

**Luton**

**Luton Borough  
Council**

**Early Help Strategy**

**2017-2020**

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<b>Summary of Purpose</b>	<p>The aim of the strategy is to support all partners to work in a co-ordinated way to use their resources most effectively to meet the needs of children and families at an early stage.</p> <p>The Strategy explains what is meant by Early Help, identifies the local needs of children and families in Luton, sets out the priorities for service development, and describes the process by which services will be planned, commissioned and delivered.</p>
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<b>Accessibility</b>	This document can be made available in large print, or in electronic format. There are no copies currently available in other languages
<b>Equalities Impact Assessment</b>	During the preparation of this protocol, care has been taken to promote fairness, equality and diversity in the services delivered under the terms of the Equality Act (2010) regardless of disability, ethnic origin, race, gender, age, religious belief or sexual orientation. These issues have been addressed in the protocol by the application of an impact assessment checklist.
<b>Circulation Restrictions</b>	Public Policy Document

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## **Luton Borough Council**

### **Early Help strategy**

#### **What is early help?**

Early help for children and families means providing support early on, before or as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in the child's life from the antenatal period and birth through to the teenage years.

It is not just about the early years and applies to a wide range of problems, issues and risks affecting the lives of children, young people and their families.

Early help is about agencies acting together to prevent escalation of need by intervening at the right time and the right level of service. It aims to prevent or reduce the need for specialist interventions such as child protection and intensive physical and mental health services.

#### **Background and current context**

The need to develop early help services was emphasised in the influential report by Frank Field MP 'The Foundation Years: Preventing poor children becoming poor adults' (2010).

*This report states "We have found overwhelming evidence that children's life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first 5 years of life. It is family background, parental education, good parenting and the opportunities for learning and development in those crucial years that together matter more to children than money, in determining whether their potential is realised in adult life"*

This agenda was widened to include early intervention for all ages of children and young people by the report from Graham Allen MP 'Early Intervention: The Next Steps' (HM Government 2011). The Wave Trust '1001 Critical Days' emphasises the importance of the very early years of life making the most significant difference to a child's life chances.

The critical importance of multiagency Early Help was strongly emphasised in the pivotal report by Professor Eileen Munro's Review of Child Protection (2010). This led to its inclusion in government guidance, in particular Working Together 2015. Chapter 1 of this document stipulates that professionals across local agencies, including those in universal services should understand their role in identifying emerging problems and share information appropriately to support early identification and assessment of children and their families. In Luton, the Early Help Assessment is the established process to identify and assess the needs of children and their families who may benefit from early help services... Alongside this the Framework for the Inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers includes those for whom a preventative

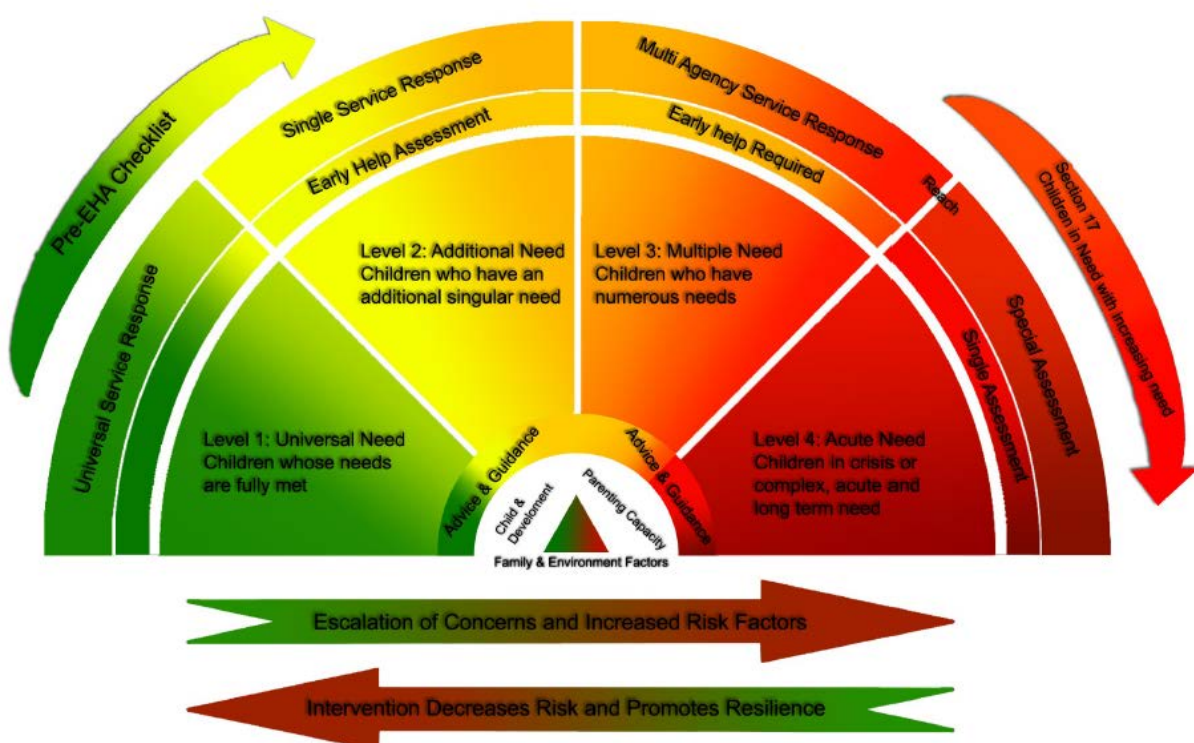
service would reduce the likelihood of that risk of harm escalating and reduce the need for statutory intervention.

Learning from serious case reviews also indicates the points at which early intervention could help reduce risks. The learning is as important for children known to universal and early help services, where they do not see a social worker, as for children with known child protection risks.

### Early Help in Luton

The Luton Thresholds Framework (Meeting the Needs of Children and Families in Luton) underpins our local vision to provide targeted support services at the earliest opportunity. It aims to offer a clear framework and common understanding of thresholds of need for practitioners across all agencies and promote a shared awareness of the different interventions required to effectively support children, young people and their families or carers. The Thresholds Framework promotes a model of intervention which reflects four levels of need (see Diagram 1 Windscreen Threshold Model below). This Threshold Model provides for a common continuum of need, with a clear ‘step up, step down’ pathway across four levels: Universal Need (no unmet needs); Additional needs (can be met by single services); Intensive needs (complex needs) and Specialist needs (safeguarding needs). The intention of this approach is to maximise resources and joint work, ensuring that in doing so we are targeting our interventions at those most in need and at the earliest point of need in order to reduce the number of children and families requiring specialist services.

Diagram 1 Windscreen Threshold Model:



### **The Stronger Families programme**

The government supported Troubled Families programme has built on this foundation for multiagency working. Phase 2 of the programme (2015-2020) is a five-year Payment by Results (PBR) initiative to turn round the lives of 1940 households in Luton. The programme encourages services to work in a new way for families with multiple problems; taking an integrated, whole family approach i.e. not looking at individuals or individual problems, but at the family as an entity: with overlapping, connected problems and histories and work with these families in such a way as to reduce demand for costly reactive services.

In Luton, the Prevention & Early Intervention Service has embedded its Stronger Family Programme within its Early Help & Advice Hub. The Hub was developed in September 2015 to coordinate and deliver an early help response to Luton families at Levels 2 and 3 in line with the Luton Thresholds Framework. Families in need of Level 2 services identified through an Early Help Assessment (EHA) receive coordinated support via the 'team around the family' (TAF) approach, while those identified at Level 3 receive intensive support from an Early Help Team Family Support Worker. This whole family model of working is embedded as 'business as usual' across the Early Help team.

LBC is charged within the National Troubled Family Programme Financial Framework to demonstrate an integrated approach to service delivery across relevant local public service partners, particularly for high demand and costly families. This involves securing the engagement of partners at strategic and operational levels, brokering information and data sharing arrangements, undertaking workforce reform and being able to demonstrate the fiscal benefits of the Luton Stronger Families Programme and to whom that benefit accrues.

### **The Flying Start Programme**

Flying Start is a partnership between the Luton Borough Council together with the Pre-school Learning Alliance and its partners, communities and parents, whom together are committed to delivering the Flying Start vision and strategy. Flying Start aims to improve outcomes for children from pregnancy to their 5th birthday as a foundation to a healthy future. The programme is built on national and international evidence of the absolute importance of the very early years of life starting from pregnancy in determining a child's future outcomes.

Flying Start outcomes are by the end of 10 years:

1. Significantly more children, by their 5th birthday, will have age-appropriate communication skills, will interact effectively with adults and children, resulting in better educational outcomes and improved employment opportunities.
2. More children are securely attached and emotionally resilient, with improved school readiness. In the longer term the impact of poor maternal mental health & associated risk factors on children's outcomes are reduced.

3. Babies will have improved birth outcomes; with fewer women obese in pregnancy, improved understanding of nutrition and healthy behaviours, breastfeeding will be increased and fewer children are obese or have dental decay, with improved health and wellbeing into adulthood.

Within 5 years:

Parent and community-led decision making will positively and systematically change the lives and life chances of 0-5 year olds for future generations. During the period, Flying Start Executive aims to reallocate linked investment from core budgets into sustainable evidence based early intervention programmes and programmes for future parents.

Children centres were remodelled in early 2017 and come “in house” to Luton Borough Council and are now called Flying Start Children Centres; they are the delivery arm of the Flying Start Strategy. Within the Flying Start Strategy, Children Centres are working closely with Health Visiting Services to offer parents an integrated service whereby Children Centres provide non clinical elements of the Healthy Child Programme. Each Flying Start Children Centre delivers services (Flying Start Core Offer including a wide range of parenting programmes) across four neighbourhoods, namely North, West, Central and South.

Prevention and Early Help across the whole community

Despite the emphasis on these two major projects above, which are focused on specific families and communities, it is important not to forget that the Early Help applies to all communities, children and families in Luton who need intervention at certain stages in their lives. The strategy considers the issues for all vulnerable families and populations including their social, economic, and medical and health needs; and places integrated approaches and joint work at its centre.

Our strategy will continue to aspire towards improved outcomes for children and young people *across the spectrum* of need (above) by embedding such universal services as providers of early years education and childcare, working with relevant health and other partners in an integrated and whole-system approach to enable early identification and timely intervention. The principle of ‘progressive universalism’ (DfES, 2005) is helpful in this respect, as it sets out an approach of providing support for all, with more intensive and specialist support for those who most need it. To this end, both universal and targeted services are central to Early Help, and should be linked so that one aim of universal services should be to identify those who need additional support.

To this end, we will continue to make early help central to the work of professionals in mainstream services- e.g. family workers in schools, school nurses, health visitors and GPs, the police - who can play a part in offering support and advice to children with additional needs; responding to early indicators to reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour or

criminal behaviour or family breakdown; targeting young people most at risk to engage in positive activities and raise their aspirations.

### **Parenting Support and Strategy**

The Delivery Framework for Parenting Support in Luton is set within the framework of the Early Help Strategy and is driven by a set of overarching outcomes that build on the outcomes frameworks developed for the purposes of both the Flying Start and the Stronger Families programmes

Referrals for parenting support for parents/carers of children aged 0- 5yrs are submitted through Flying Start which has operational level performance management responsibility. Targeted parenting support for parents/carers of children and young people aged 11yrs to 18 years open to the Early Help team is managed through the Luton Youth Offending Service Take 3 parenting programme. Universal parenting services are facilitated through the Family Information Service, Children Centres and Health Services.

### **SEN reform**

The Children and Families Act 2014 details the legislative framework for a radical overhaul of the system supporting children and young people with SEN and disabilities. The implementation framework in Luton for this reform brings together a wide range of organisations including the local authority, schools, colleges, early years providers, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), community and parent groups. Key principles for delivery include:

- The development of the Local Offer, setting out in one place information on provision the local authority expects to be available to children and young people with SEN and disabilities;
- The introduction of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans, which will replace statements of special educational needs and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs);
- Collaboration between education, health and social care services in commissioning support for children and young people with SEN or disabilities;
- Personal budgets, to reflect the holistic nature of an EHC plan and can include funding for special educational, health and social care provision.

The **Luton Children and Young People's Trust** vision 'to put in place prevention and early intervention to ensure that babies, children and young people in Luton are supported to be safe, healthy and successful' is underpinned by the Luton Children and Young People's Plan which has established four priority outcomes:

- Keeping children and young people safe and secure
- Building strong and supportive families
- Improving children's and young people's health and well-being
- Raising the aspirations of children and young people to raise the attainment and achievement



## **Demographic and deprivation indicators**

According to the 2011 Census measured the population of Luton to be 203,200 of which 101,900 are male and 101,300 are female.

The 2001 Census estimated the population of Luton to be 184,400, so the population of Luton has increased by 18,800 people in ten years, an increase of 10%. Nationally the population rose by 7%.

However the Luton 2015 Mid- Year Population Estimate the population of Luton is now 214,700, an increase of 3700 between 2014 and 2015 which is a growth rate of 1.8 %. This is faster than the national growth rate of 0.8%, and Luton has a younger population than the national average. The population has risen by 8,900 since 2012, an increase of 4% in 3 years

### **Population turnover**

Children and families who move frequently can be at particular risk of not accessing services that they need. For those already socially excluded, moving frequently can worsen the effects of their exclusion. The 2011 census showed that there were 3,300 children aged <18 (around 6%) who had moved address within Luton during the previous year.

In terms of new arrivals to the area, 2,186 people aged <19 came to live in Luton from a different local authority in the UK and 2,711 left to live elsewhere in 2012. There were 645 migrants aged <19 who moved into Luton from a non-UK location and 113 left Luton to live abroad.

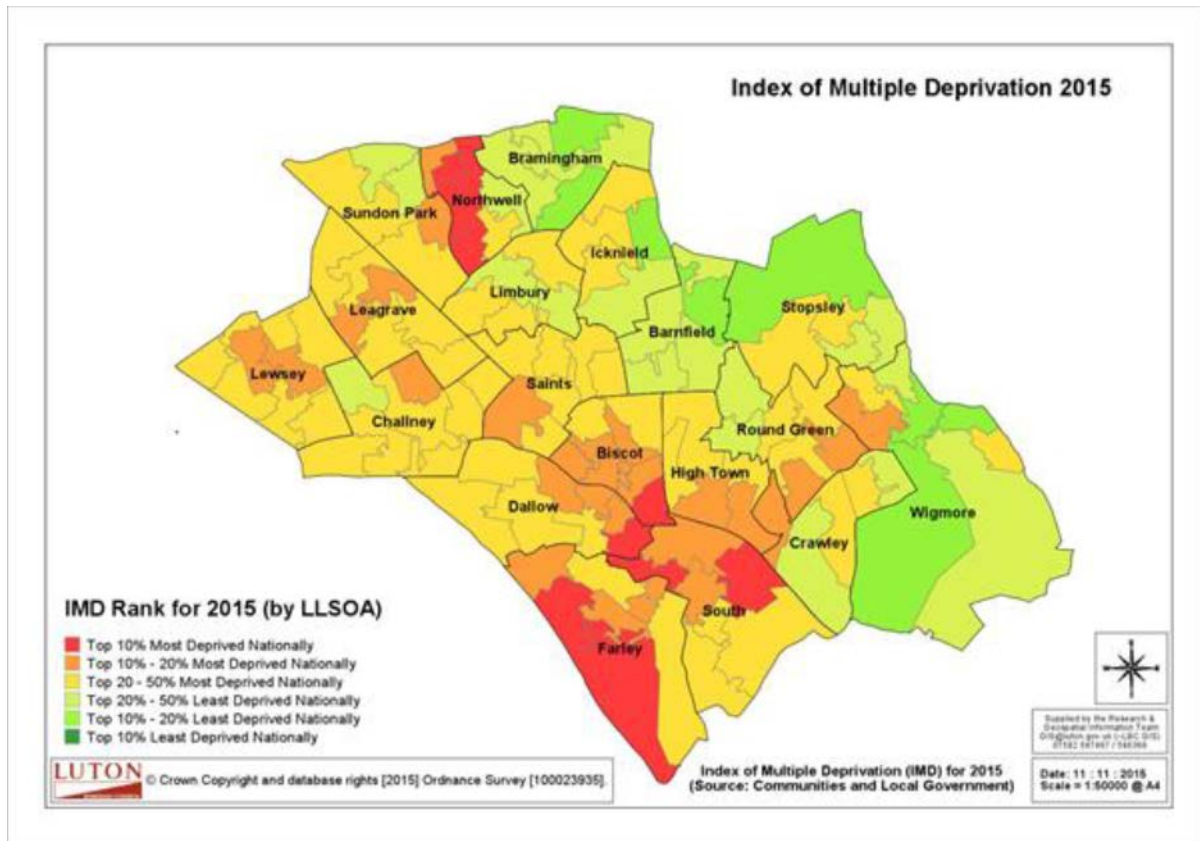
The latest population projections for the child population in Luton by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) suggests that the population aged <18 years will increase by 10% by 2020 (5,000 more children) and 20% by 2037 (10,000 more children).

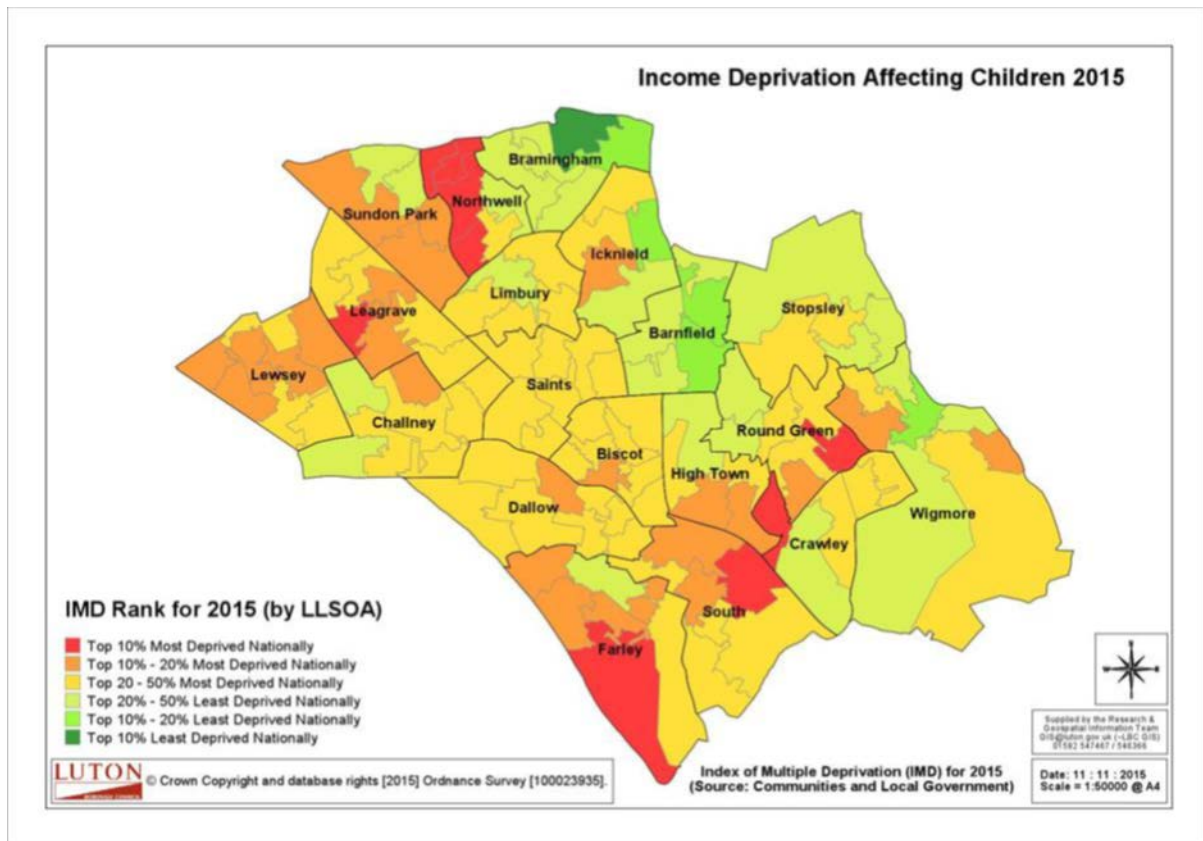
Luton is very ethnically diverse. The latest school census, 2014, showed that 72% of the school population were in an ethnic group other than white British. The school census also shows that 51.5% of primary school pupils and 47.0% of secondary school pupils have a first language which is known or believed to be other than English. This does not mean that these children cannot speak English well as the vast majority of these children will be multi-lingual. The 2011 census showed that 5.4% of the Luton population (aged 3+) indicated in the census that they cannot speak English or cannot speak it well. Luton is one of only twelve local authorities in England with more than 5% on this measure and one of only three outside of London.

### **Deprivation**

The 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) were published in September 2015. Luton is ranked as the 59th (out of 326) most deprived local authority. In 2010 Luton was ranked as the 69th most deprived local authority in 2007 as the 87st (out of 354 authorities) and in 2004 the 101st most deprived local authority. This indicates that Luton is becoming relatively more deprived in comparison to the other local authorities of England and the trend of has been happening since 2004.

Luton has nine output areas in the top ten per cent most deprived areas in the country. Three of these are in Northwell, two in Farley and South wards and one in Biscot and Dallow wards. Luton highest deprivation rankings are in the crime (24th) and Barriers to Housing and Services (15th) indicators.





Our local data denotes that there are approximately 57,500 young people aged 0-18 living in Luton, this is about 27.5% of the total population of 203,000 (Census, 2011)

These factors increase the need for early help services in Luton.

### 5.1 Luton specific issues

A number of specific reports have been commissioned to address issues of concern in Luton. Key findings from these reviews are summarised:

The **LBC bullying survey 2009** identified that 35% of children reported being bullied in school, and 19% bullied out of school.

The **Luton Youth Violence Review (January 2014)** identified key themes associated with youth violence:

1. Early exclusion from school
2. Exclusion for violent behaviour
3. Low educational attainment
4. Family history of criminality / violence
5. Experience of domestic violence
6. Early drug use (12y or younger)

**The Gangs Profile: Luton Community Safety Partnership (2012)** identified that characteristics of victims of gang related offending are similar to the offenders. Violence and intimidation is a common theme in the way gangs operate and a common feature is lack of education and employment. Over half of all gang related offenders have been excluded from school on at least one occasion. Gang members are from the same groups of young people, live in specific confined areas and offend in their own localities (as well as the town centre). North and West Luton have seen substantial increases in violence from young offenders.

### **Delivering Early Help Services**

Luton is committed to a whole system approach to the delivery of early help, recognising a need for universal services accessible to all, through to specialist services to address more complex issues.

### **Elements of the model**

- Universal services will support all children to achieve their full potential and will work with partners to support families to access service appropriate to their needs.
- Early Help is not separate from universal or higher level statutory services and is used to 'step up' or 'step down' according to level of need and risk.
- All agencies are committed to identification of a need for early help services. Integration and joint work across services and agencies is central to early help, to ensure that children and families are supported as early as possible through a multi-agency approach.
- An Early Help Assessment (EHA) is used as the first point of contact by all parents and professionals to identify and understand additional needs which cannot be met by universal services. When an EHA is completed it is submitted to the Early Help & Advice Hub for allocation decision making in line with the Luton Thresholds Framework.
- Children, young people and families are key partners and should be involved and consulted at every stage.
- Information sharing between agencies should support integrated processes and inform joint commissioning.
- Services should be reviewed and evaluated to make sure they address needs. Commissioned services should provide information on outcomes achieved.

## **Priorities for Early Help in Luton**

Key priorities for early help in Luton have been established through:

- The Luton Children & Young People's Plan
- The Luton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- The Flying Start Strategy
- The Luton Stronger Families Programme and Outcomes Plan

## **Working together to implement the Early Help strategy**

Successful implementation will require a strategic commitment to working collaboratively from all agencies and will build on Luton's existing partnerships across the statutory, voluntary and community sector. The community and voluntary groups are at the heart of service delivery for youth work and support for disabled children. The Stronger Families programme brings together schools, health, social care, youth offending service and the police to turn around some of Luton's most troubled families. Partnerships across youth offending and youth work services, probation, police, community safety, the community and voluntary sector, and safeguarding / social workers are central to preventing serious youth violence and tackling gangs. Partnerships with schools enable early help and safeguarding of those young people at risk. By working better together, community health services, mental health service, children centres and social care will align their information and systems so that families only need to tell their story once; and will deliver a more integrated and public health focused service.

We will ensure joint planning and commissioning of services to target priorities and meet agreed outcomes including Family Group Conferencing services. There will be an ongoing commitment to the continued use of the EHA and other core processes including information sharing, monitoring and service review. The momentum developed by Flying Start will be developed to harness funding from social finance and investment, and realigned statutory monies to redirect resources into prevention and early help. In addition, a key driver behind delivery of this Early Help Strategy is the 'service transformation' requirements stipulated by the Troubled Families Programme; whereby a whole family approach to early intervention is the norm by the time the programme finishes in 2020. We will seek to prove through our data collection and analysis that 'getting it right' early on is not only a good thing for children and families, but is also an economic and sustainable use of money and resources.

Communication will be essential – both with children and families so that they can inform the way in which services are developed and with all partners to promote understanding of thresholds and knowledge of all services which can be accessed. Involving families, local

communities and local professionals in decision making will positively and systematically change the lives and life chances of children in Luton for future generations.

### **Governance**

Performance against the Luton Early Help Strategy is overseen by the Children's Trust Board.

Although responsibility for improving outcomes lies with the individual organisations working with children, young people and families, the Luton Children's Trust's primary focus is to drive that improvement, through identifying opportunities and removing barriers.

### **How will we know we are making a difference?**

Our aim is that children, young people and families are supported when they need help and avoid the need for more intensive statutory interventions.

Our challenge now is to ensure that our early help activities continue to improve, are operated consistently across agencies, and are taken forward as a well-managed programme including performance measures, monitoring and assessment of cost-benefit. To this end we will implement Luton's new performance framework that captures and reports impact on outcomes for children and their families, and informs evidence-based commissioning.

The following measures will be monitored:

- Increase in number of EHAs completed by a range of partners
- Reduction in number of children subject of CP Plans as a result of poor mental health, DV and substance misuse
- Numbers of disabled children supported through short breaks and who do not come into care
- Reduction in bullying statistics
- Improved school attendance
- Reduction in persistent absenteeism and school exclusions
- Improvement in attainment at key stages of education and at gcse
- Raising the Participation Age (RPA)
- Reduction in young people NEET
- Reduction in gang related offending
- Reduction in involvement in extremist groups
- Reduced anti-social behaviour
- Increased engagement in work / training for families
- Increased number of integrated health, education and social care plans for children with disability or additional needs

The Early Help & Advice Hub is responsible for working with providers of commissioned services to monitor outcomes, through a framework of data, output and outcome based performance information, and information from consultation with children, young people, families and practitioners. This is essential for the targeted development of Early Help commissioned services, evaluation of effectiveness and ensuring the most cost effective approach to securing the desired outcomes for children and families in Luton. This monitoring process will provide information to inform future commissioning decisions, so that they are made strategically, on the basis of need, alongside partners and after consideration of options.