

## Family Centre Cluster Working – Dudley Early Help Offer

### Background

In 2016, Dudley Children and Young People's Alliance Board endorsed **Dudley's Early Help Strategy**.

This document served to provide the overarching aim of Dudley's Early Help operating model enabling effective, well co-ordinated Early Help for those who need it and a seamless journey of support for children, young people and their families across all levels of need.

A key part of the Early Help operating model highlights cluster based working as the preferred method of delivery for Early Help Services across the Borough. Five clusters will form the basis of delivery and operate from a newly formed 0-18 years (up to 25 years if the young person has a learning difficulty or disability) Family Centre in each of the Cluster areas. Brierley Hill, Halesowen, Stourbridge, Dudley North and Dudley Central.

It is anticipated that all five cluster areas will be operational by the end of September 2017 and we are due to commence phase one of the project which will see Brierley Hill being developed as a cluster area in the first instance. The other four areas will follow shortly after.

### What do we mean by cluster working?

Each Cluster will be organised around universal services including schools, with a Family Centre at its heart. Cluster working arrangements are designed to ensure that families are offered the right intervention at the right time, and as early as possible to prevent issues escalating which may result in poor outcomes for the family.

Clusters bring together a range of universal and targeted early help services in each local area, including schools and services provided by the voluntary and community sector. Through clusters, Children's Services and key partners aim to provide a local model of support for children and their families. They will link schools and early year's provision with targeted early help support in an effort to improve outcomes for families.

Clusters will have a range of co-ordinated community services to meet different levels of need, delivered by providers from across the public, voluntary and private sectors to support families and communities in each local area. There will be five Clusters across the borough, each with a Family Centre that is easily accessible by the public. Professionals from a range of agencies will be co-located, working closely together around a child's or family's needs. This offers the opportunity to consider fuller integration into multi-agency teams at a later stage. Each Cluster will work closely with its Early Years, Primary and Secondary Schools.

We want to build the capacity and resilience of communities so as many families as possible can thrive using universal services. We will work in co-production with partners from the voluntary and community sector and local communities to design and deliver services that meet needs in each Cluster. We know that people using services, their families and their neighbours have much to contribute and see them as valuable partners in the co-delivery of services, with volunteers from the community having a key role in ensuring the Clusters flourish.

Cluster working enables local practitioners to build good working relationships in order to provide effective services for the families in their area. This should ensure that families receive the right support at the right time and at the earliest opportunity. Building effective working relationships helps to facilitate information sharing where appropriate - a key aspect of safeguarding.

### Early Help and Universal Services Delivered from the Clusters

Targeted Early Help services are available for children and young people aged 0-18 (25 where the young person has a disability) and their families. Early help is also delivered by universal services, particularly schools, and Clusters will ensure close relationships with all universal provision. Services include\*:

- Local Authority Family Solutions Early Help services
- Childcare
- All education establishments including Early Years, primary, secondary & post 16
- Police
- Volunteer delivered services by (e.g. Breastfeeding Buddies and Helpline)
- Health Visiting Service
- Midwifery Service
- Housing
- Primary Emotional Health & Wellbeing Service (includes School Health Advisor Service)
- Birth Registration Service
- Open access community services delivered by voluntary organisations

*\*This is not an exhaustive list*

The exact composition will vary across the five Clusters, in line with its needs analysis to ensure resources and services are based on an individual profile of local need.

### **Early Help Assessments**

An Early Help Assessment is recommended when single universal services identify that a child has some additional needs. It becomes a requirement when Universal Plus services are no longer meeting needs and a co-ordinated response from more than one agency is required. This is at the threshold between Level 2 and Level 3 (See below)

Early Help Assessments include the whole family and result in outcome-focused plans. It is essential that parental consent to share information is obtained (where age of child requires this), and this will normally be the responsibility of the referring agency to obtain.

### **Consent and Information Sharing**

The Early Help Assessment is centred on professionals seeking consent to share information with partner agencies.

The Early Help Assessment consent should be signed by all household members who are aged 14 and over.

Practitioners should encourage the parent/carer to inform younger children in the household of the family's involvement in the Early Help programme and that data is being shared with other agencies.

## **Stage 1 – Assessments/Early Help Assessments**

**Early Help** - Where Dudley's Threshold Framework indicates that children's needs are Level 2 or 3 (see below) an Early Help Assessment will be completed by a Lead Professional.

Every completed Early Help Assessment will be sent to the appropriate monitored cluster inbox linked to the child's home address:

### **Level 3: Complex Needs**

Children, young people and their families will have had their needs and the potential for risk to the child identified through an Early Help Assessment. This risk may lead to harm without a substantial package of intervention by universal and targeted services. Coordinated by a Team Around the Family.

## Level 2: Additional Needs

Children are best supported at universal plus level by universal agencies already working with them such as schools or health staff. Working closely with the child and family ensures that all necessary support is provided. An Early Help Assessment is recommended to identify additional needs and how best to meet them.

**MASH/SPA** - Where there are child and family needs identified through contact via the MASH/SPA through organisations who are not ordinarily in a positions to undertake an Early Help Assessment (Paramedics, GP, Police, Fire Service etc.) the Early Help Desk will complete an Internal Request form which will be sent to the appropriate monitored cluster inbox linked to the child's home address.

**CSE/Missing/DART** – The Early Help Assessment process described in this document compliments the existing multi-agency CSE/DART and Missing processes but does not replace any of the existing pathways.

**Step Down** - The social worker will send the recent assessment and other relevant supporting documents (CP Plan, CIN Plan etc.) to the appropriate monitored cluster inbox linked to the child's home address.

**Monitored Inboxes** - The Family Solutions monitored inboxes are as follows:

[FS.DudleyNorth@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:FS.DudleyNorth@dudley.gov.uk)

[FS.DudleyCentral@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:FS.DudleyCentral@dudley.gov.uk)

[FS.BrierleyHill@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:FS.BrierleyHill@dudley.gov.uk)

[FS.Halesowen@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:FS.Halesowen@dudley.gov.uk)

[FS.Stourbridge@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:FS.Stourbridge@dudley.gov.uk)

If information is coming from an nhs.net, pnn.police.uk or a gsi.gov.uk email account, please ensure this is sent to the GCSX email address below, to ensure the information is sent securely.

[Fsecure@dudley.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:Fsecure@dudley.gcsx.gov.uk)

## Stage 2 – Cluster Administration

The Early Help Assessment/Assessment will be processed by the relevant Family Centre administration team using EIS. This will include initial screening of consent to share information with Early Help Partners, basic demographic information, and cluster relevance via the Postcode Checker etc.

The Family Centre Manager/Senior Practice Supervisor will screen every Early Help Assessment and determine whether a resource is required from the Early Help partners across the cluster. Should there be a resource requirement, the child/ren and family will be discussed at the next Allocation Partnership meeting.

## Stage 3 – Allocation Partnership Meetings

Allocation Partnership Meetings will take place every 10 working days commencing **Thursday 15 December 2016** across all five cluster areas.

The attendance will typically be:

- **DMBC Family Solutions** - Family Centre Manager
- **DMBC Family Solutions** - Senior Practice Supervisor
- **DMBC Family Solutions** - Administrator
- **Health Representative**-Health Visiting and School Nursing
- **Housing**
- **Community and Voluntary Sector (Cluster Based)**
- **Education/Childcare/Additional Needs Representative (Cluster Based)**
- **Other relevant cluster Early Help Partners**

**Step Down Prioritisation** - Where cases are part of the social care step-down procedure, family support work will be prioritised and allocated outside of the Allocation Partnership to ensure there is no undue delay moving from CIN to Early Help. The details of the information would be shared at the following Allocation Partnership meeting with the option of Early Help partners adding to the support plan at the Allocation Partnership meeting.

The details of families to be discussed will be shared with Early Help representatives (listed above) no later than 5 pm each Monday before the Allocation Partnership meeting to enable 48 hours to examine historical or current involvement.

All other cases will be discussed at the Allocation Partnership meeting with a multi-professional decision as to whether:

- A resource will be allocated from Early Help services
- What the resource is and who will deliver the resource
- Whether the resource will be delivered as a single or multiple agency response

Following the decision making process, the administrator will record on EIS the outcome and following the meeting inform the Lead Professional of the outcome by email.

Work will commence from the relevant Early Help agency in line with their typical procedures.

### **Escalation Procedures**

Should there be disagreement between the Lead Professional and the decision making process, the Lead Professional should contact the Family Centre Manager in the first instance to request a review. Should there remain any disagreement; the Lead Professional should request a review from the Family Solutions Service Manager, Family Support.

### **Quality Assurance and Data Performance**

The Early Help Quality Assurance framework will be developed concurrent with the onset of this process.

**Next Steps and Timescales**

**2 December 2016**

Close down multiple referral forms/routes into Family Solutions

**5 December 2016**

Commence Early Help Assessments and Step Down Arrangements in the Early Help Operating Model

**15 December 2016**

Allocation Partnership Meetings commence in clusters

**Key Contacts**

**Scott Jones- Service Manager- Scott Jones- [scott.x.jones@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:scott.x.jones@dudley.gov.uk)- 01384 814077**

**Dudley North Family Centre Manager- Sarah Roper- [sarah.j.roper@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.j.roper@dudley.gov.uk)- 01384 813178**

**Dudley Central Family Centre Manager- Sue Powell- [susan.powell@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:susan.powell@dudley.gov.uk)- 01384 813543**

**Brierley Hill Family Centre Manager-Teresa McNally- [Teresa.mcnally@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Teresa.mcnally@dudley.gov.uk)- 01384 813322**

**Stourbridge Family Centre Manager- Calcyta Mapp- [Calcyta.mapp@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Calcyta.mapp@dudley.gov.uk)- 01384 818780**

**Halesowen Family Centre Manager- Vacant Post (Calcyta Mapp covering)**