

Kirklees **Safeguarding Children Board**

Kirklees Early Support Strategy

October 2018

Early Support and our shared approach to responding to the needs of children, young people and families



Supporting resilient and confident children, families and communities in Kirklees

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Sign off date: October 2018
Due for Review: October 2019

1 Introduction

It is estimated that over two million children in the UK today are living in challenging family circumstances. These include children whose family lives are affected by poverty, poor housing, parental drug and alcohol dependency, neglect, domestic abuse, poor mental health or have an education health and care plan or are eligible for SEN support.

It is recognised that families and young people in Kirklees can experience either temporary or longer term difficulties and pressures which can impact on well-being. For some families, without 'early support' difficulties can escalate, family circumstances deteriorate and children are more at risk of suffering significant harm, adversely affecting their life chance outcomes and possibilities. It is crucial that these children and their families benefit from the best quality professional help at the earliest opportunity.

Professor Eileen Munro highlighted in her review of child protection 'preventative services can do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services'.

Early support for children and families is more effective and less expensive than intervening when problems become entrenched. Even if early support cannot stop problems escalating, targeted and evidence based support for those at most risk can still make a difference and reduce the need for the high costs of social care involvement and taking children into care. These kinds of services are better for children and families but are also important to ensure that the local safeguarding system is sustainable. Without enough of both early and targeted support the pressures on social work can become too high, reducing the quality of decision making and practice and raising costs. Thus, in summary, effective early support is better for children, better for the local safeguarding system and better for the public purse.

A key dynamic for thriving communities in Kirklees is enabling people and communities to have a good life and to do more for themselves. All partners in Kirklees recognise that 'early support' is a collaborative partnership approach not a specific council provision. They will have different perspectives on how early support can best impact to improve outcomes, e.g. focus on evidence based approaches such as Nurturing Parents and Stronger Families. The Early Support Strategy refers to a way of working that means providing interventions early to support and build resilience amongst children, young people and their families – particularly those that may be vulnerable. There is an awareness that children with additional needs and their parents/carers are often either missed or in some communities are hard to reach by early support services. This is a clear area for improvement and by doing this, the aim is to promote positive outcomes and prevent the unnecessary development of greater needs in the future.

The strategy is not a stand-alone document and is an integral strand of the Children and Young People plan for Kirklees. It has important links to universal services who provide the initial support to families and young people across the borough. The vision is to promote preventative strategies and approaches that reduce escalation of problems. This is aligned with promoting improved learning outcomes and initiatives such as Nurturing Parents which are all fundamental elements in the early support offer. The strategy contributes to the Kirklees ambition to achieve the aims of Every Child Matters. A list of the contributing strategies is provided on Page 11.

Good practice has already been identified in Kirklees examples such as the Kirklees Community Hubs and the prevention interventions such as Community Resolutions pioneered by the Kirklees Youth Offending Team. At the heart of the Children's Services Improvement Plan are innovative initiatives such as Family Group Conferencing, Multi-Systemic Therapy and Family Mental Health Services.

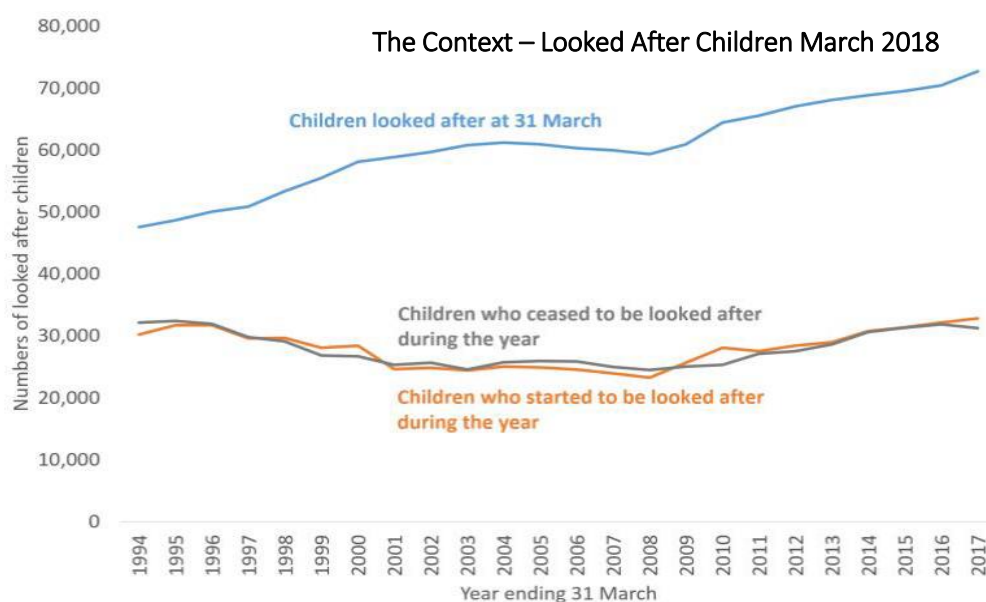
This strategy will guide the development of the Early Support Partnership’s own services and those services that are commissioned, to ensure that the most vulnerable in our communities receive the support they need to achieve the very best they can in all areas of their lives. It is made real and translated into sustainable improvements in outcomes for children, young people, families and their communities, and the Kirklees partners. Its impact will be measured and reviewed.

2 National Context

The national context shows that there has been a rise in the numbers of looked after children on a year by year basis. This number continues to increase and has done so steadily over the last nine years. At 31 March 2017 there were 72,670 looked after children, an increase of 3% on 2016.

The number of children starting to be looked after in 2016-17 has also risen in recent years and has increased by 2% compared with the previous year.

The number of children ceasing to be looked after in 2016-17 has fallen by 2% compared with the previous year.



Until last year, like the national picture, the number of looked after children in Kirklees has been rising. Whilst the contributing factors are complex it is possible to make a real difference at the local level.

One significant aspect of early support involves those with an education health and care plan. There are increasing numbers of children and young people in Kirklees with an EHCP and with identified SEND and the trend shows increasing complexity of those needs.

All the research shows that if agencies work as an effective partnership across an area then improvements can be made. The key to success is the quality of relationship between partners, the local knowledge of services and how services integrate together to address needs. The focus of the early support partnership in Kirklees will be on the voice of the child and what difference they are making.

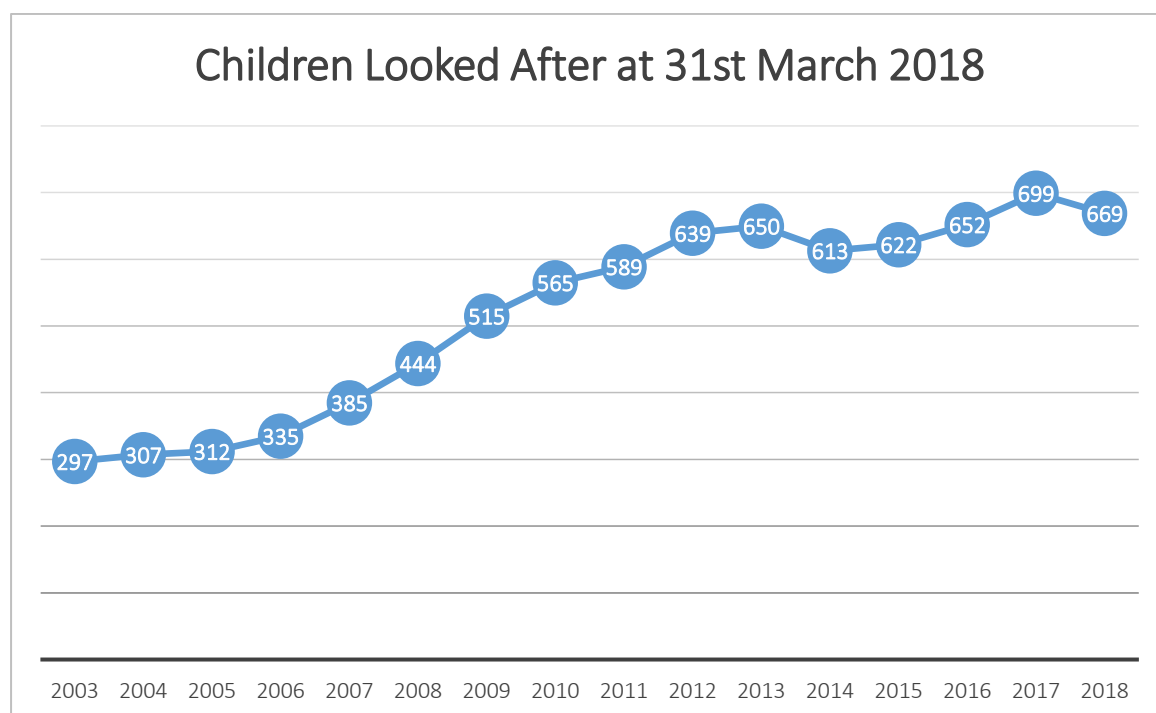
3 The Local Context

Even at a time of unprecedented pressure on resources, there is a wealth of provision and talent in Kirklees. The challenge for the partners is how this is harnessed, to address gaps, to ensure that young people and families do not get lost between partners and that our services are timely. Across the partnership we want to agree how we engage with families and how we empower them.

Our approach is based on building communities, developing resilience and establishing networks. As well as developing a local offer based around 4 geographical and diverse areas we recognise that some services work best across the authority as a whole. We want to develop a unifying but not uniform offer, reflecting the needs and strengths of young people, families and communities.

The strength of Kirklees is its diversity - the range of partners involved including schools, the voluntary and community sector, faith organisations, health agencies and local authority services.

We already believe there is some evidence to show that the approach outlined in this strategy is beginning to slow down the increase in the numbers of looked after children in Kirklees. There is still, however, scope for further improvement.



4 Kirklees Early Support Partnership Vision

The Kirklees Early Support Partnership has developed a vision of what it is hoping to achieve. It outlines a shared understanding of the key issues and how these can be addressed.

Our aspiration is that our practitioners, irrespective of the nature of their formal positions, develop a shared language and approach to working with families and young people.

We all believe that every child and young person should have the opportunity to reach their full potential and that they are best supported to grow and achieve within their own families and communities. There will always be some children, young people and families that will need support and we are committed to ensuring we work with them to identify their own solutions,

building on their strengths. In doing so we will ensure that, where services are needed, they will be flexible to meet children's and families' needs.

This approach supports a shift of focus away from short-term crises and towards effective support for children and young people and their families at an earlier stage, with them at the centre of enabling communities rather than being dependent on statutory public services.

We recognise that we engage with children and families in a variety of settings and at different times. Our aspiration is that our practitioners, irrespective of the nature of their formal positions, ensure that the right conversation takes place at the right time with the right people.

5 Our Priorities

- Help children to live in safe and supportive families
- Support children, young people and families to become more resilient and identify and resolve their own problems before crises occur
- Ensure all young people, including vulnerable learners, achieve their full potential through improving the quality and range of opportunities for learning and skills development from early learning to post 16. Ensure they are supported to make appropriate choices and sustain transitions
- Improve the physical health and mental wellbeing of all
- Support approaches that help develop communities that facilitate and support parents and families to nurture their children
- Improve outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

6 Early Support Partnership Approach

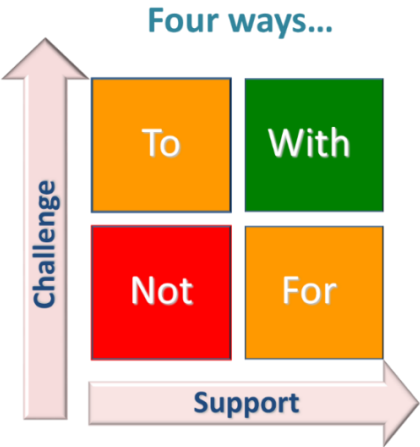
In Kirklees we are committed to working in a way that builds on and maximises the resources and skills across the partnership. We recognise that we need to work to achieve integration and coherence through our services and ensure that they contribute to improved outcomes. Kirklees is a diverse and varied area and we recognise that different areas will require a locally based approach to engage with their communities. To achieve this across Kirklees we are committed to:

- Strengths based approach – enabling rather than deficit based
- Shared approach and responsibility where professionals talk and share space
- Develop innovation and sustainable improvements
- Child's voice at the centre of decisions
- Commitment and accountability
- Encourage young people and their families to aspire to achieve better outcomes for themselves
- Culture of shared experience based on learning
- Developing family networks and communities
- Open and honest with families and each other
- Right Person, Right Service, Right Time

Working with Families

Early support needs to focus on those adverse experiences and help both the child and the parents deal with these. We want to forge a relationship between agencies and children and families so that the emphasis of practice is on *working with* children and families, rather than doing things to them or for them. "*Working with*" involves high support and high challenge so that families find their own lasting solutions to the challenges they face, and are equipped with the resilience to move forward successfully.

We are working towards a position where *working with* is the default option; basic entitlement for all children, young people and families who come into contact with services throughout the district, with the child at the heart of decisions that affect them.



Adapted from: Wachtel T & McCold P in Strang H & Braithwaite J (eds), (2001), Restorative Justice and Civil Society, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

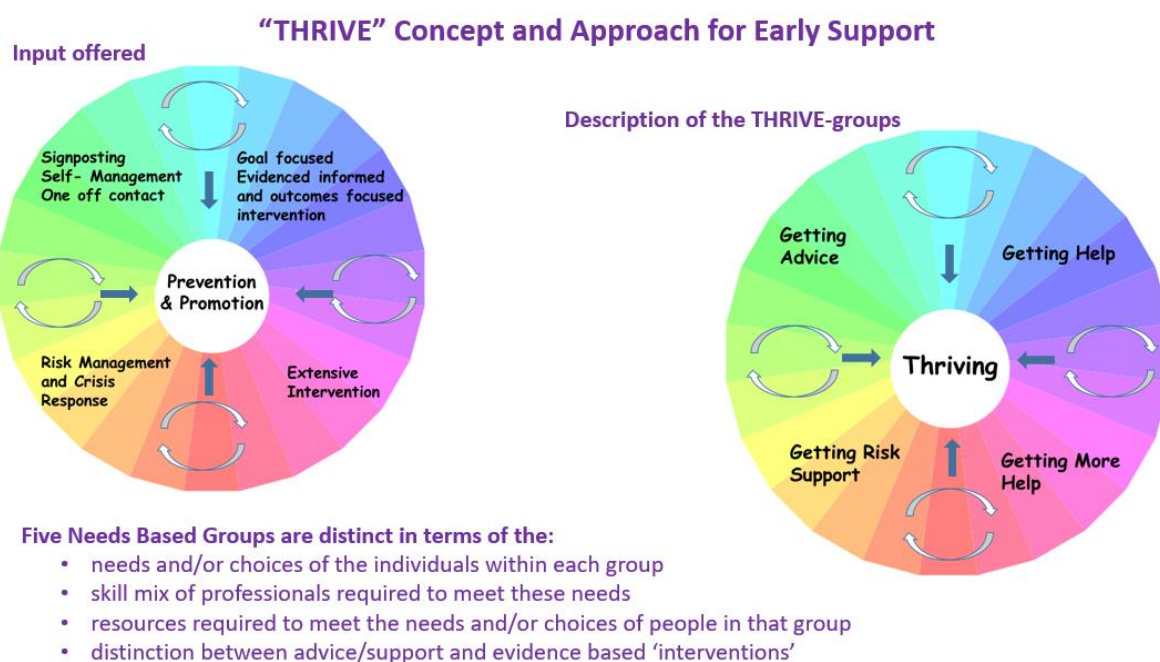
7 Thrive Concept – The Kirklees Approach To Early Support

The partnership vision promotes the aim to help all families and children to thrive and reach their full potential. The Kirklees Early Support concept and approach is designed to address situations when this stops happening for a variety of reasons.

Thrive is an approach to early support already being used in areas including health and schools.

The approach is based on *working with*

- Strengths-based, asset-based approaches
- Key transformative approaches that span all staff and partners working to assist step up/step down
- “Working with” approach across the Kirklees Early Support Partnership (co-design, collaborate, co-locate)
- “Pro-social” – expertly tapping into the positive motivations of partners and communities
- “Creative commissioning” – constantly striving to find the best route for effective delivery
- “Networking” – making better collective use of intelligence and resource, systems thinking – for professionals and for individuals own support networks
- Co-invest time, money, expertise and seeking innovation in the approaches and activities that have a proven ability to help people sustain their step away from services
- Tapping in to self-support and self-agency, developing individual capacity and resilience
- Using evidence based approaches to design the range of activities, actions and self-help approaches that aim to get people to thrive



Using the Thrive Concept

The graphic gives examples of how professionals/services could fulfil their roles within this approach whilst recognising that some will need support to fulfil this role.



8 Outcomes Based Accountability Approach

It is critical that our approach is based on proven research, supported by clear evidence and can be shown to be making a real difference. Using the outcomes based accountability (OBA) process, outcomes, measures and action plans will be determined and agreed at a local level by all stakeholders. We will ask the key OBA questions:

- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- What difference did we make?

Outcomes Based Accountability indicators – What difference are we making?

We will know that our approach is making a difference when there is evidence of a statistically significant impact in key indicators measuring the effectiveness of early support interventions. Partners will already have in their action plans key 'OBA indicators' which collectively will demonstrate the impact and outcomes of the early help support.

In summary these will include some the following:

- Numbers of Children Looked After, CPP and CIN, some of these may be children with additional needs
- Numbers of children to A & E, average birth weight, numbers of referrals to CAMHS
- Percentage of children with low attendance at school, percentage of students achieving a level 3 qualification at age 19

- Number of community-based interventions being accessed by families

9 Challenges, Risks and Responsibilities

Emerging Challenges

Engagement with young people, families and key stakeholders has identified a number of potential risks and challenges which need to be addressed to deliver the vision. The greatest challenge is cultural, developing the confidence to work and listen to the voice of the child and families. The challenges are not unique to Kirklees and with the emerging culture of high support and high challenge can be addressed. Some of these risks are as follows:

- Better clarity in understanding layer(s) of need
- Strengthened guidance on determining layer(s) of need
- Consent and information sharing
- Improving the knowledge about what services and support are available from a parents/carers point of view and their ability on how to access
- Simplified arrangements for accessing appropriate support
- Lack of shared understanding about what different services contribute to prevention
- Inter-agency co-ordination can be further improved to ensure resources are used most effectively to deliver shared objectives
- Recognition that there is a gap in the offer of services and support for children with additional needs and their parents/carers
- That parents are being asked the same things over again and sometimes feel judged rather than supported
- That agencies rather than families determine the right time for support
- There are too many box ticking style performance indicators
- There is too little one to one support for children with complex needs
- There is too great a focus on higher tier services
- There is a long waiting list for Family Support
- There is uncertainty about future funding
- Voice of the child is not always heard and evidenced

In developing the partnership there needs to be clarity about the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders.

Local authorities and partner agencies delivering early support to children and families should improve the quality and consistency of assessment and plans by:

- Promoting the use of evidence- and research-informed assessment practice
- Improving the quality of analysis in assessments
- Ensuring that assessments reflect the views and experience of the child and family
- Making the purpose clearer and improving the intended outcome
- Ensuring plans are regularly reviewed and that these reviews evaluate the child's and family's progress
- Provide professional supervision to all staff delivering early support and ensure that their work receives regular management oversight, particularly in respect of decisions about whether families need more formal help
- Ensure that all early support professionals have access to effective training
- Ensure that children's needs for early support arising from parental substance misuse, mental ill health and domestic abuse are addressed in commissioning plans

- Ensuring that all those who work with families have an understanding of those factors that contribute to ensuring that all children have the best start in life

The LSCB should:

- Critically evaluate the effectiveness of early support and publish these findings in the LSCB annual report, monitor the quality of early support assessment, planning and management oversight through effective audit arrangements
- Develop and monitor local quality standards to ensure that early support professionals have access to effective supervision and management oversight
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the LSCB framework for decision making document to ensure that it is understood and used appropriately by all partner agencies and that children and families are helped effectively as a result
- Monitor and evaluate whether children’s emerging needs are appropriately met elsewhere when contacts to children’s social care do not require statutory intervention
- Ensure that all professionals working with families receive effective early support training

Local authorities should:

- Ensure that when a child is referred to local authority children’s social care the referrer is consistently given good-quality feedback about the outcome of the referral
- Establish effective processes for evaluating the overall impact of early support

10 Supporting Strategies and Policies underpinning Early Support

- Kirklees Children’s Improvement Plan
- Nurturing Parents Charter
- Kirklees Education and Learning (Draft)
- Kirklees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-2020
- Kirklees SEND strategy
- Securing Sufficient High Quality Learning and Childcare Places School Organisation, Planning and Development for 2015-2018
- Kirklees Safeguarding Children’s Board - Framework for decision making

11 Sources

This strategy has been developed through a combination of researching best practice and holding a series of consultation events with key stakeholders.

Appendix 1

Kirklees Needs Demand

The Context – Kirklees Overview – March 2018

	Batley & Spen	Dewsbury & Mirfield	Huddersfield	Kirklees Rural	Address Confidential/ Live Outside Kirklees	Total
Population						
Total No. of children age 0-18 *	27,628	21,590	32,757	22,177		104,152
<i>% breakdown of children aged 0-18 per District Committee area</i>	27%	21%	31%	21%		100%
No. of children aged 0-18 living in 0-30% most deprived LSOA	13,749	15,327	18,109	1,959		49,144
<i>% children living in 0-30% most deprived LSOA</i>	28%	30%	38%	4%		
Social Care						
Social Care CIN/CPP/LAC a/a 2 March 2018 (children aged 0-18) **	655	544	936	352	120	2607
<i>% breakdown of children per district committee</i>	25%	21%	36%	14%	5%	100%
Breakdown of Classification:						
CIN	390	332	549	232	51	1554
<i>%</i>	25%	21%	35%	15%	3%	100%
CPP	100	77	158	29	17	381
<i>%</i>	26%	20%	41%	8%	4%	100%
LAC (home postcode)	165	135	229	91	52	670
<i>%</i>	25%	20%	34%	14%	8%	100%

Children in Kirklees with an Education Health and Care Plan in 2018 (EHCP)

	Batley and Spen	Dewsbury and Mirfield	Huddersfield	Kirklees Rural	Total
Cognition & Learning Needs	152	132	156	104	544
Percentage of EHCP Population by Area	28%	24%	29%	19%	
Communication & Interaction Needs	212	172	287	170	841
Percentage of EHCP Population by Area	25%	20%	34%	20%	
Physical & Medical Needs	36	44	65	29	174
Percentage of EHCP Population by Area	21%	25%	37%	17%	
Social, Emotional, Mental Health Needs	93	53	109	73	328
Percentage of EHCP Population by Area	28%	16%	33%	22%	
Sensory Impairments (including hearing, vision)	27	25	25	16	93
Percentage of EHCP Population by Area	29%	27%	27%	17%	
Other categories of need or in assessment	62	65	80	59	266
Percentage of EHCP Population by Area	23%	24%	30%	22%	

The May 2018 school census identified that there were 6,934 children recorded as having SEN support.

Kirklees Early Support Strategy

