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Forward

This Strategy sets out the vision and strategic priorities for Helping Families Early in Surrey for the period 2020 to 2023.

“Providing early help is more effective than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as possible as a problem emerges at any point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can also prevent further problems arising; for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care, or in families where there are emerging parental mental health issues or drug and alcohol misuse.”

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

This document brings together the key components of how as a partnership we help families early in Surrey now and our strategy for the future. We believe we can help families by building on their strengths, forming relationships and connecting families to their communities. We know that getting help at the right time in the right way can prevent poor outcomes for children and families. The strategy is a call to action, as a partnership we are all ‘helping families early’ and we can help each other to do this by having an effective partnership strategy that brings together the key action that will make most difference to the lives of children in Surrey. Together we have put the foundations in place to now build on in the next phase that helps families early over the next 3 years.



Our Vision – Family Resilience

In Surrey, we all believe that every child should have the opportunity to reach their potential and that children are best supported to grow and achieve within their own families.

Parents and carers are usually the best people to understand their child's needs. Asking for help should be seen as a sign of parents being responsible and not of failure. Parents say that support works well when they are respected and listened to by those working with them.

In the majority of cases, it should be the decision of the parents when to ask for help or advice but there are occasions when those working with children and families may need to assertively engage parents to help them to resolve problems

By working together, we will develop flexible services which are responsive to children's and families' needs and provide the right level of help at the right time. This will shift focus away from managing short-term crisis, towards effective help and support for children, young people and their families at an earlier stage.

Family Resilience means that:

- Parents and/or care-givers feel supported to provide stable, consistent and appropriate care for their families.
- Children and young people achieve their education goals.
- Young people are equipped with the skills and attitudes to join the workforce and overcome barriers to employability.
- Children and young people achieve the best possible physical and mental health.
- Children and young people are safe and feel safe.

Principles of Family Resilience:

- Timely intervention - dealing with problems as soon as they arise and before they escalate. Wherever possible all children's and families' needs will be met by universal services.
- Integrated working - children, young people and families receive support for all of their needs through a single offer. We will offer tangible support to help families find their own sustainable solutions. Once improvement is made services will reduce or end so as not to create dependence and to be available to help other families.
- Flexible pathway and tools - that recognises children and young people will move between different levels of need as their needs and circumstances change. As soon as any practitioner is aware that a child may have additional needs they will talk to that child and their family and offer advice and guidance to meet that need.



- Participation and co-design - with children, young people and their families. Our core aim is to build resilience in children and families and the capacity to overcome their own difficulties for the remainder of their lives.
- Early help is everyone's responsibility – it requires everyone to work together to put the child or young person at the centre of everything they do to meet their needs and improve outcomes. Families will be supported and empowered to identify their own problems, needs and solutions. In most cases, outcomes for children will be improved by supporting and assisting parents/carers to make changes.

Principles and Ambition for Helping Families Early in Partnership

We are committed to the following principles which inform the way we work with children and families:

We will:

- Empower families to take responsibility by working with them, not doing things to or for them.
- Recognise that family, friends and community can be the most effective and sustainable forces of “help”.
- Enable support at the right time, in the right place, in the right way.
- Work in partnership to make best use of shared resource, skills and knowledge
- Embrace a strengths based, whole-family approach to finding sustainable solutions.
- Build our work on an evidence informed approach.
- Understand the power of good communications both with families and with colleagues.

Our Ambition

What children and young people can expect from the partnership helping early strategy:

- I will feel safe, valued and respected.
- I am recognised as an individual and am free from any discrimination.
- I will be at the centre of all decisions and will only need to tell my story once.
- My voice will be heard and will influence the planning of help and services.
- It will be understood that things that have happened to me might affect me at different times in my life, when I might need some extra support.

What parents, carers and families can expect:

- I am recognised as an individual, who has unique characteristics and needs, and am free from discrimination.
- The diverse needs of all of my family are recognised.
- My views and opinions are listened to.
- I am encouraged and empowered to support my family.



knowledge of the support that is available to families to help families build resilience and relationships within their communities.

Targeted Support

Whilst most of the needs of children and families can be met by universal services and providing help early some families need a number of different services and a coordinated response to meet their needs. Surrey County Council has remodelled its targeted services to meet the needs of children across the age range to provide comprehensive and seamless support when it is needed.

- The Family Centres are now located in communities where they are more likely to be needed, have extended their age range and now support families with children aged 0-11 years, prioritised the outreach worker role to support families in their homes and local communities.
- The Family Support Programme (FSP) previously funded through the National Troubled Families Programme has now been fully incorporated into the Family Resilience model and provides targeted support for families with children aged 5-18
- The new Targeted Youth Support (TYS) Teams work with young people (aged 12plus) and their families to reduce the need for statutory intervention. FSP and TYS deliver interventions that support young people who are at risk of offending, exploitation and serious youth violence.
- Our response to safeguarding young people has been strengthened with the creation of Safeguarding Adolescent Teams working with the most vulnerable young people whose needs meet the statutory threshold for a Child in Need of Help or Protection.

These services are allocated directly by a request for support through the Children's Single Point of Access. In most cases these services will take the lead practitioner role and add value to existing services already engaged with the family and develop a plan with the family and other agencies to build on family strengths and increase resilience.

Early Help Commissioning

The services helping families in communities have been recommissioned to create lead providers in each district and borough to provide level 2 support for 0-19 years providing opportunities for local community and voluntary organisations to work together. To access these services there is no need to contact C-SPA and families can access the support directly in their local communities.



Early Help Assessment, plans and engagement

The Early Help Assessment should support practice and how we engage with children, young people and families. Not all families need an early help assessment to receive help and, in many services, they already have their own tools to support and engage families. However, when multiple agencies are needed to provide the help that is needed and in particular targeted services an Early Help Assessment should be used. A multi-agency task and finish group has reviewed the existing Early Help Assessment to ensure it is effective at supporting practice and engagement with families. Further work is now planned to review the accompanying guidance and training to support practitioners.

Family Resilience Networks

Providing help to families cannot be achieved by any single agency alone and requires effective working together. The range of panels and boards that have been used in Surrey have not always made an impact on improving outcomes for families and a fresh approach is needed so that collectively we know our communities and the opportunities for working together to meet the profile of need locally. The new Family Resilience Networks will be facilitated by the Quadrant Assistant Director from Surrey County Council and will:

- Bring together a network of service representatives to establish a collective understanding of the lived experience of children and families in each quadrant of the county
- Work together to connect the network of support available for children and families to provided help early and improve their life chances
- Share best practice, skills and resources
- Identify opportunities for collaboration, innovation and joint commissioning.

Parenting Strategy

Parenting Coordinators have been appointed to develop and co-ordinate our parenting offer in each quadrant. Working across the partnership they will work closely with a wide range of different services that will contribute to the delivery of an evidenced based approach to parenting support programmes. The range of programmes will cover the all ages, Early Help, Targeted and Specialist Services. The parenting offer will include groups that can be accessed by self-referral and more specific groups that can be accessed through a request for support.

Other Transformation Strands

Helping Families Early is a key component of a number of different transformation strands and strategies including:



- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- First 1000 Days
- Public health approach to serious youth violence

Each one of these important strategies have at their core the ambition to help families early and prevent the need for late and often high cost intervention. The priorities within this strategy will complement these and other transformation stands by focussing on the call to action priorities that builds an effective workforce, access to support and evidence impact and outcomes.

Helping Families Early Priorities – A call to action 2020-2023



Need

Understanding the diverse needs of children young people, families and the workforce



Information

Access to information, advice, guidance, support and signposting within the local community



Response

Effective partnership response, responsibility and accountability



Practice

Co-ordinated planning and provision of support



Impact

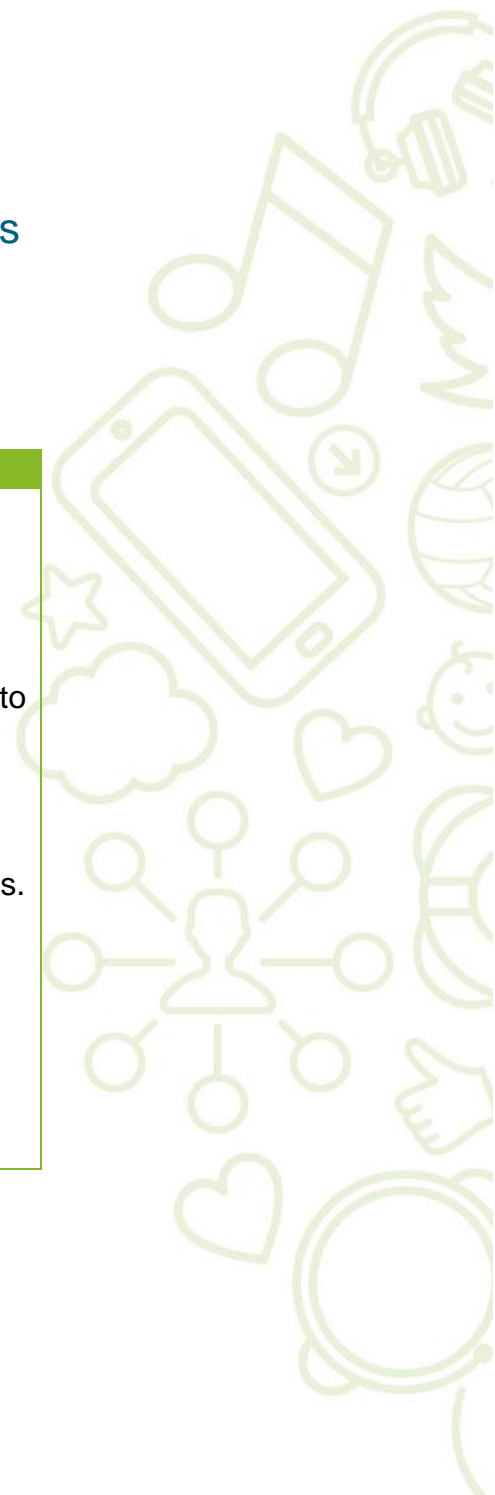
Demonstrating a positive impact on the lives of children, young people and families

Actions and Outcomes

Priority 1 - Understanding of the diverse needs of children, young people and families and the workforce

Timely identification of need by partners and communities to prevent problems before they develop, or at the earliest possible stage. Having conversations with families, building on their capacity and empowering them to support their children and young people to achieve positive outcomes.

Key Actions	How will we know we are successful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce Family Resilience Network Forums in each quadrant facilitated by Surrey County Council• Develop a clearer understanding of the impact of trauma on children, parents and carers.• Embed a strength based, person-centred, solution focused way of working.• Share good practice across partners on ways of empowering families and building resilience.• Ensure that, when appropriate, Early Help plans are in place, shared with families and informed by an assessment of need.• Recognise that a wide range of factors may be impacting families (e.g. debt, housing).• Strengthen information sharing mechanisms between partner agencies.• Develop the use of data to support the identification of need and design of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service users report joined up and coordinated support focussed on their needs and strengths.• Practitioners understand protected characteristics and their impact on the likelihood of need.• Family resilience is increased and the capacity to help families find their own solutions is enhanced.• Partners have access to the information they need to effectively work together and have access to advice and support from professionals.• Practitioners are trauma aware and trauma informed



- Implement the Helping Families Early Strategy for families, with key partner agencies understanding their role and accountability for the delivery of services.
- Include outcomes for Helping Families Early in commissioned contracts and consider joint commissioning of services across partner agencies.
- Produce a three-year Helping Families Early action plan.
- Map essential and desired skills, training and provision of training across partners.
- Guidance and training are developed by the partnership to support practice
- Helping Families Early Champions are developed across the partnership with a focus on culture and behaviours
- Partners include information about what help has already taken place if a request for support is made through the C-SPA.

- Helping Families Early is referenced in partnership strategies and action plans.
- Core competences for Helping Families Early are agreed across partners.
- Practitioners and managers across the partnership access good quality, relevant training.
- Families report that their experience of help has been well coordinated.

Priority 4 - Coordinated planning and provision of support.

Services and provision are planned, wherever possible, to be based within communities, making the most of local resources and delivering support at the most local level. All groups and ages, including adolescents and those with mental health needs, have been considered in planning. Smooth transitions are planned at key points in a child/young person’s life, including transition to adulthood, between services, between school/settings and between professionals

Key Actions	How will we know we are successful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the future scope of the Early Help Hub and pathways to Targeted Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case audits and comments from families demonstrate family centric and community-based actions.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure coherence with the SEND transformation and Local Offer in relation to Helping Families Early. • Develop the Youth Offer to help young people at risk of exploitation and serious youth violence • Identify the help for children, young people and families with emotional and mental health needs. • Provide opportunities for service users to participate and be involved in decision making regarding new and existing services. • Develop innovative ways of working that draw on local knowledge and experience and respond to the changing demographics in communities. • Develop and embed smooth transfers between schools and settings at key transition points. • Develop and agree a Parenting Strategy to support the delivery of Helping Families Early 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, young people and families report seamless transitions between services, practitioners and localities. • Services are family-focussed, working with children, young people and their families and involving them in service planning to meet their needs. • Families report that they experience timely access to services and prompt delivery of agreed actions. • There is reduction in the level of demand for specialist services. • A comprehensive parenting offer is in place across the partnership
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Priority 6 - Demonstrate a positive impact on the lives of children, young people and families.

Outcome measures evaluate progress in achieving outcomes and capture sustainable change. Outcomes demonstrate that services are effective and make a difference to the lives of children, young people and families. Outcome measures include feedback from children, young people and families.

Key Actions	How will we know we are successful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree and implement an outcomes framework to monitor the impact for the child, young person or family ('distance travelled'). • Agree a data set and key performance indicators to measure the impact of Early Help. • Develop feedback from service users so that it is integral to service planning, informs performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All partners have methods of regularly seeking service user feedback. • Service users are confident that their views are used to inform decisions about their support and about the structure of service provision. • Children, young people and families are satisfied with and positively endorse the help and support they receive.



Appendix A

The Statutory Basis for Early Help

'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' sets out the statutory guidance for Local Authorities and their partners.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Chapter 1 paragraphs 1 to 16 sets out the statutory guidance in relation to:

- Identifying children and families who would benefit from Early Help
- Effective assessment of the need for Early Help.
- Provision of effective Early Help services
- Accessing help and services

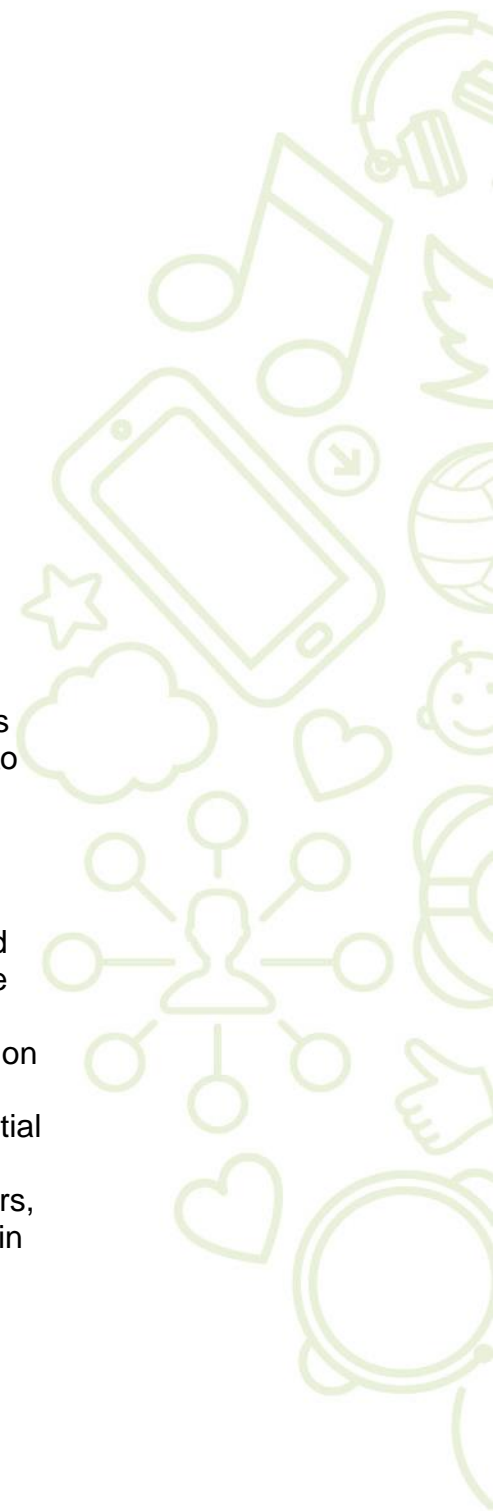
Paragraph extracts from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018:

1. Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early Help can also prevent further problems arising; for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care, or in families where there are emerging parental mental health issues or drug and alcohol misuse.

2. Effective Early Help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to: identify children and families who would benefit from Early Help, undertake an assessment of the need for Early Help, provide targeted Early Help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child.

3. Local authorities, under section 10 of the Children Act, have a responsibility to promote inter-agency co-operation to improve the welfare of all children. Identifying children and families who would benefit from Early Help.

4. Local organisations and agencies should have in place effective ways to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs of individual children and families. Local authorities should work with organisations and agencies to develop joined-up Early Help services based on a clear understanding of local needs. This requires all practitioners, including those in universal services and those providing services to adults with children, to understand their role in identifying emerging problems and to share information with other practitioners to support early identification and assessment.



6. Practitioners should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for Early Help for a child who: is disabled and has specific additional needs; has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan); is a young carer; is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour; is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home; is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation; is at risk of being radicalised or exploited; is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse; is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves; has returned home to their family from care; is a privately fostered child.

11. The provision of Early Help services should form part of a continuum of support to respond to the different levels of need of individual children and families.

12. Local areas should have a comprehensive range of effective, evidence-based services in place to address assessed needs early.... Services may also focus on improving family functioning and building the family's own capability to solve problems. This should be done within a structured, evidence-based framework involving regular view to ensure that real progress is being made.

[Keeping children safe in education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges September 2018](#)

Statutory guidance for schools and colleges in relation to Early Help is set out in paragraphs 6, 7 and 27

Paragraph extracts from Keeping children safe in education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges September 2018:

6. School and college staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.

7. All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn and all staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Early Help.

27. If Early Help is appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an Early Help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care for assessment for statutory services, if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.



Appendix B

The Evidence Base for Early Help

The importance of Early Help has been a common theme in research and in a number of government reviews over the past decade. Quotes from a selection of these are included below.

[Realising the Potential of Early Intervention - Early Intervention Foundation 2018](#)

'Leaving problems unresolved in childhood doesn't only impact on the lives of individuals and families it also impacts on society and the economy, by undermining the wellbeing of communities and reducing people's opportunities to live positive and successful lives. Acting early to support children at risk of poor outcomes can build healthier, happier and more productive communities, and produce a range of economic benefits that significantly outweigh the costs of intervening.'

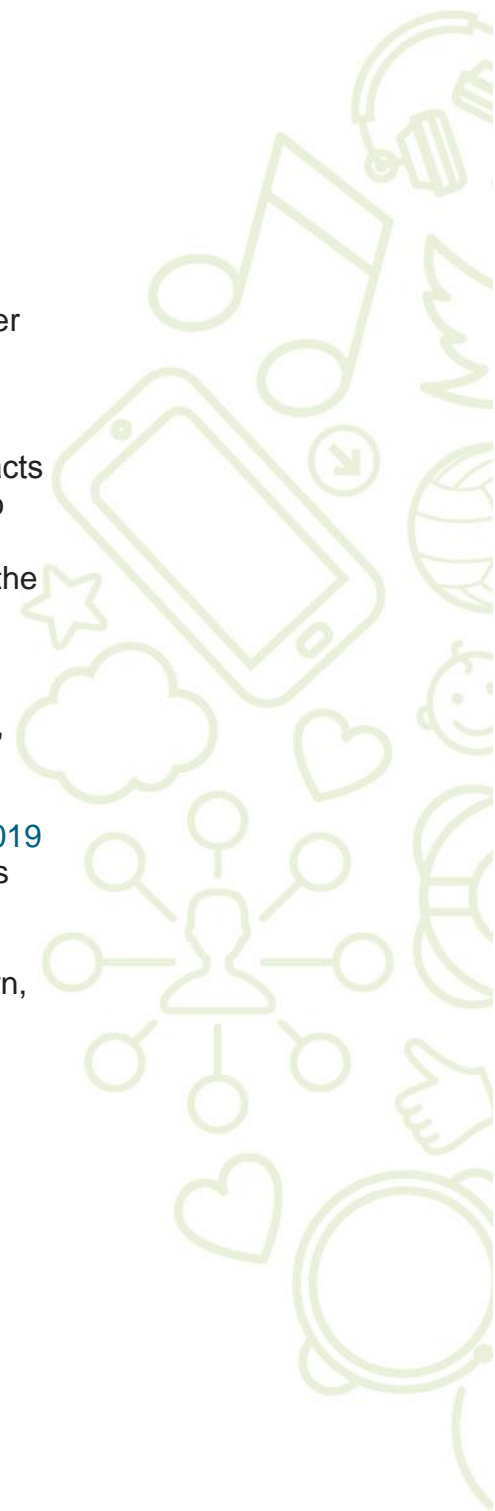
Early intervention is not a panacea for all of society's problems, nor is it a financial coping strategy for local or central government. It is a vital way of providing children with the skills and resilience they need to succeed in life, and of mitigating the negative impacts of poverty and other forms of disadvantage'.

[Evaluating early help. A guide to evaluation of complex local early help systems. Early Intervention Foundation 2019](#)

'Generating good quality evidence of impact, particularly of systems involving a range of agencies and services, is difficult. It takes time, and requires capacity, resources and capability, all of which are in short supply in local services. We need to build capacity to use and generate evidence in children's services. This means equipping those delivering early help with the skills and resources required to measure the impact of their service and, in turn, to generate good quality evidence. '

[Developing an effective local early help offer for children and families - Local Government Association / Isos partnership March 2019](#)

"An effective early help offer brings together local partners to provide good quality early support for children and families that builds their resilience, prevents difficulties from escalating and leads to better outcomes that are sustained."



Early Intervention: The Next Steps - Graham Allen January 2011

'I recommend that future expansion of early intervention programmes should favour those which combine strong evidence bases with impact of crucial stages in the development of social and emotional bedrock in children and the present network of children's centres should use such approaches to identify and meet the needs of vulnerable children and families.'

The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report, a Child- Centred System: Eileen Munro

'Preventative services can do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services. Many services and professions help children and families so co-ordinating their work is important to reduce inefficiencies.'

Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Michael Marmot 2010

'The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional – are laid in early childhood. What happens during those early years, starting in the womb, has lifelong effects on many aspects of health and wellbeing, from obesity, heart disease and mental health, to educational and economic achievement. Later interventions, although important, are considerably less effective if they have not had good early foundations.'

Childhood Trauma

Trauma in early life and childhood can have an impact on future health and wellbeing throughout life. There is a significant and growing body of evidence that traumatic experiences during childhood have a profound impact on an individual's life chances.

These experiences alter development of the brain and of the hormonal, nervous and immunological systems. Research has shown a clear relationship between trauma and poor physical and mental health and socioeconomic outcomes. Evidence suggests that risk increases with the number of traumatic experiences. Adults who have experienced trauma as a child are more likely to be raising their children in similar environments.

Economic Benefits of Early Help

Nationally and locally public sector spending continues to be reduced and there is a need to look at reduction of high cost interventions. Finding robust evidence that demonstrates explicitly that investment in Early Help will realise direct future economic benefit has never been straight forward. However, a growing body of research is beginning to show that such investment can reduce the demand for high-cost intervention at a later stage. There are good grounds to believe that earlier rather than later investment will lead to ongoing benefits not only in saving

