**Early Help Locality Network Meeting**

**Brixham – Thursday 20th January 2022**

**15.00 – 17.00 via MS Teams**

**Present:**

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| Lorrie Layne | LL | Torbay Council – Community Engagement Officer (Chair) |
| Pippa Bastock | PB | Deputy DSL, Roselands Primary School |
| Carolyn Brend | CB | Torbay Council - Portage |
| Beth Chitty | BC | Torbay Council – Early Help Service |
| Amy Coles-Shepherd | ACS | Torbay Council – Family Intervention Team |
| Thomas El-Hoss | TEH | University of Exeter |
| Linda Hayden | LH | Torbay Council - Portage |
| Jenny Hunt | JH | Torbay Youth Trust |
| Jessica Keast-Towns | JKT | Make Amends Project |
| George Morley | GM | Peopletoo |
| Sarah Pengelly | SP | HAAF Project |
| Jodie Pine | JP | TESS |
| Milly Shepperd | MS | Eat that Frog |
| Tanny Stobart | TS | Play Torbay |

**Apologies:**

|  |  |  |
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| Mark Gray | MG | Peopletoo |

**Welcome and Introductions**

**Future Chairing Arrangements**

The group discussed potential options for future chairing of this locality network meeting. Key points:

* Attendance at the Brixham network tends to be lower than the other two; this could be because many schools have staff meetings on a Wednesday when these meetings tend to be set
* It was noted, however, that more needs to be done to try and engage more schools (and this could include changing the day)
* The agendas for the meeting tend to be set by the local authority who currently chair them -the group agreed that the ideal was to move towards agendas set by partners so that we are covering the areas that they want to cover. Predominantly the idea behind the network is to discuss locality-based issues. It was suggested that it may be worth having the agenda ready to go with the area specific items each time. This could be sent out to all schools to encourage involvement.
* In terms of chairing, there was a recognition that there are other roles implied by this, including the co-ordination of the meeting, and these tasks would need to be factored into any agreement (e.g. support to do these)
* It was suggested that meetings should be for an hour and a half

**Feedback about the Early Help Model in Practice – an opportunity to provide feedback and how we can make the model work in practice**

Key points:

* It was suggested that there could be some revision for people around the model, as it has been some time since the original induction sessions
* The Early Help Assessment Training seems to be working well as there is a reduction in calls requesting support in filling out the form.
* Cases seem to be being dealt with by panel in a timely way and hence Team Around the Family Meetings taking place promptly, with an increased level of information and understanding of cases.
* There is some slight confusion with different between Early Help and Targeted Help and it would be good to have some guidance on this. (NB note added after meeting – we no longer use the term “targeted help” and only use “early help”)
* It was suggested that it would be useful to develop a leaflet explaining the approach to Early Help and the key contacts, and displaying the logos that suggest the partnership approach. It may be useful to consult with parents and carers what language they would like to see in a leaflet.

**Feedback from Early Help Implementation Board:**

* **Early Help Board Governance**
* **Principles of Early Help**

The new Early Help Governance framework, with a Strategic Board, replacing the current Early Help Board, is now expected to be in place by February 2022. There has been a change to the proposed structure in that whereas previously there was an intention to develop a Commissioning Group alongside this, there will now be 4 sub groups to the Strategic Board, which will be:

* The 3 Early Help Locality Networks
* Best Start in Life (incorporating the Torbay Promise)
* The Early Help Hub Project Board
* Workforce Development

Commissioning will be subsumed into the main strategic group. The group discussed the draft principles and priorities of the proposed Early Help Strategic Board.

It was agreed that in principle the priorities and principles were sound, though the priorities sound more like mission statements rather than priorities. They are also quite broad at the moment, and need to be broken down into measurable outcomes.

**Early Help / Family Hub Update**

A bid has been made to the DfE Family Hubs Transformation Fund, with the outcome to be known in March. Notwithstanding whether this will be successful or not, the bid has sharpened the focus on our delivery plan, and we now have a detailed delivery plan which can be either implemented in full should we be successful with the funding, or a version thereof if we are not. We have been speaking to a number of potential Hub partners as part of a Phase 1 implementation, and will be looking to confirm these by the end of February.

Torbay’s Early Help / Family Hub model (the two titles mean the same, but “Family Hubs” is the term being used nationally) is very much based on Hubs that are a fundamental part of their local community, where families have existing relationships that they trust and who help connect them to wider services as they need them

**Mapping of Domestic Abuse Services**

The group were referred to the recent questionnaire seeking to establish the extent of work around domestic abuse in Torbay. This is to support the Standing Tall Forum to understand if there are any further services that they may not be aware of, and support in a mapping of DA services across the Bay.

The questionnaire will be sent through again with these minutes, with a request if returns could be made as soon as possible.

**First Steps Advice – Carolyn Brend (3pm)**

Carolyn Brend presented to the group on the First Steps Advice service. Key points:

* This service provides a drop in service for professionals requiring advice on supporting a child or young person with an additional need. It is recommended as the first step before considering whether or not to request an assessment for an EHCP
* The drop in is offered every third Tuesday of the month. Cases can be brought to these sessions but must be anonymised
* This service will be launched in April 2022

The contact for this service is Carolyn Brend – [Carolyn.brend@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:Carolyn.brend@torbay.gov.uk)

TESS run a forum for designated safeguarding leads with 5 schools attending – it was suggested that Carolyn attend and give a brief presentation.

**Early Help Service Update on Interventions – Beth Chitty (4pm)**

Beth Chitty promoted a new service being delivered via the Family Intervention Team.

These include:

* Parenting Apart – reducing parental conflict for separated parents and resolving contact issues outside of the family court arena.
* DAY programme for young people (13+) identified as at risk of DA or CSE or beginning to display abusive behaviour. This programme uses popular culture media to promote more healthy relationship behaviour
* CRAFT restore relationships enabling men to change their behaviour and form more healthy relationships. Also appropriate for low/ med risk DA perpetrators.
* DA champion training - for professionals.

The contact for this service is Beth Chitty – beth.chitty@torbay.gov.uk

A question was raised as to whether primary schools be involved in this work, but the initiatives are primarily for children over 14 at this stage.

**TMRF Research**

Thomas El-Hoss updated the group around the research programme being led by the University of Exeter. This is focussed on understanding families’ experience of receiving services, to help inform services around their planning and how they can be sure to be accessible.

The group were invited to connect with the project if they have families who they feel would like to contribute to this research.

It was suggested that families in the young carers network could be interested in this. **Tom to share details for any interested practitioners to reach out and get involved.**

**Updates from partners (for example any key developments to share)**

The Your Best Friend initiative added to the chat: <https://yourbestfriend.org.uk/fund>. This initiative is distributing £300,000 in grants to organisations and groups based in England and Wales to create their own ideas and projects that support Your Best Friend’s aims

**Training and workforce development opportunities**

Early Help Assessment Training is still currently ongoing on a fortnightly basis to the end of February.

These have been well attended; all current dates as well as the current version of the Early Help Assessment and Early Help Plan can be found on the Early Help Website <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/children-and-families/services-and-support/early-help/>

**Date and Time of Next Meeting**

To be agreed for March 2022