

Early Years Strategy for Devon 2024-2034

Report of the Director of Public Health and Communities

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

To endorse the Early Years Strategy and agree to receive regular updates on the implementation of the strategy and support associated actions.

2) Background / Introduction

In July 2023 the Early Years Health Needs Assessment was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board. This item updates the Board on progress in presenting the Early Years Strategy 2024-2034 for endorsement.

3) Main Body / Proposal

The Early Years Strategy 2024-2034 is attached. The overall vision, strategic priorities and guiding principles are presented below.

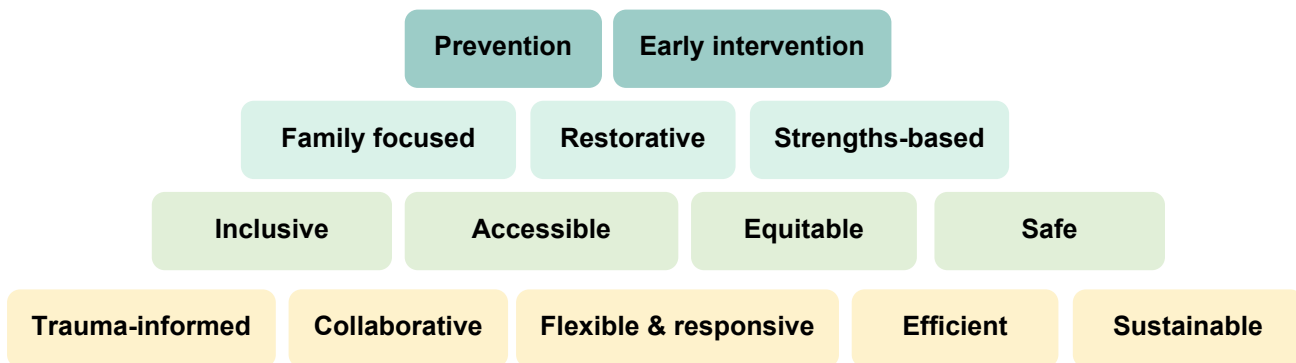
a) Vision

“All children in Devon will have the best possible start in life with happy, healthy, and safe childhoods, to realise their full potential and thrive.”

b) Strategic Priorities

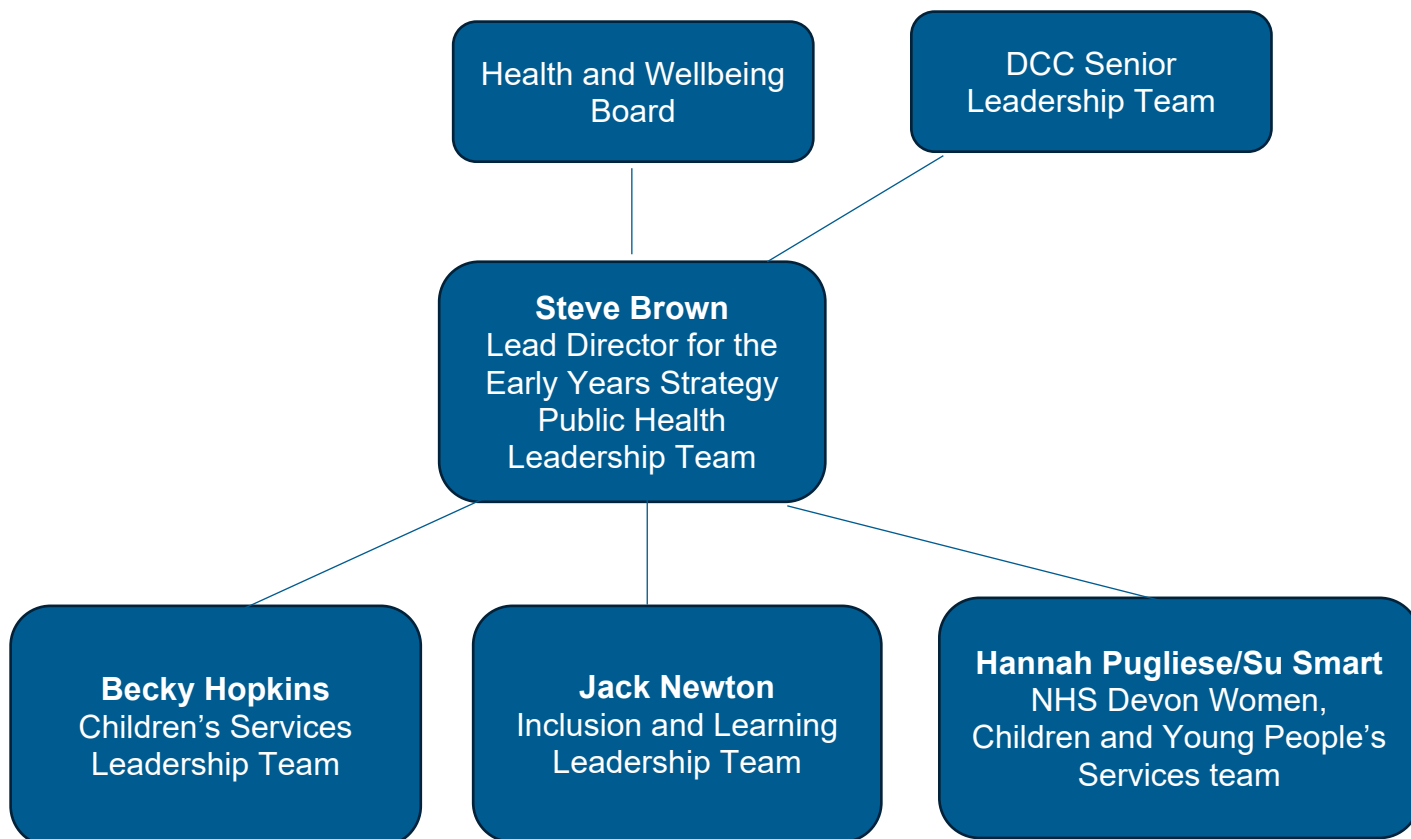
1. From conception, parents/carers and their children are supported to fulfil their potential by an effective and connected Early Years System
2. All children have a positive journey through their early years to the end of Reception, and are well supported and ready to start Year 1 in school
3. Families and children are well supported when experiencing stressors, to reduce their burden and the likelihood of adverse outcomes
4. Children’s early development and learning is expertly supported by a strong, skilled, knowledgeable and well led Early Years System workforce who always advocate for the safety of all children
5. Parents can access sufficient, high quality, and fully inclusive childcare places that support early learning and childcare needs
6. Communities are strengthened to enable families to be the best they can be

c) Guiding principles



d) Proposed governance structure

The proposed Lead Director for the Early Years Strategy is Steve Brown (Director of Public Health and Communities). The key groups that will collaboratively lead on the strategy implementation are represented within the governance structure chart below. These are the Public Health and Communities team, Children’s Services, the Inclusion and Learning team and the NHS Devon Women, Children and Young People’s Services team. Each team has a named senior sponsor to be a representative for the Early Years Strategy.



e) Next steps

The next steps include developing a strategic action plan through engagement with partners and families.

4) Options / Alternatives

N/A

5) Consultations / Representations / Technical Data

The Early Years Strategy has been discussed with the Public Health Leadership Team, the Children's Services Leadership Team, the Inclusion and Learning Leadership Team, as well as the NHS Devon Women, Children and Young People's Services team and some parent groups. All groups have supported the strategy.

6) Strategic Plan

The Early Years Strategy aligns with the vision and priorities in the Council's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 - <https://www.devon.gov.uk/strategic-plan>

This includes:

- **Respond to the climate emergency**
One of the guiding principles in the Early Years Strategy is Sustainability:
“Sustainability: Work together to reduce carbon emissions across the Early Years System and support families and communities to be more sustainable”
- **Be ambitious for children and young people**
The overall vision of the Early Years Strategy is:
“All children in Devon will have the best possible start in life with happy, healthy, and safe childhoods, to realise their full potential and thrive.”
- **Support sustainable economic recovery**
From an economic perspective, people who are healthier and happier are more productive in their community, which also leads to gains in the labour market such as an improvement in earnings and employment. In enabling people to be in their best health however, the evidence suggests that late intervention is costly, with a 2016 Early Intervention Foundation report estimating that approximately £17 billion per year is spent on late intervention in England and Wales. Prevention and early intervention may therefore bring significant economic benefits, and reduce the need for late intervention, and reduce the demands and costs for public sector services in the long-term.
Investing in the Early Years system and placing emphasis on the wider determinants of health supports Devon's economic recovery.

- Tackle poverty and inequality (address poverty, health and other inequalities)**
 Addressing child poverty and unfair inequalities are at the heart of the Early Years Strategy. Equity is another one of the guiding principles:
“Equity: Reduce inequalities by considering the wider determinants of health and using a proportionate universalism approach to deliver resources according to need”
 Strategic Priority 3 is that: Families and children are well supported when experiencing stressors, to reduce their burden and the likelihood of adverse outcomes.
- Improve health and wellbeing, including any public health impacts**
 The focus of the Early Years Strategy is on improving health and wellbeing, including more broad public health impacts.
- Help communities be safe, connected and resilient.**
 The guiding principles in the Early Years Strategy include safety, accessibility, collaborative, flexible & responsible.
 The final Strategic Priority is: Communities are strengthened to enable families to be the best they can be.

7) Financial Considerations

No funding is being requested.

8) Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations.

9) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio-economic)

The Early Years Strategy aims to have a positive effect on environment and environmental related issues. As mentioned above One of the guiding principles in the Early Years Strategy is Sustainability: *“Work together to reduce carbon emissions across the Early Years System and support families and communities to be more sustainable”*. There are many ways in which improvements in Early Years can also have a positive impact on the climate including work related to healthy eating and active travel for example.

10) Equality Considerations

The Early Years Strategy gives due regard to the Equality Act 2010 and it is included within the Appendices. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are considered throughout the strategy and promoted.

11) Risk Management Considerations

No risks have been identified.

12) Summary / Conclusions / Reasons for Recommendations

We recommend that the Health and Wellbeing Board approve the Early Years Strategy and agree to oversee the implementation of it. This will allow vital work to continue to improve the health and wellbeing of the population.

Name

Director: Steve Brown

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities: Councillor Roger Croad

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Nil

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