

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM

Date:	25 March 2014	Agenda Item: 08
Title:	Early Help and Social Care – Plans for 2014-15	
Responsible Officer:	Ann Domeney, Head of Service, Early Help and Safeguarding	
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1. REPORT SUMMARY

1.1 In response to 20th January 2014 Schools Forum, a task and finish group has been set up.

The group comprise:

- Service Leader (Early Help and First Response)
- Service Leader (Early Help - Youth Support)
- Director (Family Friends)
- Family Support Services Manager
- Team Manager (Children and Young People with Disabilities Service)
- Head teachers.

1.2 The group will determine the core functions of the proposed three Early Help social workers. Overseeing the development of the job accountabilities for these posts as well as monitoring and reviewing progress.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Schools forum are asked to:

- **agree to the Task and Finish group taking the lead in developing the three Early Help Social Work positions**
- **receive progressing reports in nine months.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 In December 2013 the Early Help Strategy was developed. This was agreed across agencies in the Borough. The Early Help Strategy promotes the use of early help or intervention to prevent the escalation of issues and costs. The concept of early help is universally accepted and there is compelling evidence, that providing early help achieves better outcomes for children, young people and families. There is no doubt that a child living in a stable and caring environment is likely to achieve better academic results, present less behavioural issues and have better outcomes than a child living in a chaotic household.

- 3.2 Whilst there are a number of agencies within Windsor and Maidenhead providing early support and intervention, communication between these services could be improved. Schools are presented with circumstances and issues that are not easily resolved. The development of the early intervention panel has assisted to a degree in providing a forum for children/young people to be discussed but often this is at a time when problems and issues are embedded and solutions far harder to be found.

4. EARLY HELP SOCIAL WORKERS

- 4.1 The creation of three Early Help Social Workers in consultation with Schools provides the opportunity for children, young people and their families to access help earlier preventing the escalation of issues both at home and within the school environment.
- 4.2 A Task and Finish group has been set up. The group includes a variety of agencies and five Head teachers from Infant, Junior and Primary schools. Additionally two Secondary Head teachers have been asked to join this group so there is representation across all age ranges in schools.
- 4.3 The group will determine the core functions of the proposed three Early Help social workers oversee the development of the job accountabilities for these posts and review progress.

The initial proposal is that one Early Help social worker will focus on children with disabilities and special educational needs and two will be linked to the geographical areas of the Children's Centres, the Maidenhead Children Centre Hub and the Windsor/Datchet Hub. Their remit will encompass all ages. The key functions of the posts are likely to be:

- Bridging the links between Schools, School Support Services, Early Help and safeguarding services
- Providing advice, information and signposting schools to appropriate early help services
- Providing advice and consultation in relation to safeguarding issues
- Undertaking Early Help assessments and direct work with children and their families
- Supporting the work of the proposed Early help triage and area based Early Help Panels

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

- 5.1 The provision of three Early Help Social Workers cost between £108,750 and £123,596 per annum, depending on experience. There will be some initial recruitment costs and ongoing costs such as mobile telephones and a laptop to facilitate working across Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 5.2 The costs for 2014/15 will be reduced as the recruitment process will take some time to put in place and may be delayed if the workers have notice periods to serve with their present employers.