

# Early Help in Sandwell

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# Sandwell's Early Help Strategy

- A key strategy: Grant Thornton Review, LGA Peer Challenge Report, feedback from Ofsted 2022
- Identifying and addressing children's needs early in their lives or in the onset of a problem
- Prevent problems from escalating into statutory arena – intrusive, inflexible, expensive
- Too many contacts/referrals do not progress to a social care service
- Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play (Section 10 of Children Act; Working Together 2018)



# What is Early Help?

- Early Help is not a service, it is a collaborative approach.
- Early Help seeks to identify unmet needs of children and families, intervening to address these needs
- Early Help means providing the ***right support, in the right place, at the right time***, at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Early Help is the responsibility, and should be delivered, by all agencies who work with children and families within Sandwell.
- Statutory guidance is provided through Working together 2018



# Early Help Governance

- Early Help and the implementation of the strategy is overseen by the Early Help Partnership, chaired by the voluntary sector, with representatives from SMBC, SCT, Education, Police and Health
- The Early Help Partnership reports to the Children and Families Strategic Partnership
- Sandwell Childrens Safeguarding Partnership receives regular updates and assurance of progress against the Early Help strategy and action plan



# The windscreen of help and support

## Multi agency Early Help

**In need of a multi agency response.**

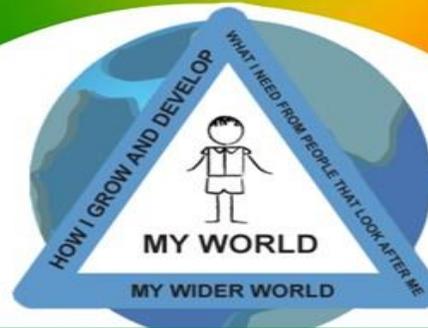
The child and family *require* a Team around the family (TAF) as they have two or more unmet needs. If the level of risk increases then step up to a TAF lead by Strengthening Families Service within SCT should be considered.

## Early Help

**Single agency response from an agency within the partnership.**

(No TAF required)

The child and family are identified as having one additional need



## Statutory Social Work In need of safeguarding

Children in need of social work led statutory assessment and intervention because there is a risk of significant harm (Child In Need Assessment (s17), Child Protection (s47), Looked After Children.

## Universal

Services that can be accessed by all children and young people



# Tools to support the delivery of multi agency Early Help

- **Early Help Assessment (EHA)** – assessment to be completed with families to identify needs and develop a plan.
- **Early Help Module (EHM)** – electronic system to record all multi agency early help intervention.
- **Team Around the Family (TAF)** – multi agency meeting attended by the child and family to develop and monitor the plan.
- **The Lead professional (LP) role** – professional that leads support and is the main point of contact for the family.



# Progress and achievements

- ✓ Early Help Strategy launch – February 2022
- ✓ Partnership training made up of three modules embedded – a fourth being added from January 2023.
- ✓ The Early Help Partnership host two website for families and professionals to search for early help support in Sandwell.
- ✓ Sandwell's Early Help data DASHBOARD developed and went live in September 2022
- ✓ Refreshed Early Help Assessment (EHA) – October 2022
- ✓ Four partnership events took place during November confirming the priorities
- ✓ An Early Help e-Learning package has been written and is being developed to go live in March 2023



Examples from Police and Health

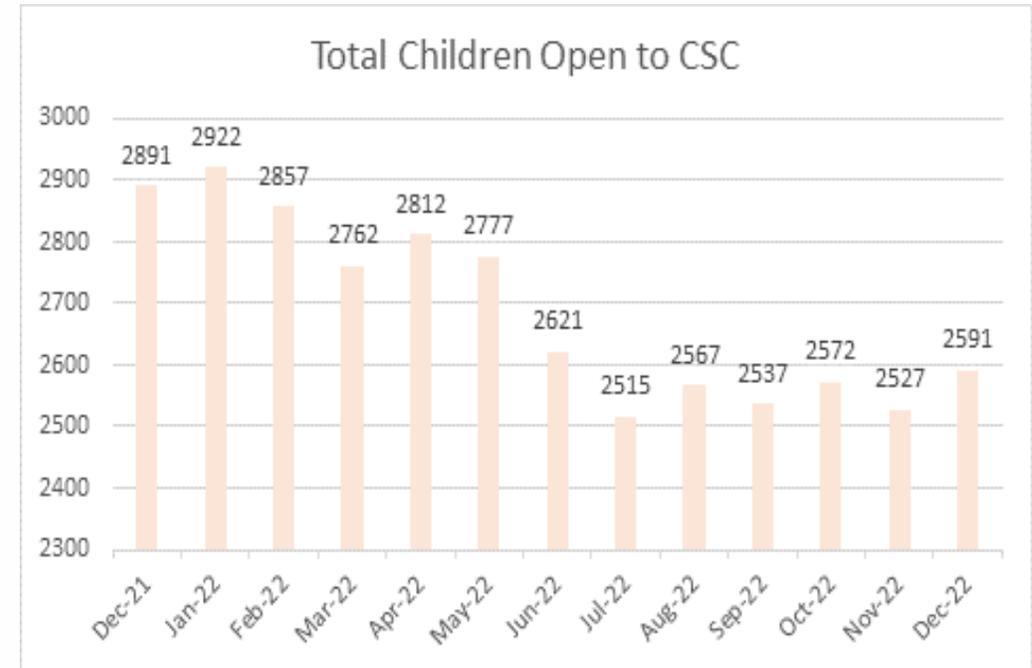
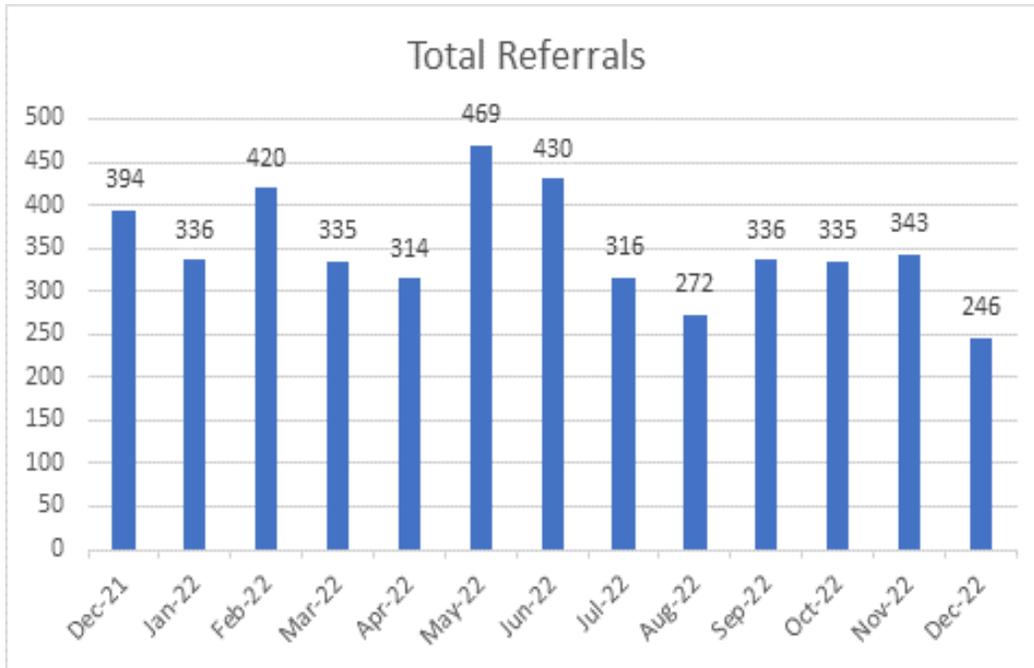


# Impact and Progress

- 3% increase in multi agency early help led by agencies across the partnership since July 2022 (36-38.6%). Further increase in November 22, with Police taking lead professional role for two families
- There has been 20% increase in the number of families the Strengthening Families Service work with that would suggest more families are being supported in the early help arena
- 400 fewer children open to social care compared to this time last year
- Demand for early help training has increased with 4 additional sessions held to meet demand in the last 2 months



# Impact and Progress on Childrens Social Care



# Areas for Development

- Ongoing promotion of the strategy and the messaging around Early Help to ensure commitment and engagement from all partners
- The Early Help data dashboard to be used to proactively challenge partners and ensure we are providing ***'right support, at the right time, in the right place'***
- Further reduction in the amount of MARFs received by Sandwell Children's Trust that result in no statutory social work intervention
- Ongoing cultural change across the partnership to ensure as a partnership we think 'prevention' at every level.



# The next steps

- Consultation with children and families to ensure the Early Help message is known and understood in communities across Sandwell.
- Continue to promote the need for diversity in the take up of Lead Professional
- Improved analysis of the Early Help data dashboard, leading to constructive challenge where required.
- Bespoke discussions e.g. with Adult Services, Sandwell Healthy Minds and CAMHS planned for January 2023 to confirm their contribution to the Early Help approach
- Complete and launch the new Early Help e-Learning module.
- A 'year on' partnership event to look at progress made within the last 12 months and confirmation next steps.

