The support offered is aimed at building a family's resilience and coping mechanisms.

Family Information Service: Family Information Service Flintshire provides families (and those working with families) with a wide range of information about activities and support available to them. This includes free and impartial expert advice, information and guidance on local childcare and early education places.

Information Sharing Protocol: An information sharing protocol provides a framework for the secure and confidential obtaining, holding, recording, storing and sharing of information between participating partner agencies or organisations. It is an agreed set of principles about sharing personal or confidential information and it enables each organisation signed up to the protocol to understand the legal powers and circumstances in which it should share information and what its responsibilities are.

Flintshire Local Voluntary Council: FLVC is the umbrella and support organisation for over 1200 voluntary and community groups based in Flintshire.