

Developing Early Help / Strengthening Safeguarding – Important Developments

Introduction

In January 2014 we will change the way we provide support to children, young people and their families. These changes will improve the way safeguarding and early help services are provided.

Why are we changing?

Our key priority is to ensure that we get the right help to the right child at the right time. Working with our partners to better target our shared resources lies at the heart of the changes we are making.

The Changes

Children, their families and our partners will see three key changes to our local arrangements. These are:

- All services will be co-ordinated through the Children's Front Door - this will ensure that we have the best possible information about a child or young person's circumstances to inform an effective and proportionate response to their needs.
- Our Integrated Family Service [IFS] whilst continuing to provide high level support to children and young people in the community, will become a 'Child in Need' service. This change will see the current IFS teams targeting those families where without additional help and support children are at risk of becoming looked after or in need of safeguarding.
- The Troubled Families arrangements will be simplified and strengthened to ensure better identification, support and tracking of outcomes for those children, young people and families who fit the nationally specified profile. In a nutshell, we will introduce a stand alone Family Focus Service to ensure we maximise the impact of our troubled families initiative in York and in conjunction with our partners.

Taken together, these three developments will see better targeting of more children and young people who need help and support.

Managing the Changes

To ensure that these changes cause minimum impact for families and to be certain that they are grounded in the reality of current needs, we are working directly with front line practitioners and managers of all of those services involved.

Building Capacity / Delivering a Safe Service

It is very important to note that these changes will **not** see a reduction in services to vulnerable families. In fact, our new Child in Need service will be strengthened by the inclusion of a qualified social worker in each of the three locality teams.

These teams will continue to be led by our very experienced Practice Managers who are very well placed to bring some consistency for families as we manage the transition to these new arrangements

A new overall Service Manager has also been appointed to lead this service.

Keeping You Informed

Front line practitioners, their managers and senior managers across Children's Specialist Services will be providing regular briefings and updates on these changes over the coming weeks.

If you have any questions or comments about the planned changes please use our dedicated mailbox at: servicesforfamiliesreview@york.gov.uk

Evaluating the Impact

A full review of the impact of these changes will take place in June 2014 with an evaluation report prepared for the Children's Trust Board and the City of York Safeguarding Children's Board. The review will focus on the impact and benefits of arrangements we are putting in place over the next six months, and will inform the shape of more permanent future arrangements.

Eoin Rush
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Overview of new Service Structure Arrangements

