
Early Response Hub Annual Report 2023-24

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	12 December 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Heather Codling
Report Author:	Karen Atalla
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4639

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This is the annual report of the West Berkshire Early Response Hub, detailing activities during the period April 2023–March 24.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Executive Board with an overview of the Early Response Hubs wide and varied work, bringing earlier help and support to children in need across West Berkshire.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 Recommendation for this annual report to be noted, and that the oversight for the delivery of service supports decisions regarding the future strategic direction of early help.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during April 2023-March 2024 therefore there are no financial implications arising from this report.
Human Resource:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no Human Resource matters arising from this report.
Legal:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Management:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no risk implications arising from this report.			
Property:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no property implications arising from this report.			
Policy:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no Policy implications arising from this report.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024.</p> <p>There are no proposed decisions being requested therefore no impact on inequality.</p> <p>However, this report highlights the work with Children in Need, including children who go 'Missing' from home or care and Young Carers, all of whom often face multiple inequalities. Reviewing the service and its effectiveness, supports improvement and innovation to ensure that we adapt to changes in policy whilst continually striving for better outcomes for children and their families, challenging inequalities through collaborative working.</p>

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<p>B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>		X		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024.</p> <p>There are no proposed decisions being requested therefore no impact on those with protected characteristics.</p>
<p>Environmental Impact:</p>		X		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no environmental impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>Health Impact:</p>		X		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no Health impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>ICT Impact:</p>		X		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no ICT impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>Digital Services Impact:</p>		X		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no Digital impact associated with this annual report.</p>

<p>Council Strategy Priorities:</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This annual report reflects Council Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Help others to help themselves and others • Services we are proud of • Improve the health and wellbeing of our residents through appropriate interventions • Support everyone to reach their full potential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help people to help themselves and others ○ Improve the health and wellbeing of our resident through appropriate interventions • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnership Expand our work with partner organisations and communities to improve service for residents
<p>Core Business:</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, which sets out the work of the Early Response Hub and its different elements of responsibility, that deliver its core business.</p>
<p>Data Impact:</p>		<p>X</p>		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no data impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>Consultation and Engagement:</p>	<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, and incorporates data, feedback from partner agencies co located and virtual within CAAS and ERH.</p> <p>Feedback from families and professionals has also been incorporated.</p>			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Early Response Hub provides support and intervention to families and Children in Need of support at the time they need it, with the aim of preventing worries from escalating to avoid costly statutory intervention.
- 4.2 Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 & 2004 places a 'general duty' on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need and to make arrangements with partners to provide services through interagency working that promote the wellbeing of the child at home. Working Together 2018 & 2023 statutory guidance states that there should be a comprehensive range of effective services to address assessed needs earlier.
- 4.3 The report illustrates that during the 2023-24 financial year, there has been an increase in numbers of children who have accessed support and provides a hypotheses and data for the seen increases that we continue to collate and analyse to inform service delivery.
- 4.4 An online digital referral form for ERH was launched in October 2023. The take up in the use of the form by partner agencies has been at a slower pace than required. We continue to promote the benefits and use of the referral form with our partner agencies.
- 4.5 There are several different elements of work within ERH, each element has a focus on prevention and intervention. One important element of the work is identifying and supporting Young Carers. This cohort of children are some of our most vulnerable who have been supported to make time for themselves and meet with other children like themselves for peer support and respite.
- 4.6 There is a great emphasis placed on obtaining feedback from children and their families that has championed the creation of online feedback surveys to facilitate the voices of children and their families being incorporated into service delivery.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

Early Response Hub (ERH) plays an important role in supporting children in need of help and support across West Berkshire, this is a well established and respected service that continually strives to increase the footprint of early help to support the Right Service at the Right time.

- 5.1 ERH sits within the Children's Services front door and has several different elements of responsibility. This Annual Report of the Early Response Hub for 2023-2024 is designed to share information on the work, highlighting the impact of the work, its intricacies and parts.
- 5.2 Each area of work has a focus on Intervention and Prevention.
 - 5.2.1 ERH Triage (responding to families within three days or five days with a home visit) – these are families who typically require a single agency referral to a community service and referrals are made by the ERH Triage with the family's agreement, to break down barriers to services.

- 5.2.2 ERH Assessment (completing Family First level2b assessments) - non statutory assessments completed over a maximum of 25 working days and can act as a foundation to a statutory s17 single assessment if level 3 concerns are identified during the assessment.
- 5.2.3 ERH Intervention on families in receipt of statutory intervention (six weeks of intervention focused on a particular worry or issue) – as part of the Family Help and Achievement Model, families may require secondary allocation to an Intervention Worker, to work alongside the social worker with the family, on a bespoke intensive plan of intervention, to reduce the worries and concerns.
- 5.2.4 Young Carers – identifying, assessment and supporting young carers in West Berkshire via assessments, reassessments and respite activities.
- 5.2.5 Reducing Parental Conflict (for co-parenting parents and training for professionals) – delivering reducing parental conflict training for separated parents to enable them to co-parent more effectively and delivering training to professionals to help them to understand the difference between parental conflict and domestic abuse.
- 5.2.6 My Family Plan consultation service - the My Family Plan facilitators provide a consultation and advice service to lead professionals in My Family Plans which are a community led support plan.
- 5.2.7 Family Group Conferences (and Restorative Conferences) – the opportunity for a family to come together to identify a family plan to respond to the worries or concerns for children and families.
- 5.2.8 Family Help and Achievement Model – a new model of responding to families across the spectrum of need.

Background

- 5.3 Early Help is a shared responsibility across agencies and communities and the ERH is an excellent example of interagency working that needs to be replicated with partner agencies with collective strategy and policy. There is a duty placed on agencies to cooperate to promote wellbeing of children.

Legal Background

- 5.4 Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on councils to safeguard and promote the welfare of 'children in need' within their area.
- 5.5 Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the legal framework for multi-agency 'cooperation to improve wellbeing'.
- 5.6 The Stable Homes Built on Love Strategy (SHBOL) was published in response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (2022). This strategy outlines a major reset

of 'family help' and how we respond to those children in need of help and support with a key focus on this being a shared endeavour across the partnership.

6 Proposals

6.1 It is recommended that this Early Help Annual Report is noted for information.

6.2 As this is an annual report there are no implications identified.

7 Other options considered.

7.1 No other option considered, Annual Reports provide an overview of service delivery.

8 Conclusion

8.1 This Early Response Hub Annual Report demonstrates the effectiveness and growth of the Early Response Hub and its impact on service and how we are striving to better support our children in need across West Berkshire.

8.2 The report reflects the positive achievements, the challenges, and the innovative ways that the Early Response Hub works with different agencies to bring a collaborative response to the challenge of demand on the service.

8.3 The report also identifies priority areas for 2024-2025.

9 Appendices

9.1 Early Response Hub Annual Report 2023-2024

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report is to note only | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
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