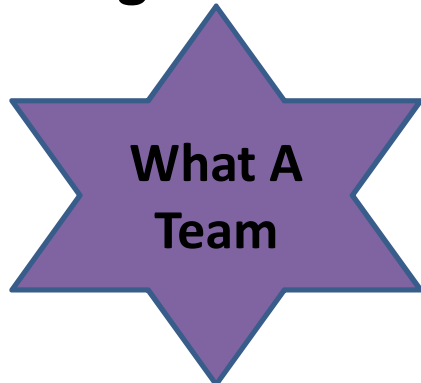
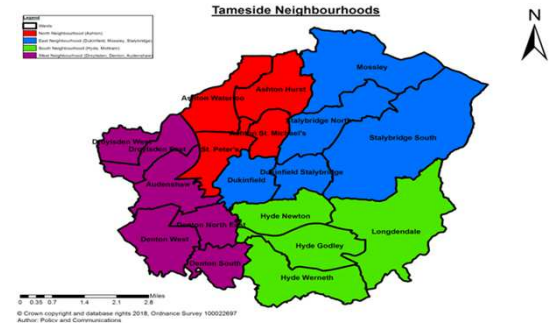


# Children's Services Neighbourhood Forum Briefing

January 2021



# Early Help/ Early Years & Neighbourhoods



Motivated

Collaboration

Improved confidence in IT

Resilience

Positive

Mental Health

Working From Home

Creativity

Anxiety

Isolation

Flexibility

Supportive

Personal Challenges

## Early Help

- Targeted support with CSC to support vulnerable families during COVID and lockdown – FIW supported over **400 families on a CIN plan**
- Referral and Links with Humanitarian Hub through Early Help **60+ families supported**
- Secured **over £50,000** of additional funding – community grant & Cash 4 Kids to support families/ Save the Children/ Toy Appeal  
This enabled us to purchase specifics to support families  
Nappies/ Resources/ Baby Milk/ School Uniforms
- Early Years virtual GROW Offer – group/ activities and 1-1 – **1,200 children supported through Children Centre pathways / over 92 children with SEND/ over 3,000 attendees on virtual groups**
- Parenting Strategy / Early Help Strategy & Webpage Launched **over 9,000 hits**
- Relationship offer developed and launched for families
- Virtual group, online and 1-1 parenting support - Over **200 families** have received support and **120 people trained for delivery**
- Early Years & Education pathway support – daily contacts to support schools and childcare settings and families to support attendance and management of concerns –**964 children** supported only **2 escalated to CSC**
- Virtual Early Help Panel continued
- **53 TAS** & with Family Group Conference support as needed supporting **320 children**
- Developed resource packs to support families to engage with activities on line
- Young Carers service delivered a virtual offer and resource packs for all families
- Duty rota from TFT/ EoC enabling a more responsive service across all levels of support both face to face and in homes
- Created a designated duty team to respond to emergencies

# WHAT HAVE BEEN THE CHALLENGES

- Initial adapting to Covid 19
- Working differently throughout the partnership - connectivity
- Confidence to try new ways of working
- Not being able to have face to face with families – we don't know what we don't know
- The impact and sustainability of delivering Evidence based interventions virtually to families – not 'trying and testing' these with families
- The emotional impact on children and young people
- IT
- Gaining Voice of Child and the lived life experience at this time
- How do we know children are safe
- School / Early Years closures
- Working from home
- Moving families down/out of the continuum. VCIFP are offering limited support.
- Keeping schools/settings engaged in the TAS process – low number of EHAs being completed by partner agencies, not being proactive in identifying emerging needs and not seeing this as a priority
- Not having peer to peer support within teams as not office based
- Personal/work life balance – WFH
- Families using COVID as an excuse to disengage
- To get vulnerable children into schools during lockdown
- Administration of Free School Meals has been a challenge/families understanding of this as well/target audience complex needs and our approach

## Feedback Received

I just want to let you know that Rachael has done amazing with AR and work she truly is a gem! Her hard work has supported the family to get AR home and cared for by her parents and for her to spend her first Christmas with her family

*'Nothing is better than being able to pick up the phone and speak to someone who can point you in the right direction and that is exactly what the Neighbourhood Team have done for me.'*

I am incapable of describing what You have done for me and my daughters.. In fact you have done your job with me to the fullest and in good way full of kindness and everything going well because of you and your help.. You was like an angel who holds a magical sticks and achieves for me everything.. My situation has stabilized and I have a permanent house because of your help.. The help this year with with every small and large thing, school, health condition, and everything, and you did not leave me.. even during your holiday you make your friend helped me.. even with my status situation.. you Prepared for me and for my daughters the food and tools which is necessary for the house and many things.. without you I could not bear the situation and the good life her for me and for my daughters..

This has been the most wonderful experience, I've enjoyed all the learning, I now clearly understand how to communicate with my children

*'Without the advice from other professionals that form part of our Team Around the School we would not have had the results with mum that we have and in turn this has improved the pupils attendance and the general wellbeing of all the children in the family. The TAS meeting helped the whole family and took inconsideration that the children are Young Carers. We have had no other concerns over the family since the TAS meeting and mum feels that the process worked really well for her family and has helped to make life better for herself and her family which is the best result we could have hoped to achieve.'*

I thank you unconditionally for ALL your support and good advice. It helped enormously having the family conference...Having you there was just what we all needed. Your a lovely person very easy to talk to and very unjudgmental. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for being there not just for me but ALL of us. Your an inspiration  
Xxxx

non-judgmental and made me feel at ease to open up and share the struggles I was facing

Helped me with my anxiety especially now with covid –

Thank You - Please believe me when I say Im so very grateful for what u've done in such a short time for us. U really are a special n deserve everything n more. Have a absolute brill xmas n new year. All my love M M X

I can understand my daughter much better





## Service pressures during Covid

- Social Care and Early Help services have worked consistently throughout the pandemic – unsung heroes
- Demand for Early Help and Social Care services has been very high
  - Services have been resilient and flexible
  - Staff have adapted to new working conditions, sickness and worked at risk of Covid on a daily basis
  - There has been increased external pressures on services such as schools, health and Police
  - Big increase in contacts and referrals from Police
  - Increased pressures on families > additional demand

# External Pressures

## POINTS OF ENTRY

EXTERNAL FACTORS  
Lockdown –  
Hidden Harm,  
DV, Police  
Issues, Poverty,  
Worklessness

## SYSTEM PRESSURE

**Contact: + 14% on last year**  
Open Cases –10% Decrease in year to  
31 Mar 2020  
- 7% Decrease Mar – Jul  
-12% Increase Jul – Dec  
**Net increase 5% since March**  
Children on CP Plans:  
- 5% on last year  
- **Volatile – broadly static in  
pandemic**  
Cared for Children Numbers: + 3% on  
last year  
- **1.25% Increase Jul – Dec**  
Increased Complexity of Existing Cases  
– Quantifiable??

## POINTS OF EXIT

DE-ESCALATION  
/ EXIT  
Discharge from  
Care – Slowing  
Lack of  
Placement  
Availability  
Risk Averse



# Examples of excellent work by Social Workers during Covid

- Working innovatively with children and young people using technology and children and young people appreciating this.
- Being creative in seeing children young people in lockdown, not just sitting in the house: going to the park etc
- Creatively enabling Family Time to happen, not relying on the Contact Centre
- Offering families the option to attend Child Protection Conferences in person or virtually
- Working more collaboratively with Early Help services around particularly vulnerable families: e.g. food parcels and children missing from education
- Making better use of family networks to care for children in emergency situations

## Schools - Update

- Headteachers and school staff worked tirelessly despite huge challenge
- Disproportionate disruption to education for children in NW and disadvantaged
- In the Autumn term, as of 2 December 2020, almost all schools affected:
  - 579 students and 364 staff confirmed COVID
  - 2,793 students and 131 staff isolated in two weeks previous
- Current attendance 17% (25% primary) in line with GM
- All national exams and assessments cancelled for summer 2021
- Current requirements for schools to remain open for: vulnerable children; critical worker children; nursery
- DfE funding for additional costs incurred due to COVID-19 although there are significant restrictions and concern about the financial pressures on schools

## Schools - Support

- Support for schools and colleges continues to be available to all schools
- Collective processes which support safe and sensible local decision-making.
- Planning and communication: daily calls, scenario planning group, TASH, TPC, Special School Heads, at least weekly bulletin from AD Education
- Public Health and Health and Safety webinars
- Risk assessment template and advice, regular COVID Committee review process
- Round the clock availability of officers for schools
- Parent Helpline for parents with children with additional needs

## Schools – Remote Learning

- Summer - DfE laptops for children with SW and disadvantaged Y10
- Autumn/Spring - additional laptops for disadvantaged children isolating due to COVID-19 from Y3
- Challenging expectation to teach children in school and at home to a high standard
- Support for schools from DfE EdTech Demonstrator school and Russell Scott Primary School
- Improvement & Partnerships offer to schools streamlined and focused on disadvantaged children
  - Education Endowment Foundation CPD, Making a Difference for Disadvantaged Learners
  - National Tutoring / Tutor Trust
  - Early language support – Making it REAL; WellComm; Helicopter Stories; Y1 research seminars

## Schools – Free School Meals (FSM)

- October half-term over 5,000 supermarket vouchers (£15 per child)
- Winter COVID Grant, supermarket vouchers (£40 per child)
  - Christmas: FSM in schools 9,554, 436 EY Pupil Premium, 1,085 vulnerable 2-yr-olds additional vouchers for families in need who did not meet the criteria
  - February half-term (£15 per child)
- Schools are providing food parcels or supermarket vouchers for children isolating or unable to attend school due to COVID-19