

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE CABINET</b>
<b>Date:</b>	13 February 2019
<b>Executive Member/Reporting Officer:</b>	Councillor Oliver Ryan – Executive Member (Children’s Services) Richard Hancock – Director (Children’s Services)
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>INVESTMENT IN A NEW EARLY HELP IT SOLUTION</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	<p>The Early Help service has ambitious improvement plans in place to reduce demands on Social Care and improve outcomes for Children and Families in Tameside.</p> <p>The service does not currently benefit from a dedicated Early Help IT system and consequently operates on an IT Social Care system, which does not support the objectives of Early Help.</p> <p>Maintaining the <i>status quo</i> whilst possible would directly and detrimentally impact on the service’s ability to deliver a number of strategic objectives in their improvement plan.</p> <p>Only by investing in new Early Help IT software will the service be able to achieve key deliverables around multi-agency working, coordination of Early Help Assessments (Early Help Assessments or CAFs) and Step Ups Step Downs.</p>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p>To approve £0.204m (year one) investment in the procurement of an Early Help IT system, AND that the financing arrangements for the licensing and support of this IT solution as detailed in <b>Appendix A</b> are approved.</p> <p>To approve the additional staffing resource and costs to ensure that the system is implemented and maintained appropriately from year two onwards as detailed in <b>Appendix A</b> (£0.101m in year two, increasing by inflation each year thereafter).</p>
<b>Financial Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)</b>	<p>The report explains the rationale for the proposed investment in a new early help IT solution. The system should ensure potential demand on Children’s Social Care services is managed effectively and the current ongoing budget pressures are reduced accordingly.</p> <p><b>Appendix A</b> provides a summary of the proposed investment for years 1 to 5 of the system implementation. The investment will be funded via additional base budget that will be allocated to the Governance and Pensions Directorate from year one (2019/20).</p> <p>There is total investment required in year one of £ 0.204m to support software and implementation related expenditure as explained in section 5 of the report. £ 0.106m is non recurrent and will be financed via Council reserves. £0.034m of this sum will be allocated to the Children’s Social Care Directorate to finance the backfill of a Neighbourhood Co-ordinator who will be required to support the initial system implementation.</p>
<b>Legal Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	<p>The purpose of this Report is to make the case that the Software functionality must be improved in order to change and enhance the Early Years Service; and is asking for investment to be planned and approved to enable this to happen. It is understood that further report(s) will deal with how this is to be achieved, for</p>

example in relation to procurement where Star and legal services will advise further.

**Risk Management:**

1. Implementation of system inadequately resourced – investment in additional people resource has been requested in this report to mitigate this risk based on learning from other authorities who have implemented Early Help software.
2. Multi agency partners do not use the Early Help system and benefits are not realised – informal consultation with key partners has commenced and initial feedback is extremely positive. A communication plan will ensure effective consultation with partners who will be involved in the design and roll out of the system.
3. Inaccurate information inputted into the system – training and feedback will be given in service and to partners with regular data reporting to ensure that information quality is maintained as much as possible, although this will continue to be a significant risk.
4. Project implemented outside of timeframes – a robust project plan agreed by all parties will be developed in consultation with all stakeholders to ensure that timeframes are adhered to.
5. Data security and sharing – multi agency access will make records regarding vulnerable children and families accessible to a broader network of professionals. As part of the project plan a detailed exercise will be undertaken to understand system data restriction functionality and put in place all appropriate governance around information security and GDPR in partnership with the Council's Risk Management service.

**Link to the Corporate Plan:**

The Corporate Plan outlines the priorities for improving the borough of Tameside including the quality of life for its children and families.

**Background Information:**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer Emily Drake, Head of Payments, Systems and Registrars:

Telephone: 0161 342 3158

e-mail: [emily.drake@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:emily.drake@tameside.gov.uk)

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Liquidlogic Children's System (LCS), formerly known as Integrated Children's System (ICS), is the Council's primary IT system used in Children's Social Care for case management, record keeping and performance monitoring.
- 1.2. In place since 2008, the LCS system is well embedded and widely used across Children's Social Care, supported by the Corporate Systems Team.
- 1.3. The Children's Services Improvement Plan recognises that IT is a key enabler in achieving Children's Services ambition to 'deliver services that are good or outstanding and securing consistent and basic standards as a secure foundation for further improvement in future years'.
- 1.4. Development of IT systems contributes directly to two key recommendations from the Children's Services Improvement Plan recommendations.

Recommendation 5	Improve the quality of performance management reporting to senior leaders and elected members, so they have sufficient information to benchmark improvement against clear, good practice standards.
Recommendation 8	Work with partners to ensure coordinated early help for a wider group of children through increased use of early help assessment and plans via the common assessment framework and implement an effective quality assurance framework to monitor and improve the work done in early help.

- 1.5. Furthermore, two specific actions in the plan relate directly to LCS system development:

1.6	Integrated Children's System (ICS) Review to be carried out
4.4x	Increase EHA (CAF) completion levels and EHA (CAF) information sharing ( <i>through purchase of Early Help software</i> )

- 1.6. A review of the LCS system commenced in January 2018 as specified in the Children's Services Improvement Plan Action. Significant progress has been made in partnership between Children's Services and the Corporate Systems Team to improve and maximise use of LCS in Social Care and implement any 'quick wins' without the need for further financial commitment. Over 40 improvements have been made to date through this phase of work. The impact of these improvements have aligned business and system processes, creating more streamlined, efficient and appropriate ways of working and thus diverting capacity from administrative duties to more direct work in the service.
- 1.7. Whilst the above improvements have implemented, it is clear through the LCS review that the Early Help Service does not have adequate software functionality in place to support day to day working practices, assist in meeting overall business objectives or enable effective data collation or performance management.
- 1.8. A gap analysis identified that LCS (which is a Social Care solution) is unable to meet the requirements for Early Help and that an additional IT system is necessary to ensure that the improvements are progressed further. Further financial investment is needed to procure new specific Early Help software to meet the service's strategic priorities and ultimately the needs of Tameside's families and children.
- 1.9. This report puts forward the business case for this proposed investment.

## **2. EARLY HELP BUSINESS PRIORITIES**

- 2.1. The Early Help service has a clear strategic vision and ambitious delivery plan, which we have committed to delivering following OFSTED recommendations.
- 2.2. Our commitments are detailed in the Early Help Strategy Guide and Early Help Delivery Plan, which was developed and approved in March 2018. These document the service's priorities and the extract below lists those priorities that will be beneficially impacted by the introduction of Early Help software:
- a) Diversion of referrals to Early Help response from the Hub
  - b) Support Step Down/ de-escalation from Children in Need (CIN) Team to Early Help Universal, Targeted and Preventative Services.
  - c) Increase, completion, quality and coordination of Early Intervention/ Early Help Assessment (Early Help Assessments or CAFs) across all agencies.
  - d) Develop an approach to Making Every Relationship Count – developing, implementing and sustaining restorative approaches to working with children and families, with each other, and with partners.
  - e) Develop a coordinated and integrated place-based delivery and commissioning approach that identifies and manages demand appropriately.
- 2.3. These priorities are all underpinned by guidance and statute that requires the Council to work across multiple agencies as detailed in the Government's 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' guidance updated in 2018. It states:

- 2.4. *Effective early help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to:*

- *identify children and families who would benefit from early help;*
- *undertake an assessment of the need for early help; and*
- *provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child. Local authorities, under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, have a responsibility to promote inter-agency cooperation to improve the welfare of children.*

*Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to make arrangements to promote cooperation between the authority, each of the authority's relevant partners and such other persons or bodies working with children in the local authority's area as the authority considers appropriate. The arrangements are to be made with a view to improving the well-being of all children in the authority's area, which includes protection from harm and neglect.*

## **3. CURRENT EARLY HELP IT SOFTWARE**

- 3.1. The LCS system is a Social Care IT case management system and not designed specifically around the Early Help operating model.
- 3.2. Adjustments have been made to try and accommodate the requirements of Early Help within the LCS system, however, there are significant limitations to the current model.
- 3.3. These limitations centre around the system's inability to support multi agency access, an approach that the Council has a clear commitment to. This has been recognised in OFSTED's visit who reported that *'early help is heavily led by the local authority and although there is evidence of increasing engagement by partners, the early help agenda is not yet fully owned by partners'*.

- 3.4. Presently, partners work in silos with no facility to access a child's record on a single computer system. Consequences include:
- a) Responses are poorly coordinated and lack of ownership can occur.
  - b) Often multiple Early Help Assessments (CAFs) are completed on the same family, which is inefficient and can cause the family to disengage and so escalate risk.
  - c) Early Help Assessments (CAFs) conducted by other agencies are often not sent to the Council.
  - d) Decisions about a child or family may be made on part information which can cause incorrect or missed referrals.
  - e) Early Help Assessments (CAFs) that are gathered from partners manually are out of date as soon as they are received.
- 3.5. The service lacks any tracking data of step ups and step downs between Early Help and Social Care, and information on how many families have been re-referred. This prevents a full understanding at a strategic level of the success of interventions and is a gap in data that could inform Early Help interventions.
- 3.6. This was also acknowledged at an OFSTED monitoring visit. *'The early help score card is in its infancy and requires further development to ensure that it provides sufficient robust information, and gives elected members, senior leaders and managers a clear overview of the effectiveness of the early help service. At this current time, the service lacks any overarching analysis of the impact of early help at a strategic or operational multi-agency level.'*
- 3.7. The ultimate impact is that the absence of an Early Help IT solution reduces the understanding about our children and families and consequently reduces the effectiveness of Early Help support resulting in higher demands on social care or via re-referrals.

#### **4. BENEFITS OF EARLY HELP SOFTWARE**

- 4.1. Early Help software would act as a case management tool for children outside of Social Care but to maximise its effectiveness would need to integrate with the Children's Social Care IT system LCS to ensure information was shared to ensure a 'full picture' understanding and bring business process efficiencies.
- 4.2. Practice of other authorities reinforces the business case that Early Help software is key to effective service delivery. Of Liquid Logic's 76 LCS customers, Tameside MBC is the only one not to have procured an Early Help solution.
- 4.3. The benefits that can be realised through an effective Early Help IT solution are outlined below.
- 4.4. Invest to Save to Reduce Demand on Social Care - The system will give the ability to monitor the effectiveness of the Early Help offer through a whole systems approach across partners. The investment in this new approach will assist in addressing future budget pressures by supporting a reduction in demand on Children's Social Care.
- 4.5. Effective Case Management - The case management system for children and families in Early Help would include forms, assessments, plans, alerts and workflow. This would enable better working practices, more streamlined processes and more accurate data and performance management. This will help embed a culture of performance management to understand impact of Early Help interventions.

- 4.6. Multiple Agency Access - Multiple agencies from the health, education, blue light and voluntary sectors would be able to access Early Help records on a single system. By being separate from the Social Care system this will ensure partnership working whilst reducing the risk of compromising data security. Information would be shared effectively allowing a coordinated approach and improve connections to ensure that families receive the most appropriate support at the earliest opportunity. Sandwell Council currently have 3,000 external partner users from health, education and blue light services who access their Early help system for a truly coordinated multi-agency approach. Feedback from our own partners on a jointly accessible Early Help IT system has been positive.
- 4.7. Step Up Step Down between Early Help and Social Care - There would be a clear and seamless step up step down process between the Early Help and LCS system. There would be the ability to electronically escalate and refer cases into social care, and similarly to receive electronic referrals from social care. Transparent history between each system would reduce the risk of 'lost' cases and give management better understanding of transitions between early help and social care. Knowsley MBC who utilise Early Help software have seen a 20% reduction in social care cases through management of the step up step down process.
- 4.8. Increased Capacity in Service - Significant capacity would be generated in service through streamlined processes and better record keeping. Roles could focus on operational work, for example the valuable role of EHA (CAF) Advisors could be strengthened further by an increase in capacity to which focus on EHA (CAF) quality assurance rather than the administrative exercise of gathering Early Help Assessments (CAFs).
- 4.9. Purpose Built Pathways - The system would be totally configurable to allow pathways to match day to day business operations.
- 4.10. Improved Management Information - A single system holding all Early Help information would enable management and performance data to be readily accessible.
- 4.11. Early Help Assessments (CAFs) in a Single Database - Approximately 350 Early Help Assessments (CAFs) had to be gathered manually from partners in preparation for the recent OFSTED monitoring visit. This is over 50% of all Early Help Assessments (CAFs) recorded in the borough. The Early Help software would enable partners to store their Early Help Assessments (CAFs) direct on the system. It would ensure key stakeholders could access Early Help Assessments (CAFs) 'in real time', prevent duplication and share knowledge and understanding to improve outcomes for children and families.

## **5. FINANCIAL INVESTMENT REQUIRED**

- 5.1. The estimated financial expenditure for years 1 to 5 of the project is provided in **Appendix A** and summarised below.

### **Software Costs**

- 5.2. When a new IT system is procured, there are various costs that need to be considered. These relate to the actual purchase of the system and relevant licences, implementation costs which normally will include some consultancy support from the software provider, and staffing costs to resource implementation and ongoing maintenance of the system. These costs are outlined below:
- 5.3. The year 1 costs of procuring the system are:
  - Software - £35,000
  - Implementation consultancy - £27,200
  - Ongoing support (license) – £7,000

- IT hardware - Nil
- Data migration - £10,000
- E-learning module - £12,500

Cost of System in Year 1 - £91,700

5.4. The ongoing annual cost of running the system is:

- Ongoing support (license) – £7,300 (4% increase per annum - all years)
- E-learning module - £12,500

Cost of System in Year 2 and subsequent years - c£20,000

5.5. Total software costs are £0.092m in year one. From year 2 onwards the annual cost is c£0.020m increasing by inflation beyond year 2 as detailed in **Appendix A**.

### **Staffing Costs**

5.6. Previous experience of system implementation and subsequent maintenance has highlighted that it is essential to have sufficient dedicated capacity and resource within the Council to ensure successful implementation of any Early Help IT system that achieves the outcomes for the service and the borough's children and families.

5.7. The staffing resource required for implementation and ongoing system administration has been determined based on the following:

- Feedback from Knowsley and Sandwell Council who currently successfully administer both LCS and Early Help software.
- Learning from previous system implementation within the Council that have required significant additional hours to be worked and paid.
- Learning from past lack of investment in system administration support for key systems such as iTrent and Agresso which to remedy has resulted in a centralised support resource being developed.
- The impact that a well-resourced IT system can have on generating capacity within the service.
- Learning from other Council models which through adequate system resourcing generates maximum efficiencies and a high level of return on investment in those systems.
- An analysis of the activities that would be required from the ongoing system administration resource including but not limited to upgrades and user acceptance testing, system user training, issue resolution, system development, partner agency support which could be in the thousands if other Councils' uptake is mirrored at Tameside.
- Enables system issue resolution and development to be aligned to business's priorities and not reliant on external; expertise.
- Work priorities of the existing Children's System Team including administration of LCS, LAS and data integration initiatives between Health and Social Care.

5.8. Consequently, it has been determined that the following people resource would be required:

- Release of 1 x Neighbourhood Co-ordinator (Grade F) in the service for 6-12 months to Corporate Systems for implementation. This is likely to require temporary backfilling within the service.
- Recruitment of 2 permanent FTEs, 1 x grade H (senior systems officer) and 1 x grade F (Systems Office) for implementation and ongoing system maintenance and support.

5.9 The cost of staffing resource in Year 1 would estimated to total £0.113m (**per Appendix A**).

5.10 The cost of staffing resource in Year 2 and subsequent years for ongoing maintenance and development of the system per year is estimated to total £ 0.081min 2 increasing by inflation in subsequent years as detailed in **Appendix A**.

## 6. KEY INDICATORS TO MEASURE IMPACT

- 6.1. It will be essential to measure the impact of the Early Help system to ensure that return on any investment is quantified and the success of the project assessed.
- 6.2. Overall success of this project will be measurable in its most simplest form by the implementation of a new Early Help application within pre agreed budget and timeframes.
- 6.3. The following service indicators will be used to measure impact, some of which are original actions from the Early Help Delivery Plan albeit it should be noted that these indicators are influenced by a number of other improvement actions across the service. Please note that for some indicators targets are estimated as data is not currently readily available.

Early Help Objective	Measure	Target
Support Step Down/ de-escalation from Children in Need (CIN) Team to Early Help Universal, Targeted and Preventative Services.	% of contacts being referred from social care to EH (increase)	70%
Fewer step ups from Early Help to Social Care.	% of contacts referred to children's social care (decrease)	TBC
Reduction of re referrals into Social Care	% or re referrals into social care (decrease)	TBC
Increase, completion, quality and coordination of Early Intervention/ Common Assessment Framework (EHA / CAF) across all agencies.	Number of external Early Help Assessments (CAFs) held by Council on EH system	100 with 6 months of go live
	Number of duplicate Early Help Assessments (CAFs)	5%
	Number of external Early Help Assessments (CAFs) that are Good or above	70%
Develop an approach to Making Every Relationship Count – developing, implementing and sustaining restorative approaches to working with children and families, with each other, and with partners.	Number of partners engaged in using the EH system	100%
	Numbers of partners trained on the EH assessment	
	Number of EHA (CAF) champions	

6.4. The project will also contribute to the positive work impacting on the following service KPIs:

REF	INDICATOR	Sep-18	Oct-18	CURRENT (Nov-18)	HISTORIC PERFORMANCE	STAT NEIGHBR	Target (Oct 19 For discussion)
1.1	Decision within 3 working days (% of contact)	97.8%	90.4%	93.3%			98%

1.2	Referred to children's social care (% of contact)	30.2%	31.3%	31.1%	12%	29%	29%
1.3	Referred to Early Help Offer (% of contact)	13.7%	14.8%	14.6%	13%		20%
1.4	Referrals received (No. 12 Months rolling)	3885	3874	3805	1471		3096
1.5	Referrals received (Rate 12 Months rolling)	787	785	771	718	627	627

- 6.5. Anecdotal feedback will also be gathered from the workforce via survey about improvements to day to day working including but not limited to ease of working practices, system access, partnership working, data quality and performance monitoring.

## 7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. The Early Help service has ambitious improvement plans in place to reduce demands on Social Care and improve outcomes for Children and Families in Tameside.
- 7.2. The service does not currently benefit from a dedicated Early Help IT system and consequently operates on an IT Social Care system which does not support the objectives of Early Help.
- 7.3. Whilst the investment being requested is discretionary, the reality of maintaining the *status quo* directly impacts on the service's ability to deliver a number of strategic objectives in their improvement plan.
- 7.4. Only by investing in Early Help software will the service be able to achieve deliverables around multi-agency working, coordination of Early Help Assessments (CAFs) and Step Ups Step Downs.

## 8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1. As outlined on the report cover.

Appendix A

	Software	Consultant Implementation	Support	Data Migration	Ongoing training - Partners	Neighbourhood Co-ordinator - Backfill - Grade F	Senior Systems Officer - Grade H	Systems Officer - Grade F	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Year 1	35.0	27.2	7.0	10.0	12.5	34.1	44.4	34.1	204.3
Year 2			7.3		12.5		45.7	35.1	100.7
Year 3			7.6		12.5		47.1	36.2	103.4
Year 4			7.9		12.5		48.5	37.3	106.2
Year 5			8.2		12.5		50.0	38.4	109.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>235.7</b>	<b>181.1</b>	<b>623.6</b>