

Shropshire early help effectiveness 2015/2016 findings: executive summary

The vision for children and families sits within the wider council approach to offer advice, support and assistance to the people of Shropshire ... promoting the engagement of the community and voluntary sector to identify and meet the needs to their local community.

This vision is further underpinned by a commitment to 'a child centred and coordinated approach to prevention and early assistance where the voice of the child and family is heard and their experience of life is understood by all professionals working with them.

The following is a summary of the findings from the Early Help Effectiveness Report 2015/2016 and recommendations for improvements in early help (which also take into account the implementation of the Strengthening Families through Early Help Strategy).

1.0 Sources of information that have informed the full report are:

1) Early help practitioner feedback survey (2015)

The early help practitioner feedback survey is undertaken annually via an on-line survey. All practitioners on the early help contacts list are invited to give their views on a variety of elements of early help by completing the survey. Some questions are repeated annually in order to monitor changing views over time.

There were **167 responses** to the 2015 survey: 139 fully completed and 28 partially completed. For fully completed responses this was a **22% increase in responses** compared with the 2014 survey

2) Quality assurance: early help quality audits

Early help quality audits are undertaken bi-monthly in line with the early help audit schedule by the Early Help Stakeholders group made up of operational managers/practitioners from health, education, social care and the voluntary sector.

The early help audit schedule consists of the following audits: step up to social care, step down from social care, quality of plan and review, effectiveness of early help, quality of early help assessments and related tools. From April 2015 to March 2016 five audits took place, auditing a total of 72 files.

3) Service user feedback

Service user feedback included within this report consists of:

a. Internal targeted early help services service user feedback following closure

The feedback used within this report covers the period January 2015 to December 2015. During this period there were 46 responses out of 101 parents contacted (a 46% response rate).

b. EnHance service user feedback following closure

Shropshire Partnership Consortium also undertake service user feedback on EnHance's behalf as an independent agency for this targeted early help service. The feedback used within this report covers the period there were a range of feedback methods including written and telephone questionnaires. A total of 89 responses have informed this report.

c. Service user feedback provided by targeted services

Complaints and compliments

4) Early help activity and outcomes data

Data relating to early help activity and outcomes extracted from the Social Care CareFirst system.

5) Local Government Peer Review (2015)

The report of the findings from the children's safeguarding peer review that took place in June 2015.

2.0 Key themes of the report

The effectiveness and impact of early help in Shropshire has been reviewed against across the three key themes outlined below. These themes are based on the early help vision, the Shropshire early help outcomes framework, key findings from the Ofsted early help thematic review and key judgements of the Ofsted framework and evaluation schedule.

Theme 1: Outcomes and impact for the child and family

This means: "...as a consequence of the early help offered, children's circumstances improve and, in some cases, the need for targeted services is lessened or avoided."

(Ofsted Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (ESN03), 2016)

Theme 2: The right help at the right time for the right duration

This means: "Children, young people and families are offered help when needs and/or concerns are first identified and, as a consequence of the early help offered, children's circumstances improve and, in some cases, the need for targeted services is lessened or avoided. The interface between early help and statutory child protection work is clearly and effectively differentiated".

(Ofsted Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (ESN03), 2016)

Theme 3: Leadership, management and governance

This means: "Leadership, management and governance arrangements comply with statutory guidance and together establish an effective strategy and good-quality services for children, young people and their families. There is a clear and up-to-date strategy for commissioning and developing services delivered by a suitably qualified and experienced workforce that meets the needs of local children and young people and families" *(Ofsted Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, 2016)*

3.0 Shropshire early help effectiveness 2015/2016 findings

Theme 1: outcomes and impact for the child and family

During a targeted early help service intervention, an evaluation tool is completed for each family to identify their needs. At the end of the intervention, progress against each identified need is recorded in order to evaluate the impact of the intervention. There are 18 different outcomes to select and these will be identified alongside the needs of an individual family. From April 2015 to March 2016, this tool was completed for 346 families.

In addition there are seven individual child/parent outcomes that can be used to identify and monitor progress against personal issues of the individual using the Webstar. From April 2015 to March 2016 there were 353 final Webstars completed for children (127 with end scores: 36%) and 160 final Webstars completed for parents (66 with end scores: 51%)

At the point of closure, the lead professional is asked to confirm whether outcome within the early help have been achieved, in full, partially or not at all. From April 2015 to March 2016, 627 closures summaries were completed.

Positive findings

- 88% of children and 82% of parent’s report their circumstances had improved overall
- 94% of children and 91% of parents felt happy, healthy and safe at the end of the intervention.
- The Webstar individuals against “Happy” showed the greatest progress with 79% children and 85% parents recording improvements in how happy they felt.
- 84% of Lead Professionals judged the majority of early help interventions to have been fully (52%) or partially (32%) effective.
- The greatest positive impact of early help intervention was seen on child and parent relationships, self-esteem and well-being; with 81% of parent/child relationships improving and 79% improving in self-esteem and well-being

Chart 1: Overall Webstar outcomes (children) April 2015 to March 2016

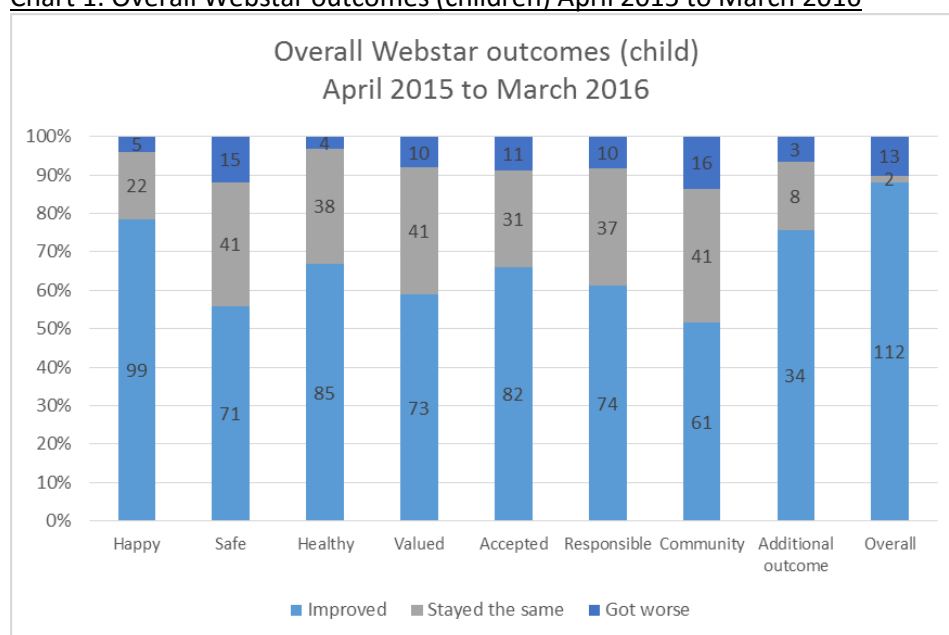
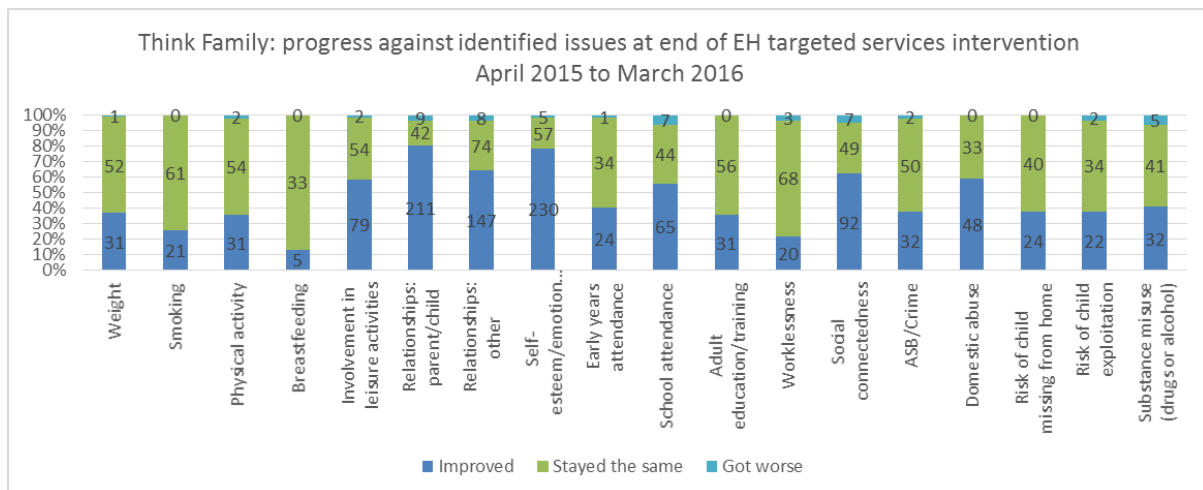


Chart 2: Family progress against identified issues at intervention closure



Theme 2: The right help at the right time for the right duration

Positive findings: accessibility of advice and support

- Almost all (99%) practitioners know where to go to access advice and support regarding early help.
- Most practitioners (85%) understand the early help process and the majority (56%) feel it is easy to use.
- Early help consultations accessibility:
 - 76% of practitioners agree that consultations with Targeted Youth Support workers are accessible
 - 69% of practitioners agree that consultations with early help social workers are accessible
 - 76% of practitioners agree that consultations with CAMHS workers are accessible
- The large majority of practitioners agreed that targeted services were accessible. Children’s Centre Targeted (94%), Youth Support (77%) EnHance (73%) Lifelines (58%) Parenting team Services (90%)
- Service user feedback indicates that most parents (89%) felt that early help services are accessible and the large majority (78%) felt that support was offered within a reasonable time.

Chart 3: Accessibility of early help professional consultations

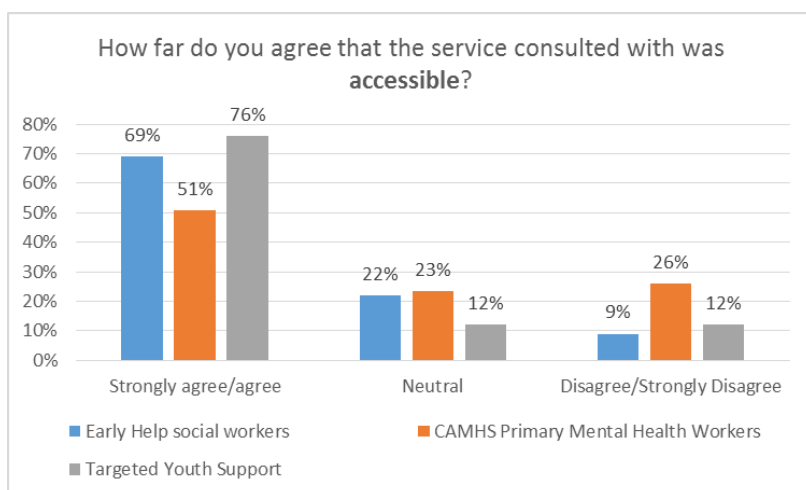
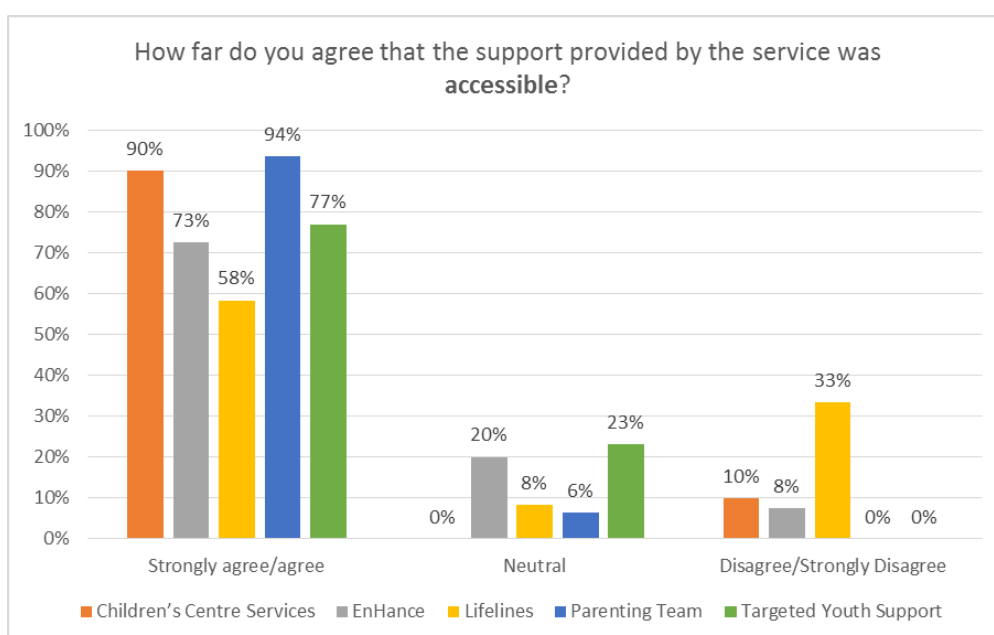


Chart 4: Accessibility of support provided by early help targeted services



Positive findings: quality of support

- Early help consultations are valued and felt to be effective by partners:
 - 92% with Targeted Youth Support, 66% with early help social workers and 58% with CAMHS workers are effective
- Early help assessment:
 - Most practitioners (83%) feel skilled in completing assessments.
 - Quality audits show that, 10% of the assessments were outstanding, 35% good, 45% requiring improvement and 10% inadequate (20 files audited) and that the large majority (65%) identify the needs of the child. The child/young person's voice was heard within 50% of early help assessments.
- Practitioner confidence in assessing thresholds has increased, with the large majority of practitioners (74%) now feeling confident in assessing thresholds.
- Early help plans:
 - Where early help plans are in place, they link to need
 - Most practitioners feel confident in planning and evaluating support

Chart 5: Effectiveness of consultations

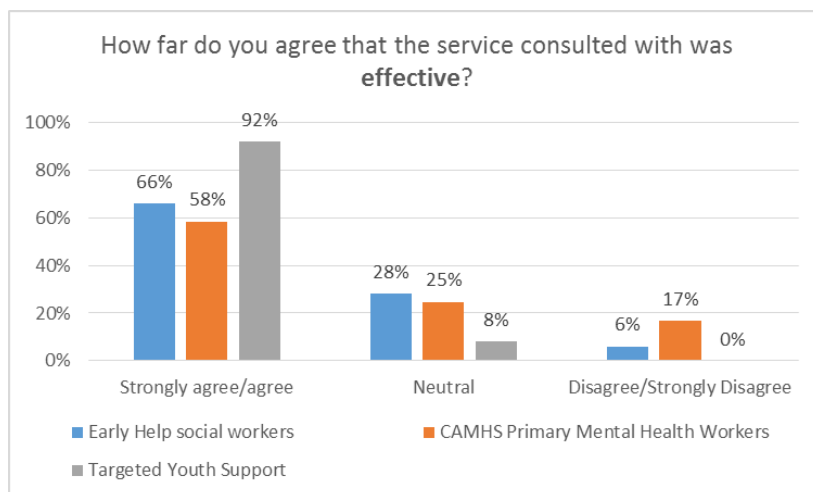
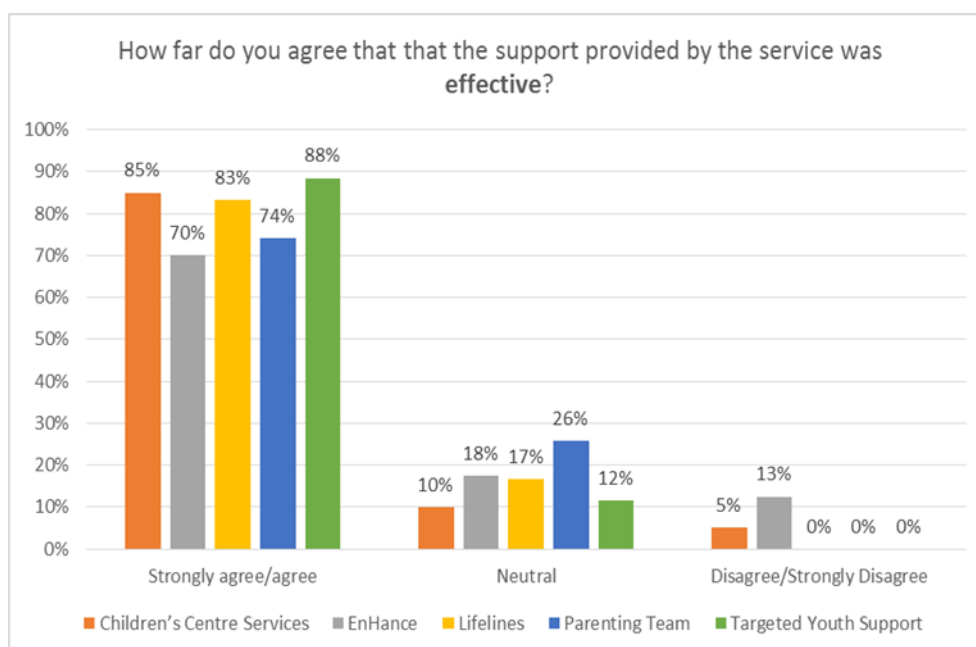


Chart 6: Effectiveness of support provided by early help targeted services



Theme 3: Early Help Leadership, governance and management

Positive findings

- The peer review found that early help locality partnerships work well and there is evidence of partnership commitment to early help. There is a broad range of in house and commissioned early help services in response to need and good evidence of early help provision and activity.
- The large majority of practitioners (68%) feel that their manager provides them with effective, quality supervision and management oversight for their early help cases.
- Training:

- The large majority of practitioners (72%) felt they had access to effective training and/or learning opportunities to support them in providing early help support.
- The majority of practitioners (56%) have had training in domestic abuse in the last 3 years.
- Overall, practitioners are confident in recognising and addressing children’s needs for early help arising from domestic abuse (average score of 7.1 on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being not confident and 10 being very confident)
- Practitioners were fairly confident in recognising and addressing needs for early help arising from parental mental ill health and parental substance misuse (average score of 6.3 on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being not confident and 10 being very confident)

4.0 Shropshire early help effectiveness: areas for improvement 2016/2017

Using the findings from the Effectiveness Report and implementation of the Strengthening Families through Early Help Strategy the following are recommendations for **improvements in early help**:

Theme 1: Outcomes for children, parents and families: areas for improvement

- Use the Strengthening Families through early help whole family assessment and whole family action plan to improve the measurement of outcomes and sustained progress.
- Review the closure summary to ensure clear monitoring of reasons for closure and outcomes, ensuring clear processes are in place for cases that end without positive outcomes
- Ensure there is a consistent and good quality offer of early help assessment, planning, intervention and review, where it is safe to do so, before referrals to social care are made.
- As part of the commissioning cycle develop a more consistent reporting and monitoring system to apply across all commissioning arrangements to improve measurement of sustainability and progress.

What we will do to achieve this?

- Implementation of the E-CINS system as the multi-agency case management system for early help
- Implementation of the whole family approach, including whole family assessment and action plan
- Confirm and implement the Shropshire Targeted Early Help Performance Framework and develop reporting of the relevant management information for evaluation.
- Continue the use of multi-agency case file auditing of early help cases to monitor and improve quality of recording and interventions.
- Working the Commissioning Support Unit, develop the reporting framework for commissioned services.

Theme 2: The right support at the right time: areas for improvement

- Review and reduce where needed waiting times for early help targeted services and ensure families' needs are prioritised and managed during waiting times.
- Further improve the quality of early help assessment (with use of the whole family Webstar), in particular ensuring the voice of the child is heard.
- Increase the number of early help plans where there is evidence of continued multiagency liaison, high quality case recording and regular reviewing in place.
- Improve the quality of plans, in particular regarding being SMART and child-focussed.
- Enable improved use of early help performance information (including an agreed early help performance framework and required management information) to ensure robust strategic and operation oversight, in order to:
 - Effectively monitor practice, performance, work flow and work load
 - Evidence service case outcomes and impact
 - Establish effective processes for evaluating the overall impact of early help, including how early help mitigates demand for higher level interventions
 - Inform commissioning

What we will do to achieve this?

- Develop a set of quality standards for early help targeted services that include expectations around communication and early intervention
- Set targets for reductions in waiting times for these are necessary.
- Implementation of the learning and development plan for Strengthening Families across Shropshire (modular training programme)
- Confirm and implement the Shropshire Targeted Early Help Performance Framework and develop reporting of the relevant management information for evaluation.
- Audits: confirm multi-agency schedule particularly focusing on participation of service users, hearing the voice of the child, and ensuring children and young people are represented throughout early help support and feedback learning session to a multi-agency audience

Theme 3: Leadership, governance and management Area for Improvement

- Develop the understanding and collaboration of joint commissioners.
- Increase access to early help training.
- Increase availability of supervision and management oversight for early help cases, particularly in relation to schools.

What we will do to achieve this?

- Develop the understanding and collaboration of joint commissioners through work with appropriate level multi-agency groups and the use of the Early Help Needs Assessment
- Promote and support the take up of professionals to training for early help including ensuring that training is available and taken up in relation to parental mental ill health and parental substance misuse.
- Review and understand the impact and actions if necessary to increase availability of supervision and management oversight for early help cases, particularly in relation to schools.

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