

# Manchester's Early Help Strategy

Our Approach

2018–2021



Early Help  
Manchester.

## **1. Foreword**

*Early Help is essential to improving the lives of Manchester's children and young people and to make sure that they are safe, happy, healthy and achieving their potential.*

*As a city one of our main aims is to better support families, to help them to cope with the difficulties they face and to support families to thrive.*

*Lots of families in Manchester face challenges and difficulties in their lives and these can lead to tough times for children and can contribute to the breakdown of families.*

*It's important to recognise that as well as facing difficulties, families and communities have strengths and that with the right support from the right people, they can be helped to overcome significant challenges.*

*In order for Early Help to transform our city we need to recognise that it isn't a service or a single team, but a way of working with families that all of the partners and stakeholders working with children and families can put in to practice.*

*Through the Children's Board, the city owns the Early Help strategy and its delivery and is well placed to embed it across the organisations which make up the board.*

*Our offer of Early Help has already achieved so much. I've visited our local Early Help Hubs, which hosts Manchester City Council teams as well as a number of other agencies, and seen some of the incredible work they do and the range of issues they can help and support with. It is marked by a can do attitude and a flexible approach to support, based on whole families.*

*As we refresh the strategy, we celebrate the work that has already been done over the last three years and look forward to the next stage of Early Help and how much we can achieve together to support children and families in our city.*

**Councillor Garry Bridges**  
**Executive Member for Children and Young People**



## **2. Early Help in Manchester**

### **Definition**

*“Early Help is intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families or with a population most at risk of developing problems. Effective intervention may occur at any point in a child or young person’s life”*

Early intervention and prevention for families with children has been a key strategic priority for the city over many years through Think Family, Community Budgets and our involvement in the national Troubled Families programme. Most recently the city’s approach to ‘Early Help’ has been delivered through our Early Help Strategy, launched in 2015.

### **Our Vision**

Our ambition is that families, particularly those with multiple and complex needs will have access to co-ordinated Early Help in accordance with need as soon as difficulties are identified. The offer is personalised, multi-agency, and embedded within a Whole Family approach. Children and young people in those families will live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives thereby breaking the intergenerational cycles of risk and vulnerability.

### **Our Priorities**

The starting point for a refresh of Manchester’s Early Help Strategy was to take an ‘Our Manchester’ approach - engage, listen, co-design. In particular we used ‘Our Manchester, Our Children’ (Manchester’s Children & Young People Plan) as the basis for our priorities. The refreshed Early Help strategy and this document are a culmination of the ideas and thoughts we have gathered through engaging, listening and co-design and it will support the delivery of the FOUR ‘Our Manchester, Our Children’ priorities:

- Safe
- Happy
- Healthy
- Successful

These four priorities have been developed by Manchester’s Children’s Board.

## Our Approach

**Early Help** is a collaborative approach not a provision or a service

This is a strategy for the communities that support those who may be experiencing difficulties. It is a strategy for the professionals who work with families, adults and children. Most of all it is a strategy for all of our families: adults, children and young people.

Members of Manchester's Youth Council were asked what works for children and young people who need support to prevent problems turning into a crisis. Through their own experiences and those of other young people, they have come up with their own early help message:

LISTEN. ENGAGE. ACT. CHECK IN. IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE.

This message will form the basis of our approach

# WHAT HELPS ME LIFT OFF?

Our ask at Manchester Youth Council is that adults working with us (young people) take onboard our messages and empower us to lead happy, safe, successful and healthy lives.

## LISTEN

- Get to know me, my strengths & my interests
- Build a relationship with me based on honesty, trust and respect
  - Find out how resilient I am
  - Find out who is important to me
- Don't judge me

## ENGAGE

- Involve me
- Encourage me to ask questions
- Explain everything in a way I can understand
- Involve others with my permission
- Enable me to have an active role in my future

## ACT

- Empower me to help myself
- Support me to engage in activities that will build my self worth
- Advocate on my behalf with my permission
- Help me to access services and make quick referrals
- Encourage me to ask for support from my family and friends



## CHECK IN

- Meet with me often and check the things that are working
- Help me to reflect on my actions and challenge me if I need it
- Make sure I am getting the support I need
- Continue to support me until I can stand on my own two feet
- Celebrate my achievements

*“Members of Manchester Youth Council were asked what works for young people who need support to prevent problems turning into a crisis. Through their own experiences and those of other young people, they have come up with their own Early Help message: 'It's not rocket science'.”*

- Elaine Morrison, Manchester City Council

**IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE!**



### 3. Our Early Help Principles and Behaviours

There are 10 Early Help principles and behaviours which will underpin our approach over the next 3 years which will help ensure families and children are **safe, happy, healthy and successful**.

Moreover these principles are relevant to everyone and could be used in any offer of early help, at any age.

1. Take a strengths based approach and be good listeners
2. Take a whole family and/or a whole household approach
3. Mobilise the strength and resources of the community
4. An offer of early help will be accessible, at the first sign that people need help and delivered as close to home as possible.
5. Support Manchester's Early Help workforce and provide them with the tools to be confident when working with children, young people and their families
6. Support Manchester's workforce to develop strong and lasting professional relationships
7. Simplify our approach using appropriate language and processes
8. Safeguard and promote the health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families
9. Independence is encouraged so people continue to be **safe, happy, healthy and successful**
10. Early Help is everybody's business

#### **4. To deliver these principles we will:**

##### **Workforce and New Ways of Working**

- i. Manchester will provide its workforce with the tools to deliver an effective and integrated offer of early help through, for example, an accredited Early Help Practitioner *Learning Programme*. This will focus on culture and behaviours rather than process. It will be delivered through a pooled budget and will be available to all practitioners supporting families and their children through new ways of working.

##### **Focus on Information Technology and digitalisation**

- ii. Manchester will develop an early help approach that is visible, accessible and fit for the 21st Century utilising technology to enhance our offer

##### **Encourage Family Co-design**

- iii. Manchester will ensure families are at the centre of our approach. We will seek regular feedback through improved use of technology and ensure families help us to design and continually improve our strategic approach

##### **Enhance Locality delivery**

- iv. Manchester will focus on strengthening the local delivery of the offer of early help. This will take the form of 'place based approaches' with an enhanced focus on early years, VCSE, community health and schools

##### **Focus on School Readiness**

- v. Manchester will focus on closer integration of our early years and early help approach to ensure more children are ready for school through earlier identification

##### **Develop creative school approaches**

- vi. Manchester will develop new and creative approaches to working in partnership with schools to ensure children and families access appropriate early help. This strategy recognises schools central role in building resilience for our children and young people, their families and our communities and will place schools at the forefront of our Early Help approach.

## 5. How do we know this the right strategic approach for Manchester?

An extensive period of engagement has taken place to ensure that our Early Help Strategy (2018 - 2021) is co-designed. The engagement process allowed for a significant period of reflection; we wanted to fully understand where our previous Early Help Strategy (2015-2018) had taken us, what it had achieved and, most importantly, what life is like for those receiving support in Manchester in 2018. We also needed to understand the full extent of our collective resources and strengths. The 10 principles that will drive our approach to Early Help over the next 3 years have been developed as part of this engagement process. This strategy will seek to build upon and develop further the good work of the last 3 years.

*"It is important to recognise that we have done a lot in a short space of time, that behaviour change in organisations will take time (like turning around a very big boat at sea) and that we need to embed good practise and not feel that we need to change too much too soon"*

Feedback taken from Early Help survey

### Key Messages: What you told us-

- The offer of Early Help in Manchester now felt aligned across a range of agencies and services. For example, taking a strengths based approach is now commonplace and is even reflected in the 'Our Manchester' approach. The aim of our strategy is to move the partnership from an aligned approach to an **integrated** offer of early help. What does integration mean?
  - joint decision making or a pooled budget
  - a whole city approach to our workforce
  - co-located teams
  - single processes or joint procedures e.g trusted data sharing
  - contributing to weekly Early Help Hub allocation meetings

*"We have more experienced staff and are developing their skills. We capture children and young people's voices better now and more regularly which is positive. Partnership working feels better but I think this could still be improved"*

Feedback taken from Early Help survey

- **Relationships** at every level- whether between families, between a professional and a family or between professionals- was identified as crucial. This strategy will acknowledge the importance of developing effective relationships at every level with a focus on **people rather than process**;
- Families tell us they feel more comfortable receiving support from those around them- a child's school or local community group rather than a city-wide service. This strategy will look to build upon the three Early Help Hub model and take a place based or community offer further, for example, by supporting the some 110,000 volunteers and paid staff

working for the voluntary, community & social enterprise sector (VCSE), 26% of which are directly supporting children and young people<sup>1</sup>. Utilising our community assets- children's centres and early years' settings- is another way of enhancing the local offer of early help.

*VCSE focus groups identified the lack of support, the challenges associated with applying comprehensive training, monitoring and support systems for their volunteers, as (a) cause of difficulties.*

*"There must be the systems in place for people to be effective and for the organisation to be able to use them (volunteers) properly, otherwise... our target groups gain nothing from it."*

Manchester State of the VCSE Sector 2017

*"Instead of all early help (services) together perhaps base in health centres or children's centres"*

Feedback taken from Early Help survey

- Our strategic assessment process helped us understand that beyond universal provision - a school or GP surgery- a family that wanted to help themselves would be unsure how to access the support they need. Improving the **visibility and access** of our Early Help offer will form a key part of our strategic approach.

*"Early Help staff... to be more visible in community venues, maybe co-located where appropriate so that they can see families in the community setting and signpost into projects / activities for on-going support"*

*"Look at holding drop in session where by families can pop into chat to the early help teams (all partners) and possibly self-refer"*

Feedback taken from Early Help survey

- We have developed a strong culture with many positive uses of common language amongst professionals, for example 'whole-family' or 'strengths based conversation'. However, our understanding of how language is perceived by those experiencing problems has developed and we know it can be a barrier in accessing support. A strong Early Help culture demonstrated by the way we use language will be a key principle for a successful offer of early help;
- Co-location works. Good progress has been made in developing a multi-agency offer of early help in Manchester- examples include co-located early years and health visiting teams in Old Moat and Early Help Hub allocation meetings. But there is a perception that 'early help' is delivered by the Local Authority. This strategy will look to re-focus early help as an approach and not a service- **'Early Help is everybody's business'**.

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<sup>1</sup> Manchester State of the VCSE Sector 2017



*“Ensure the new strategy belongs to all agencies and it is implemented by (agencies) and not MCC”*

*“We need to spread the message that Early Help is more than the (MCC) intervention teams and the EHA. I repeatedly hear (MCC) staff inform parent and partners that the case is ‘now closed to early help’. This is the wrong message”.*

Feedback taken from Early Help survey

- Schools are often at the centre of their community and therefore are the first place a family will go to access support or help. Children’s Centres are also cited as a vital community resource especially for younger families. Our strategic approach will test new concepts, such as school leadership of Early Years, and recognise their strengths and community value- they will be central to our visible, local and integrated offer.

## 6. What factors impact on a family's life?

We know there are many factors which impact a family's ability to lead **safe, happy, healthy** and **successful** lives. Through our approach and collective partnerships we will seek to understand and address this impact.

### What are the cities strengths?

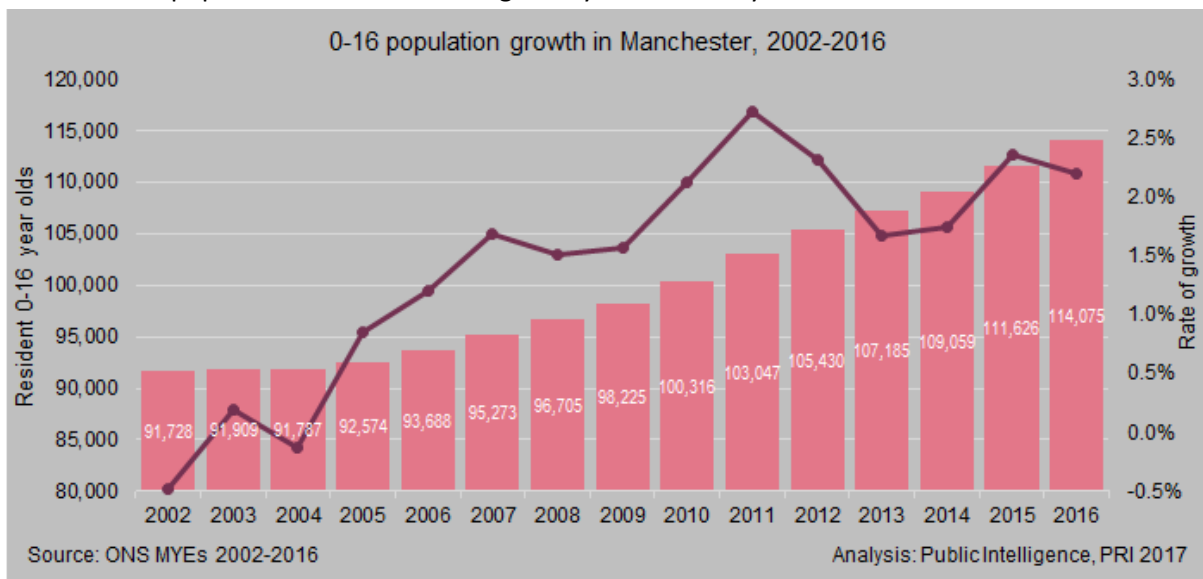
There are many strengths in our communities which impact positively on a family day-to-day and our integrated Early Help approach will look to support these. They include:

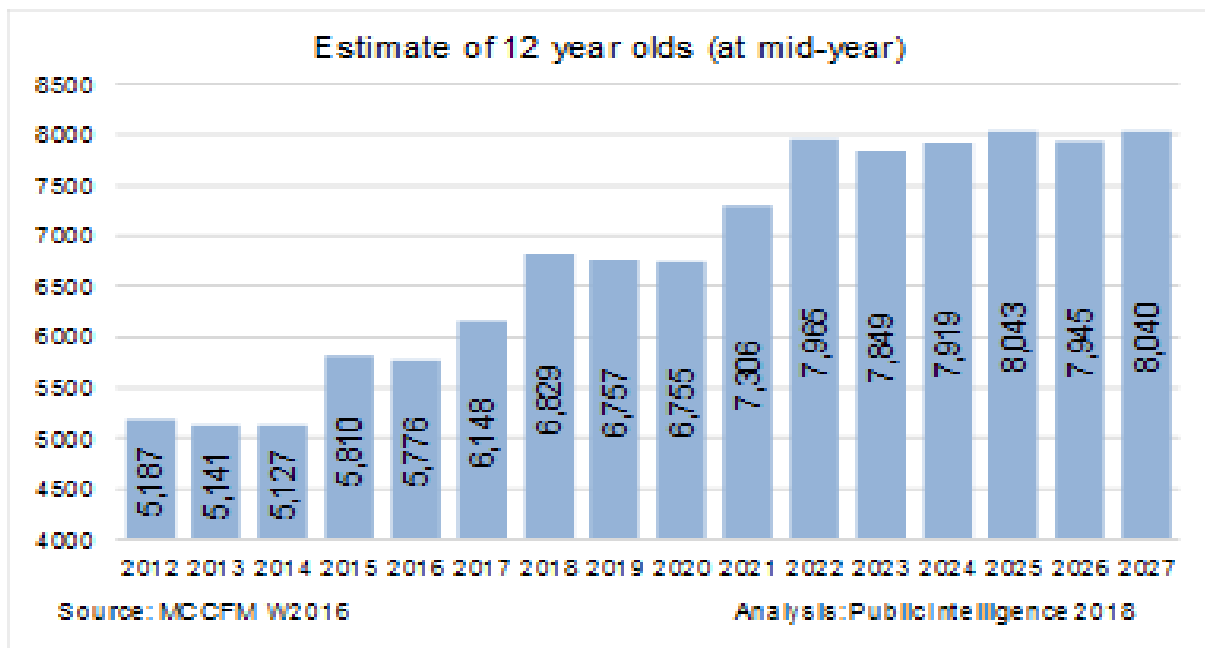
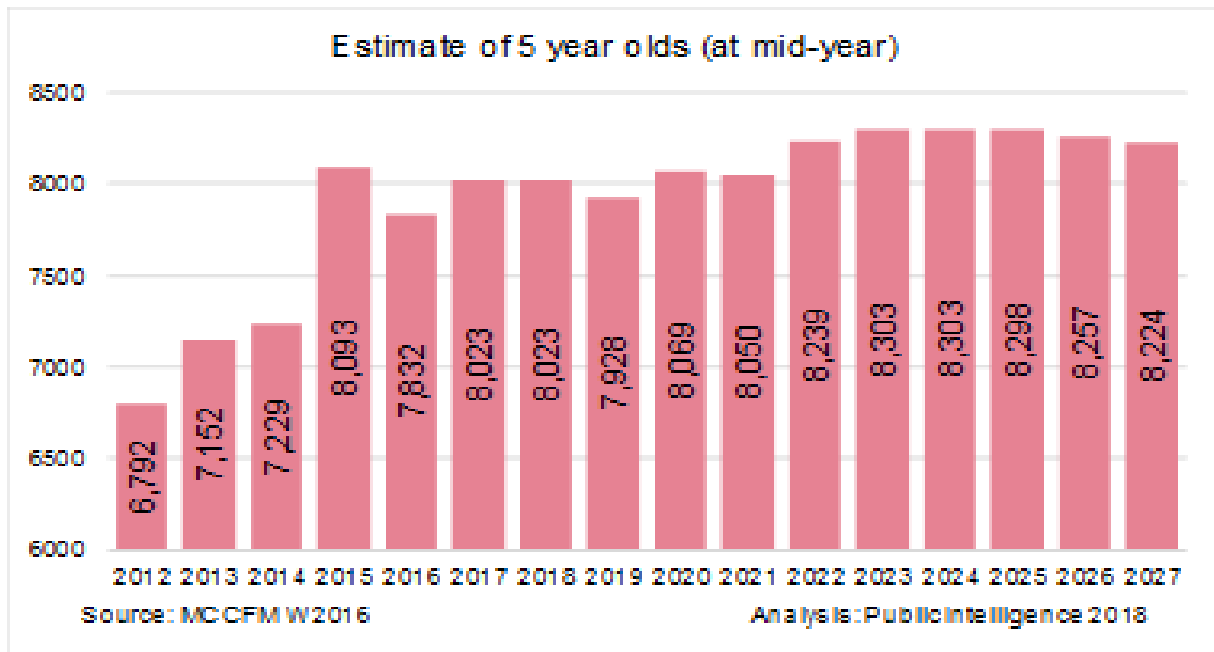
- 145 Primary Schools, 132 of which were Good or Outstanding at the last inspection
- 40 High Schools, 25 of which were Good or Outstanding at the last inspection
- 38 Sure Start Children's Centres and 170 registered day care providers in our communities across the City
- The largest children's hospital in the UK
- 110,000 volunteers and paid staff working for the voluntary, community & social enterprise sector (VCSE)
- A growing child population

### What are some of our future concerns?

#### Population Growth

Manchester's 0-16 population has grown rapidly since 2005 and is up 21.8% in 10 years. This has increased pressure on services such as schools, community health services and social care. We know that the child population will continue to grow by 2021 and beyond





### Poverty (and the impact on Children and Families)

Manchester has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the UK with an estimated one in three children under 16 living in poverty. These children are more likely to have low attainment in school and grow up in a household where domestic violence is prevalent. End Child Poverty Coalition (January 2018 report) found:

- Manchester estimated 2<sup>nd</sup> highest % children in poverty in UK (1<sup>st</sup> Tower Hamlets)
- 5 wards 50%+ in 2017: Moss Side, Rusholme, Longsight, Cheetham and Ardwick <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ECP's indicators build on HMRC data which only looks at out of work benefit claimants and tax credits, so assumes all in work not in poverty, all out of work in poverty. ECP's figures are adjusted to address this.

## **Housing**

Housing needs- property condition, rent arrears, threat of eviction and homelessness- have increased significantly since 2015. Having a roof over your head is a fundamental right and housing need can directly impact on a family's ability to lead **safe, happy, healthy** and **successful** lives. There is a growing reliance in Manchester on the Private Rented Sector and private rented housing usual means less stability for a family. This strategy will, therefore, support the delivery of the *Manchester Homelessness Strategy* and particularly its ambition in 'supporting people to maintain their home'.

- There has been a 30% increase in the number of families presenting as homeless between 2015 - 2017 (1,559 families to 2,031 families)
- Analysis of a random sample of 300 cases highlighted the following main reasons:
  - Eviction from the private rented sector (most frequent factor)
  - Domestic violence and abuse
  - Rent arrears

## **Groups at risk**

As well as recognising some of the causal factors that might limit a family's ability to be **safe, happy, healthy and successful** there are a number of specific groups that may require a targeted/specialist offer. These include (but are not limited to):

### **Children with SEND**

- There are nearly 14,000 children and young people in our City who are receiving SEN support, have an SEN statement or an Education, Health and Care Plan. These children, young people and their families are supported through a strong SEND offer.
- Autism is a significant mental health need in Manchester and CAMHS approximate that over 50% of their workload is now focussed on supporting families where autism (and related conditions) is prevalent.

### **School Exclusions**

- 128 pupils were permanently excluded from Manchester schools in 2016/2017 an increase of 30 compared to the previous year.
- This represents 109 permanent exclusions from Secondary School and 19 permanent exclusions from Primary.

### **Young carers**

- Young Carers in Manchester are supported through our Young Carers Strategy. However, we know that there is a significant under identification and recording of young carers so accurate numbers are difficult to capture.
- Data from the 2011 Census (published in May 2013) indicates that there were 1,138 children aged 0–16 years living in Manchester who identified themselves as providing some form of unpaid care.

- Research shows that young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, have lower school attendance and are more likely than the national average to be not in education, employment or training (NEET).

#### **Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)**

- Reducing the number of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is a national and local priority. Being NEET can have long term impacts on the life of an individual. Evidence shows that a young person who experiences a period NEET will, on average, lose up to £50,000 in earnings over their working life when compared to a peer who doesn't experience a period NEET.
- In Manchester, at the start of 2017, nearly 1 in 10 (9.4%) 16-18 year olds were NEET.

Detailed analysis of our families and their communities can be found in:

- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (health):  
[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500230/joint\\_strategic\\_needs\\_assessment/6797/children\\_and\\_young\\_peoples\\_jsna](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500230/joint_strategic_needs_assessment/6797/children_and_young_peoples_jsna)
- State of The City:  
[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200088/statistics\\_and\\_intelligence/7353/state\\_of\\_the\\_city\\_report\\_2017/1](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200088/statistics_and_intelligence/7353/state_of_the_city_report_2017/1)
- MCC Statistics and Data (by theme) including population, health and wellbeing, housing and deprivation  
[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/homepage/932/data\\_by\\_theme](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/homepage/932/data_by_theme)
- Manchester's Family Poverty Strategy  
[https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/6929/family\\_poverty\\_strategy\\_2017-22](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/6929/family_poverty_strategy_2017-22)

## **6. Governance**

Children's Board is composed of representatives from the local authority, police, health, voluntary and community sectors and schools, who provide services to children, young people and their families and who share a joint commitment to partnership working and improving the life chances of children and young people. The board shares a common vision to address institutional, budgetary, cultural and linguistic barriers to working together across traditional agencies with a common strategy to improve outcomes for children and young people.

This strategy is owned and governed by Manchester's Children's Board and it will scrutinise performance to ensure a strong Early Help approach is in place. The operational delivery will be overseen by the multi-agency Early Help Operational Board as well as other relevant agency specific forums.

A three year multi agency delivery plan will be produced which will ensure our vision and priorities are delivered. This plan will be over seen by Children's Board

### **Manchester's Local Care Organisation (MLCO)**

'Bringing Services Together for People in Places' is a multi-partner programme of work taking place across Manchester. The work will help to provide a space and mechanism for collaboration between services and partners to develop new ways of working, join up individual service offers and reduce duplication. The ultimate aim is for the wider 'system' to work together in places and with communities, so that people can access what they need to look after their health and wellbeing throughout their life.

Working with the MLCO's Neighbourhood Partnership Approach, Bringing Services Together will help to join up local plans and geographies. This work will help to ensure that the Early Help approach is embedded in neighbourhoods and delivered as locally as possible. The MLCO is currently developing their Early Help for Adults offer in Manchester. Through Bringing Services Together and continuous engagement with the MLCO, the two strategies will align and work together to provide a complete offer for both Families and Adults.

## 7. 'How do we know we have been successful'?

### An Early Help Impact Map

#### **Context**

The Impact Map describes how Early Help should be implemented, delivered and measured in Manchester to better evidence the impact on children, young people and families. Our Early Help approach will provide families with the tools to resolve problems as soon as they start to emerge as evidence shows that children's experiences in childhood can affect their whole life. This Impact Map is designed to evidence how successful our offer of early help is in achieving the four priorities of the Early Help Strategy and the Children and Young People Plan (Our Manchester, Our Children): **safe, happy, healthy and successful**.

#### **Reporting & Evaluating**

The **outputs** described below will be reported regularly (monthly or bi-monthly) for performance management purposes.

Reporting quarterly on the **intended outcomes** will allow Early Help performance data to be measured against the priorities for our families to be **Safe, Happy, Healthy and Successful**. The Impact Map will assist in better evidencing yearly the **impact** of an Early Help approach across the city

## Rationale

- To act sooner to tackle emerging problems for children, young people and families or with the population most at risk of developing problems by delivering a family centred early help approach
- To improve the quality of our Early Help approach to ensure families are **safe, happy, healthy and successful.**
- To measure the outcomes and impact of our Early Help approach in Manchester

## Inputs

- Early Help Hubs
- Greater Manchester Police
- Youth Offending Service
- ALL Schools
- Manchester City Council Early Help Practitioners.
- Acute & Community Health Providers incl CAMHS, GP's etc.
- Registered Providers
- Early Years
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub/Social Work
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
- VCSE sector
- Commissioned services - Targeted Youth Support Service
- Families - parents and children

## Activities

- Promote parental and child participation in the delivery and design of the Early Help journey, including capturing their voices and lived experiences
- Promoting an accessible and visible offer of early help through effective delivery and communication of the Early Help Strategy
- Utilising technology so families and the partnership can access relevant information, resources and support
- Promoting quality conversations with families and partners by embedding strength based and Signs of Safety models.
- Workforce Development Plan to promote early help behaviours and culture
- Use of EHA to ensure families are at the centre of their own plan in supporting the family's needs.
- Strong multi agency working including co-location of partners in community settings, including the EH Hubs
- Promote a targeted/specialist offer for specific groups including Children with SEND, NEET, mental health needs, drug and alcohol issues and young carers

## Outputs

- Number of families engaged and completing feedback/survey
- Number of families and professionals accessing Help and Support Manchester
- Number of Early Help Assessments registered & completed
- Number of requests for targeted and specialist support
- Number of families accessing support, interventions or services.
- Number of families stepped down from social work
- Number of families escalated to social work or specialist services

## Intended Outcomes

- Be Safe:**
  - Reduction in repeat Police call outs
  - Reduction in ASB and bullying
  - Reduction in demand for statutory social care through a good offer of early help
  - Reduced incidence of Domestic Violence
- Be Happy:**
  - Reduction in school exclusions
  - Increased number of families accessing local resources, universal services and self-help support
  - Improve family experience of Early Help offer (e.g were they listened to, whole family approach, one worker etc)
- Be Healthy:**
  - Increase number of children who are school ready:
    - Increase in the % achieving good level of development at EY Foundation Stage
    - Reduction in rate of children u-10 who are admitted to hospital with tooth decay
    - Increased 9 months and 2 years checks (stages 4 & 5 of Early Years Delivery Model)
  - Increased number of families with positive relationship
  - Increase number of families living in stable housing
- Be Successful:**
  - Increased levels of attainment at Key Stage 2 & Key Stage 4
  - Reduce the number of young people who are NEET
  - Increase the number of families in employment

## Impacts

- Children, young people and families are :
- **Safe**
  - **Happy**
  - **Healthy**
  - **Successful**
- Children, Young People and families at the centre of an Early Help approach



### Annex 1: Strategic Fit

The Early Help Strategy is intrinsically linked to the aims and priorities of many strategies and documents. The following have informed the development of the Early Help strategic approach

- 'Our Manchester, Our Children'- Children & Young People's Plan
- 'Our Manchester' The Manchester Strategy
- Homeless Strategy
- Manchester's Reform Plan
- GMCA's Early Intervention & Prevention Strategy
- GMCA Mayoral Priorities
- Manchester's Community Safety Partnership Strategy
- Young Carers Strategy
- Family Poverty Strategy
- Manchester State of the VCSE Sector 2017
- State of the City 2018
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

