



Shaping the Future of Early Help in Torbay

Working together to bring a partnership model for delivering Early Help to life

Mark Gray | February 2021

Peopletoo: Our review of the approach to Early Help

- Following a review of Torbay's children's services in its wider context in 2019, Peopletoo were commissioned by Torbay County Council to undertake a focused review of the approach to Early Help.
- The previous review highlighted the significant dependencies between an effective Early Help offer and the effective reduction of the need for social care intervention. Increasing numbers of Children Looked After had put the placement budget and local placement provision under considerable pressure, leading to an increase in the usage of more costly and out of borough residential provision.
- The outcome of this deeper dive review was a proposed new Partnership Model of Early Help. Peopletoo have since been supporting early implementation of the new model.

Our review of Early Help – recap of key activities

Summer 2020 - date



Partnership engagement
– 1:1 meetings with a range of partner organisations across the public and voluntary sector.



1:1 meetings with key Officers and Services within Torbay council.



Partnership engagement events exploring contributions to early help, strengths and challenges and opportunities and ideas for change.



Ongoing test and challenge of the developing partnership model for delivering early help with key stakeholders.

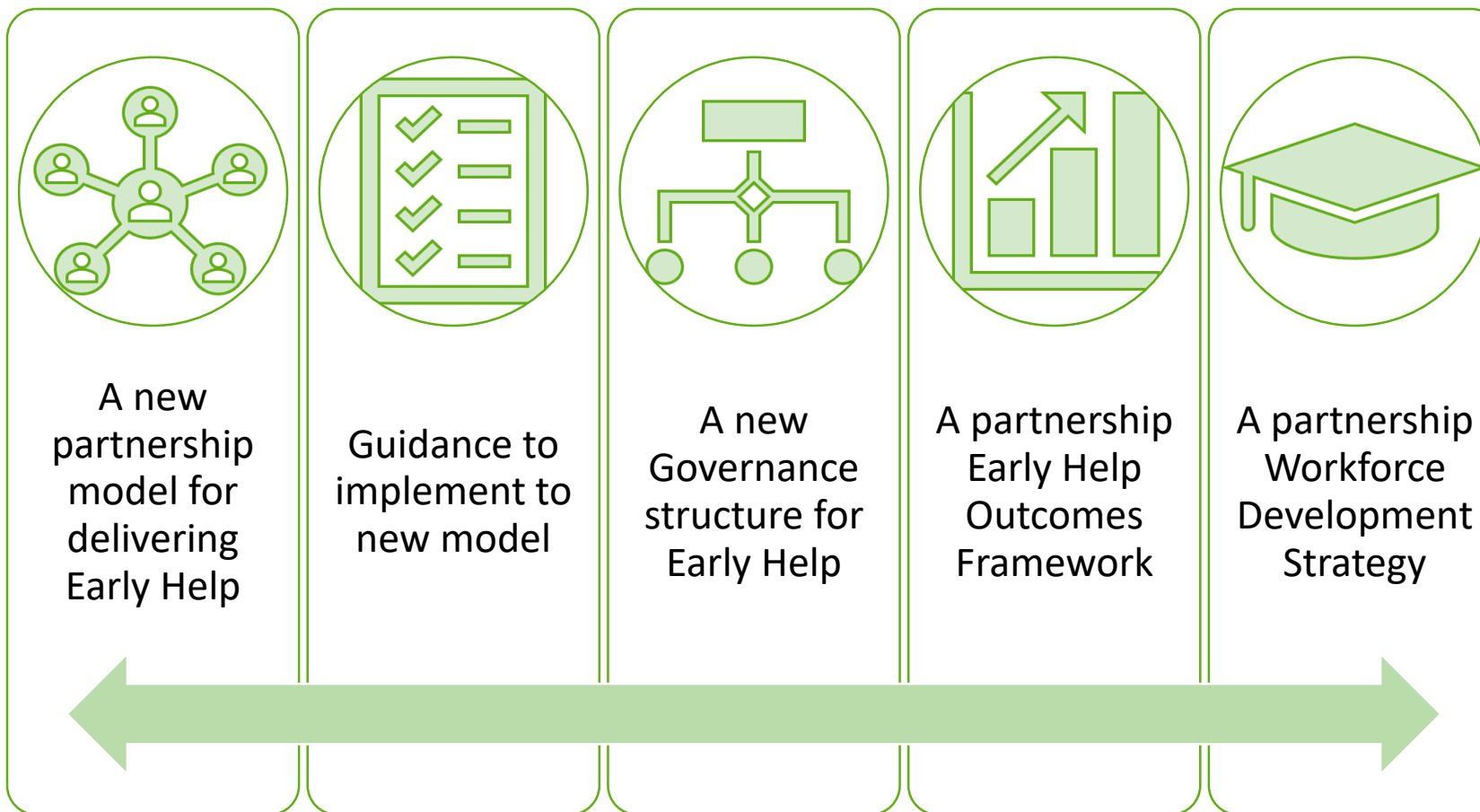


In-depth review and research of best practice.



Feedback of key findings and recommendations to Torbay's senior leadership team.

Products from this review



A new model for delivering early help

- A partnership model for delivering Early Help is to be developed. This model will clearly define what it is we mean when we talk about early help and it will recognise the contributions that all partners make to supporting children and families.
- It is recommended that the Torbay partnership develop a hub and spoke model delivered by integrated early help locality teams. – these will be based in Torbay, Brixham & Paignton
- The 'old' CAF Mentor role will be re-introduced. This will focus on assisting partners to support children and families at a low level, without the need for an Early Help Assessment, and without making a referral to the Integrated Team.
 - Family Support Workers will provide this mentorship role and will be the first point of contact for wider partners who may need advice and support in enabling families to access early help.
 - This role will have a “social prescriber / community connector” function which links community-based provision to the partner, to support them in helping and enabling the family.

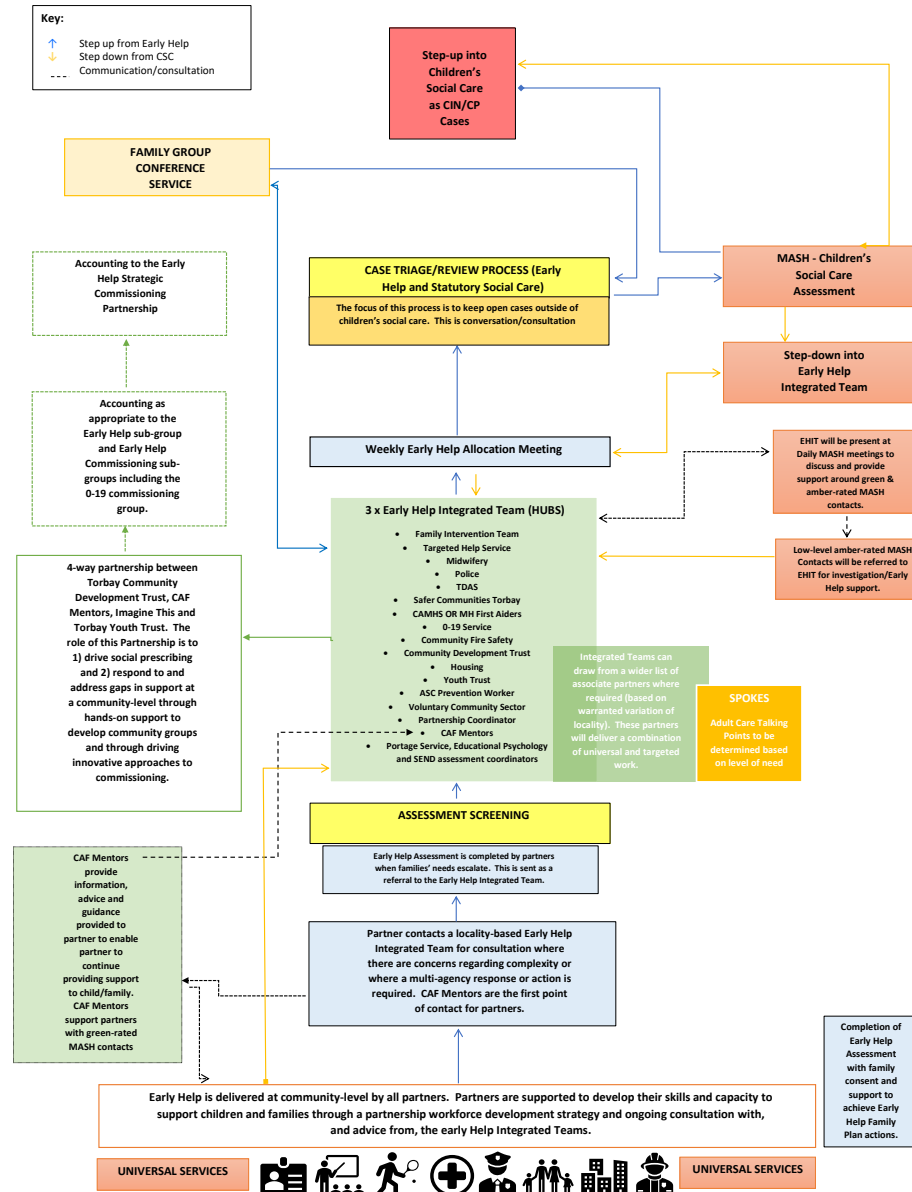
A new model for delivering early help

- This new model will require the development of a strong partnership between Torbay Community Development Trust, Torbay Youth Development Trust, Family Support Workers and the wider Voluntary Community Sector via Imagine This.
 - The purpose of this partnership is to a) drive the social prescribing model and b) respond to, and address, gaps in support at a community-level.
- The integrated teams themselves will be located in community 'hubs' which will be identified based on the level of community need and based on family footfall to ensure that services are located in the places that matter most to children and families.
 - To support the identification of potential hub locations, we are currently undertaking extensive mapping of community services and community needs and talking to partners about how we may enable the relationships to deliver the model
- The hub and spoke model of Early Help will also enable stronger links between children's services and adult's services, providing opportunity to work in a more holistic, strengths-based way with the whole family, with opportunities to 'hot-desk' and base services in Adult Care Talking Points across the Bay area.

A new model for delivering early help

- The model will provide all partners with a supportive, consultative network that promotes strong working relationships and shared responsibility for children and families. This model will support a shift in culture away from referrals and hand-offs, and will create a culture of shared responsibility, shared ownership and support for one another as individuals and professionals.
- When partners need input and support from the Family Support Workers as early help mentors, partners will need to complete an Early Help assessment, providing as much information as possible to ensure that the early help integrated team can more quickly decide and advise on the most appropriate referral pathway for the family.
- The model will be aligned to the Thrive framework, and partners will be supported by family support workers and senior managers within children's social care in the planning and delivery of TAF plans with the Early Help Integrated Team providing intensive support when families do need more help.
- The model will provide safe and effective step-up, step-down pathways between universal services, early help, targeted help and statutory children's social care. There will be mutual agreement across the partnership before cases are stepped-up/down to ensure that the family's plan, goals and aspirations are understood, and to ensure that families have received all of the help that they possibly can before escalating cases into children's social care.

Appendix 1: Shaping the Future of Early Help in Torbay – an Integrated, Locality-based model



How the Early Help Model Practically support the Health and Well Being Strategy

How can the Early Help Model Support the Health and Well Being Strategy?

Governance and Reporting

- Establishing a reporting line through the Health and Well Being Board to ensure that we are helping to meet their priorities
- Ensuring a clarity between the Early Help Implementation Board and the 0-19 Partnership and a way forward to reduce duplication and make best use of partners' time

Practical Working Together

- Working closely with the 0-19 Service to ensure that it is fully part of the Integrated Locality Team Model
- Building in trauma-informed and take account of Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Specifically contributing to the domestic abuse agenda
- Embedding the Thrive Model to promote work around Emotional Health and Well Being
- Building upon the Resilience Framework to support a strengths based approach to assessment / pre-assessment
- Taking Public Health data and intelligence to help set priorities for Early Help but also in evaluating the effectiveness of it

