



**Devon
Children and
Families
Partnership**

**DEVON
EARLY HELP MATURITY MODEL
SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Version: September 2017

INTRODUCTION

In November 2016, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published a practical guide and toolkit, [Early Help Service Transformation Maturity Model](#), with the expectation that partners in each local area make a robust self-assessment of their performance, using local evidence. The Early Help Transformation Maturity Model provides a framework for local areas to assess their performance against six strands, The family experience of transformed services, Leadership, Strategy, Workforce Development, Delivery structures and processes and Culture. Each strand is assessed against four levels of maturity (each with its own set of descriptors)



Once local areas have completed their self-assessment they will undertake a 'peer review', with an area in a similar position on their transformation journey, which will result in a local action plan being developed to build on the current progress. This cycle will be repeated on an annual basis.

Devon's Early Help self-assessment was started in summer 2017 and has been updated over a period of time with input from a wide range of partners. The multi-agency Locality Children & Families Partnerships and the Early Help Improvement Board have contributed to a significant amount of the evidence included within this document. Agencies whose representatives have input into this self-assessment include;

- Children's Social Care
- Adult Social Care
- Education & Learning
- Youth Offending Team
- Public Health
- Early Years
- Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
- NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group
- South Devon & Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group
- Schools
- Action for Children
- Babcock LDP
- Virgin Care Ltd
- Job Centre Plus
- DYS Space Ltd
- District Councils
- Leading community & voluntary sector providers

Overall, strategic leaders across the partnership have a positive view of progress in transforming Early Help services, which they are seeing in the development of the workforce, systems and practice. This has started to influence, but is not yet consistently translating, into frontline experience. However there is strong commitment across the partnership, at all levels, to delivering change which improves the outcomes and experience for families. The below self-assessment reflects feedback from frontline staff and managers in a multi-agency context.

The Family Experience of Transformed Services

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Key Evidence

- All partners can access the Right for Children system, to share family information and support coordinated activity. The use of the system is increasing but not yet fully embedded. Further communication and promotion is planned.
- Families experience multiple interactions with different practitioners and multiple assessments rather than 'one family plan'. Those who have a TAF seem to have a better experience but feedback is not collected consistently.
- Specialist support is provided by the range of practitioners engaged in the Team around the Family (TAF).
- It is thought that the experience of families varies depending on geography, particularly for those on the border.
- Family feedback is regularly captured through individual agencies to shape delivery and service development. A consistent and embedded mechanism for gathering feedback from families about their complete experience of Early Help is being piloted in North Devon and will be rolled out across the county.
- It is thought that families are not consistently empowered by the workforce to choose what their support looks like; however there is limited evidence to support this either way.
- Families who have access to evidence based parenting programmes and clear agreed outcomes, take ownership of the changes in behaviour that need to be made.
- There have been multiple improvements made to the Early Help system over the past couple of years. This has sometimes meant confusion for families and professionals due to changes in staff, thresholds and services.
- There is growing evidence of partnership working to deliver evidence based parenting programmes which build resilience in families but this is not consistent across agencies.
- Pinpoint is a web based community directory for families to identify local support and provision. Some services offer support for families to access the information they need. Devon's SEND Local Offer contains information on education, health and care services/support for children and young people with SEN and disabilities (SEND).
- The Early Help leaflet for families provides information about what Early Help is and how to get support
- The new pathway for access to Babcock LDP Advisory Service includes information for parents and links to support groups

Source(s)

- Early Help Performance scorecard: EH30-EH34, EH37, EH39-EH54
- Family feedback template (North Devon)
- Programme of activities in Children's Centres
- Children's Centre Outcomes data
- Children's Centre Attendance data
- Pinpoint Community Directory - <https://www.pinpointdevon.co.uk/>
- SEND Local Offer - <https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-local-offer>
- Early Help leaflet for families
- Website analytics: Pinpoint, SEND Local Offer, DSCB
- Babcock LDP website

Leadership

Partnership working and governance

DEVELOPING

Key Evidence

- Overall governance for the children and families agenda is provided by the Devon Children and Families Partnership (DCFP) Executive (following the merger of the Children, Young People and Families Alliance and DSCB). The DCFP Executive is made up of senior leaders from core partners.
- The DCFP Executive has identified '5 Key Shifts' that all senior leaders are committed to – asset/strengths based practice, a commitment to strengthening the Early Help system, locality based models, an integration of systems and services, bespoke and personalised services for families.
- The Children and Families Partnership Commissioning Group provides the leadership for Devon's joint commissioning strategy and delivery of commissioning intentions, looking for opportunities for integrated service delivery and system leadership including the use of joint resources and pooled budgets wherever possible.
- There is a strong track record of focusing on outcomes through our commissioning processes; this is supported by co-production and engagement with children, young people, families and providers. Strategic provider organisations are providing some system leadership but this continues to be an area that requires improvement.
- Joint strategic needs assessments are used to routinely evidence the needs of the population, including thematic needs assessments which allow a 'deep dive' in to particular areas of need to better inform commissioning of services. Work is in progress to improve the use of management information, at service and partnership level, in order to triangulate needs analysis against demand data. Partners actively redesign systems to continue to protect investment and the skills of the workforce in relation to early intervention.
- Commissioning cycle for Babcock LDP is reviewed regularly and planned according to local area priorities. In year variances address shorter term high impact projects.
- Specific Early Help governance arrangements are in place. The Early Help Improvement Board (a sub group of the DCFP Executive) is in place and is made up of a range of senior officers who are committed to leading Early Help transformation
- Locality Children & Families Partnerships provide governance at a local management level. The relationship between the Early Help Improvement Board and the Locality Children & Families Partnerships is not yet fully

Source(s)

- DCFP Governance Structure
- DCFP Executive Terms of reference
- Children & Families Partnership Commissioning Group terms or reference
- Children's Community Health & Care Services Engagement Report
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessments
- Early Help Improvement Board terms of reference
- Locality Children & Families Partnership terms of reference
- Devon Early Help Outcomes Framework
- One Minute Guide to Early Help

established to support clear and consistent communication and drive whole system improvements.

- The 'Early Help for Families in Devon: Outcomes Framework' sets out how families who need support will be identified and what a good result or positive outcomes for families looks like. The outcomes framework is framed around six themes: crime and anti-social behaviour, education and attainment, specific support need, work and finance, being safe and physical and mental health
- Key senior partners are developing an understanding of integrating services to meet local need.
- There is a better understanding of the early help system and breadth and knowledge is growing, however expectations of each service are not consistently clear.
- Work is ongoing to increase the connectivity between leaders and communities which will inform local planning and delivery of services and also empower the community to take an increased interest and responsibility to support one another.
- There are many good examples of partnership working and engagement at a local level. Practitioners are committed to working together to achieve a common purpose; however this is not yet embedded across all agencies.
- Right for Children awareness sessions are being run continuously in localities to support practitioners and raise confidence in the system which is still fairly new.
- Shared ownership of target setting is not yet secure and provider contracts do not always specify requirements in relation to Early Help which can be monitored through KPIs. The risk of this is that provider resources are targeted elsewhere.
- Leadership and consistency in language is in early stages. Work is ongoing to embed consistent language which describes Early Help and associated systems, tools, outcomes, processes. Communication about Early Help is being explored to ensure messages are delivered to the whole partnership as a priority. A One Minute Guide to Early Help has been produced to support practitioners with basic information and signposting.

Strategy

Alignment with local area's broader strategic priorities

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Key Evidence

- A 'commitment to strengthening the Early Help system' is a priority for the Devon Children and Families Partnership. Strategies relating to children and families are aligning with the Partnership's broader strategic priorities, within the Children's partnership Delivery Plan, as the golden thread through the local areas approach to improving outcomes for children and families.
- The Troubled Families Programme is included in Devon's overarching Early Help Programme, rather than a stand-alone programme.
- The Children's Partnership Delivery plan reinforces the focus on strengthening the early help system. A number of DCC and partner strategies and strategic plans refer to Early Help – SEND, Neglect, Domestic and Sexual Violence & Abuse
- The development of a new Children and Families Partnership Plan from 2018 will ensure an overarching clear plan of strategic priorities, divided into modules, one of which will be Early Help. The new partnership plan will also contain Devon's commissioning strategy, setting out commissioning intentions for the next three years. The partnership plan will be co-produced with the Expert reference Group and monitored by the DCFP Executive.
- Whilst there are good examples of joint commissioning focused on outcomes, a wider system level commissioning strategy has not been described to ensure that commissioning intentions of partner organisations deliver coherent joined up services for children, young people and families. This will be resolved by the development of the Children and Families Partnership Plan.
- Commissioners routinely identify best practice and research evidence based interventions. Options appraisals are cross referenced with needs analysis and demand data. This has led to a very broad range of interventions being available across the county and a workforce with a wide range of skills; however this becomes difficult to maintain, develop and expand. Joint working with the partnership workforce development group will look to consolidate this approach.
- There is a broad spectrum of contracted and local plans in place for services to deliver early help, assess needs of children and young people and engage families with programmes of support. These plans need further integration into the overall plan to ensure that duplication and consistency across the whole of Devon is addressed.

Source(s)

- Children's Delivery Plan 2017-2018
- Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019
- Early Help Strategy 2013
- Devon Neglect Strategy 2017-2020
- Domestic & Sexual Violence and Abuse (DSVA) Strategy and Action Plan 2016 – 2021
- Devon Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Strategy 2017-2020
- Commissioning Strategy for children's community health and care services
- Early Help for Mental Health Summary Report May 2017
- Devon JSNA Community Profiles 2017
- Early Years profile data
- Early Help Performance Scorecard
- Children's Centre Outcome Star
- Right for Children Worry Scale

- Health and wellbeing profiles are developed for local areas in Devon and include a snapshot of a wide range of different areas. Health and Wellbeing profiles, alongside the Devon Overview are part of the evidence base for the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The profiles are not routinely used by localities to support local needs assessments.
- Local profiling is completed by Early Years services to inform and monitor the Children's centres contracts and set revised targets each year.
- The Early Help performance scorecard has been developed which aims to evidence the impact of Early Help at a local and strategic level.
- Outcome models are recognised and owned by DCC and partners. The Outcome Star is used by Children's Centres, the Right for Children worry scale is monitored by DCC and the Public Health Nursing Team and Youth Services uses their own.
- Through engagement and co-production we continue to focus on whether or not services deliver outcomes as specified in contracts/agreements. This is triangulated with complaints, compliments and management information as well as feedback from families' and voluntary organisations.
- Devon's direction of travel is for families to access personalised services in communities and at home wherever possible, therefore tailoring to the needs of the local population rather than a one size fits all approach. Designing services in that way means a locally differentiated offer dependent on local needs and resources, examples of this include Children's Centres and Children's Community Health & Care service specifications. A review of infrastructure this year supports this direction of travel.
- Children's Centres, Devon Health Visitors in Partnership programme (DHViP) and Y-SMART provide good examples of a whole family approach
- Education for All Programme supports and challenges schools and settings to develop Inclusive Practice which focuses on positive outcomes for education and attainment

- Individual service outcome models
- Service complaints/compliments data
- Children's Centre service specifications
- Children's Community Health & Care service specification
- Public Health Nursing service specification
- Babcock contract reporting

Workforce Development

Skills, capabilities and performance objectives

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Evidence

- The DCFP Executive has identified a need to focus on workforce development. Work has begun to look at multi-agency workforce development opportunities; this includes voluntary and community sector representatives.
- Training themes identified by the Locality Children and Families Partnerships are based on local needs and determined by each area.
- Right for Children awareness sessions are delivered by Early Help Operations Managers across the county to practitioners from all organisations. Dates/venues are advertised on DSCB website for multi-agency practitioners.
- An understanding of whole family working, and its importance, is developing across the county
- Practitioner forums are in place in each of the local areas (North, Exeter, East/Mid, South/West) for those working directly with families. They provide opportunities to share knowledge, best practice and learning.
- DSCB multi-agency training encompasses information about Early Help
- Many staff across children's community services are trained in the THRIVE approach to support emotional development and wellbeing of children. This needs further development.
- VOYC deliver DSCB approved safeguarding training to the voluntary and community sector which encompasses Early Help. In 2016/17, training was delivered to 331 participants from 82 different organisations
- Strength based practice workshops provide good opportunities to look at ways to manage risks
- Practitioners have performance objectives relating to their individual organisations. There is not yet a set of shared performance objectives for practitioners across agencies.
- Job Centre Plus delivered Welfare Reform upskilling events to key workers across Devon. A presentation was delivered to childrens' centre leads which led to further events for all children's centre staff and private child minders to increase knowledge of how to support families and where to signpost them to. Attendee numbers - Exeter 71, North Devon 49, South Devon 56
- Joint multi agency training for practitioners is delivered across Devon focused on the Education Health and Care needs assessment & planning processes, this includes information about Early Help

Source of Evidence

- DCFP Workforce Development Group
- Right for Children countywide awareness sessions
- Forward plans for practitioner forums
- Devon Safeguarding Children's Board training and events
- VCS Training: VOYC Annual Report 2016/17
- SEND Workforce Development report

Delivery Structures and Processes

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Evidence

- Devon’s Early Help Assessment provides a single agreed tool to complete high quality whole family assessments, electronically enabled by Right for Children system
- Through objective setting in annual appraisals teams/services are required to be competent and confident in the use of Right for Children, however this is not consistent across all organisations
- Right for Children, a system which holds family information and supports coordinated activity, is operational and can be accessed by a wide range of practitioners from different organisations. The system supports effective data sharing between professionals.
- Working practice agreements support effective data sharing. There is better understanding and more confidence of information sharing between professionals, resulting in fewer agencies raising issues.
- There are four Early Help Operations Managers and four, increasing to eight, Early Help Locality Officers in place and dedicated to one of four local areas – Exeter, East/Mid, North, South/West.
- Locality Children & Families Partnerships provide a multi-agency structure to coordinate approaches, these are aimed at managers to share best practice and improve service practice .
- Practitioner forums are in place and led by locality officers for those working directly with families. These enable practitioners to discuss any issues or obtain support and advice on cases.
- Weekly triage meetings are held in local areas to consider requests for additional services (RfAS). The RfAS is designed for practitioners to access targeted services (DCC). Requests for funding are also considered by triage.
- Parenting programmes are evidence based programmes delivered through Family Intervention Team (FIT, Social Care, Children’s Centre’s and Youth Intervention Team among many others. There is a wide range of different parenting programmes offered in Devon, rather than a consistent coordinated approach using an agreed model.
- A wide range of data is available but not yet pulled together to show a complete picture, it is predominantly used by individual agencies to improve the delivery of their services or monitor single contracts.
- Work has begun to look at developing locality early help hubs, in four locality areas, which will support a centrally

Source of Evidence

- DSCB website information on Early Help systems and processes
- Working Practice Agreements
- Early Help Operations Manager job description
- Early Help Locality Officer job description
- Locality Partnership terms of reference
- Partnership forum terms of reference
- RfAS template/process
- Early Help Performance scorecard: EH1, EH7-EH11, EH28, EH34-EH37, EH68-EH79, EH87, TF3-TF5
- Evidence based practice through Family Intervention Team
- MASH Front Door Scrutiny Paper
- DCC Early Help Structure Chart

retained MASH and improved access to early help. Improving access to Early Help and reducing contacts with the MASH, that do not need a safeguarding or statutory service, would provide a more effective and less costly service, improve outcomes for children, young people and their families and help improve efficiency and effectiveness of the MASH in responding to those most in need of statutory services.

- Services within the local authority have been brought together under the targeted Early Help offer – Family Intervention, Youth Intervention, Family Solutions, Y-SMART
- More innovative approaches to integrated working and attendance at meetings need to be explored e.g. use of Skype to protect travel time

Culture

Shared vision and ambition and openness to challenge and change

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Evidence

- There is a shared vision and ambition from DCFP Executive and from services working with children and families in relation to strengthening the Early Help system, however this is yet to filter down and become embedded consistently within all agencies
- There is a strong commitment to embed a strengths based approach across the partnership. This has begun to roll out in some services but further work is needed to embed this as common practice.
- There are some real champions and examples of good practice in schools and across different services i.e. Children’s Centres which needs to be communicated and encouraged so we see more of what we want to see.
- Culturally there is a lack of confidence in managing high levels of risk within the Early Help system
- There is an improved understanding of roles and responsibilities in some agencies with less resistance to change across agencies, who are motivated to improve outcomes for families.
- Communication about Early Help is not consistently clear or targeted. Early help Improvement Board beginning to drive communication to agencies following each meeting.

Source of Evidence

- Children’s Delivery Plan 2017-2018
- MASH referral outcome data