

# South Norfolk: Making a Difference through Early Help



Our innovative Early Help Multi-agency Hub has been leading the way, bringing together agencies from across the District to work together providing holistic support to residents that is making a real difference to their lives now and in the future.

## Our Journey

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In February 2013 OFSTED highlighted that Norfolk County Council Children's Services were "*inadequate*" and failing to protect its young children and families. The support offered was "*patchy and inconsistent*", the diverse needs of individuals were "*not always taken into account*" and the early identification of issues was infrequent and sporadic. As a result, children and families were too often left vulnerable and exposed with their support needs unidentified for extensive periods of time. This allowed initial low risk issues to escalate, reaching high level thresholds of statutory intervention before triggering any form of support or action. If we continued to work in this way we would see more and more young children and families deprived of the support they needed to achieve better outcomes and the best chance in life.

It was vital that we took responsibility and made immediate change. Agencies had long recognised that an early intervention model, stimulating collaboration was the fundamental shift needed to transform the way in which public services offered support and addressed the issues presented by families, children and vulnerable residents. However, they had struggled to take any practical steps to make it a reality. As Chair of the Early Help Improvement Board, South Norfolk offered to become a lead to develop the new and integrated way of working in Norfolk.

The Early Help Hub pathfinder was led by the Chief Executive of South Norfolk Council and the Interim Assistant Director for Children Services. In January 2013, lead executives from across the public and voluntary sector committed to support and deliver this new joined-up approach to delivering early help services for children, families and older residents in their organisations. This included a commitment to:

- Deliver timely and practical support that meets residents' needs
- Provide swift access to support for all residents, young or old, for those who don't meet the threshold for social care
- Work collaboratively, with a one culture approach to sharing information and intelligence so residents only have to tell their story once but receive all the support they require
- Work with children, families and individuals in their localities as one single team to offer a holistic and tailored support package
- Deliver a no wrong door culture, where residents have simpler access to support services
- Align resources and remove duplication to maximise the utilisation of our resources.

In order to make a real difference to the lives of those in most need we committed to roll out our approach at pace, it was vital that our delivery was not stalled by discussion on infinite details involving processes and protocols, a slow approach was simply not an option. Therefore, we took an iterative approach to delivery and a just do it attitude learning and developing our service model, protocols and processes as we went. If we had put protocols and processes before pace of delivery we would have hindered our ability to reach those families, children and vulnerable individuals that had either already fallen from the universal pathway or were at risk of escalating issues.

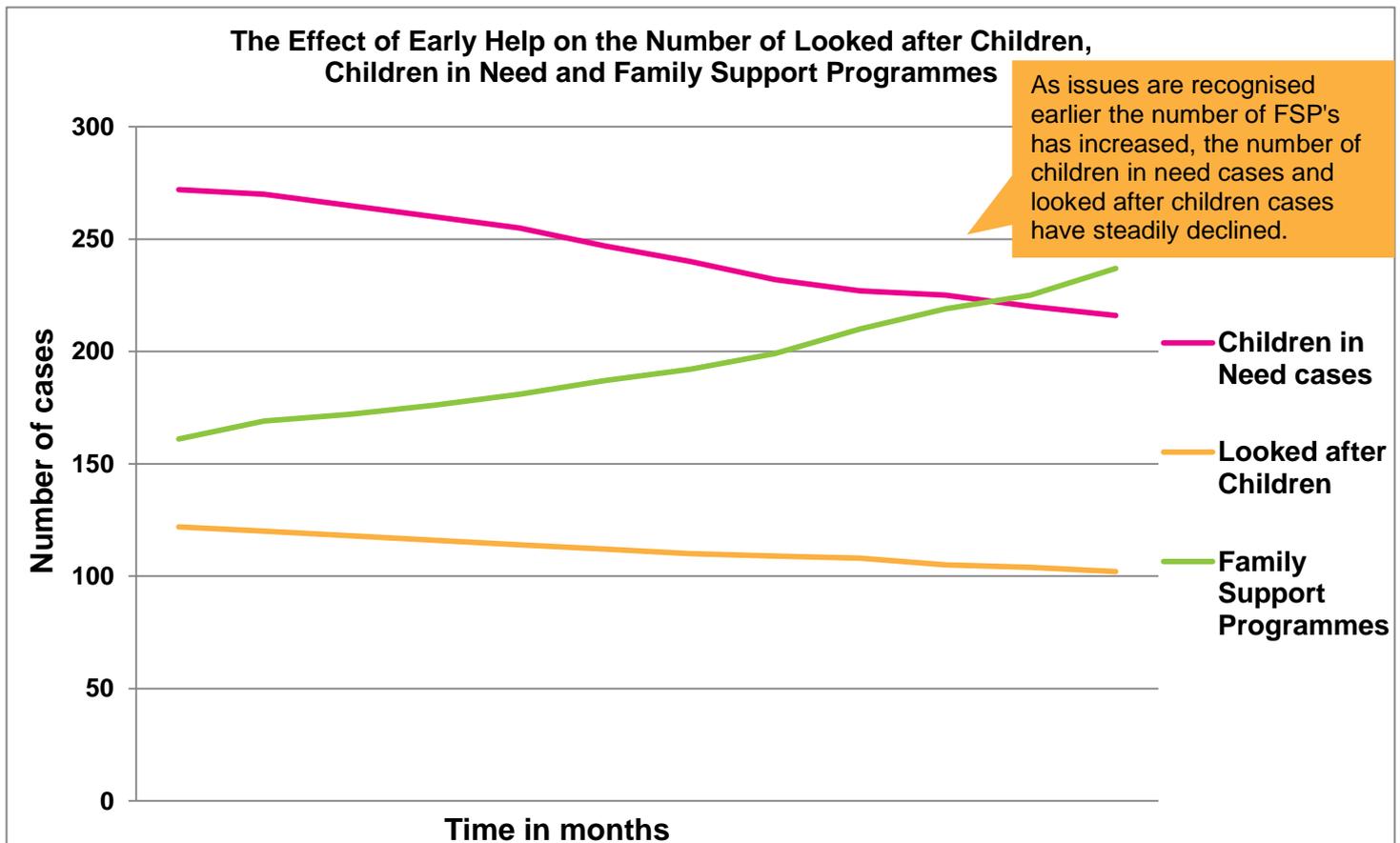
Since then, our early help approach has grown from strength to strength; partners are committed to achieving the shared objective of early intervention. Our one team, one

culture way of working allows multi-agency support to surround families and individuals seamlessly, it has built community capacity and prevented issues from escalating but more importantly, it has provided those that most need it with the vital support to achieve the best outcomes in life.

### Why did we need an Early Help approach?

A culture of intervention at the point of safeguarding thresholds had become for many the earliest offer of support from professionals therefore, allowing issues to escalate over long periods requiring intensive and costly intervention methods to support them back onto the universal pathway. If we had continued with this approach over time we would have seen an increase in not only the number of young people, families and older residents presenting with issues but a significant increase in the pace of issues presented across a range of indicators e.g. looked after children, mental health.

Our early help approach slows the initial increasing trajectory by tackling issues at the earliest opportunity and identifying the root cause preventing escalation and reoccurrence. This approach to early intervention moves vulnerable families and children into a safe and secure environment and away from high need and costly levels of intervention. The graph below demonstrates how our early help approach has made a significant difference to the number of open children in need and looked after children cases in South Norfolk.



Often issues do not occur in isolation and therefore, require multifaceted support from a number of different agencies. Before our early help approach support was offered in silos, information sharing rarely occurred; children, families and vulnerable residents had to repeat their story numerous times to a number of different professionals through a number of different routes. Often the resident was unaware of the range of support available and how or where to access it, this would result in an offer that only partially covers their needs.

Our Early Help Hub model incorporates localised and generic support through a series of local delivery hubs located in Diss, Wymondham and Costessey. These delivery hubs are significant in offering residents access to all the support they need through one single door ensuring that professionals make the connections between all agencies and eliminates the need for the resident to repeat their story

Our early help approach promotes a culture where information is shared among partners and agencies to enable us to make quick referrals and deliver the right package of support at the right time, for the right duration.

True collaboration as demonstrated through our Early Help Hub approach releases resource that is too often spent on the time-consuming and duplicated processes. This freed resource has been refocused to deliver timely and appropriate support to those in need.

## Our Early Help approach

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Our Early Help approach focuses on improving outcomes for families, older and vulnerable residents, young people and children, making public sector and voluntary services more efficient and effective for residents, reducing duplication and building the capacity of the community.

### South Norfolk Early Help approach

#### Supporting better outcomes for Families and older and vulnerable people

Improved outcomes for families

Team around the family

Community connectors identify where funding is needed

Telling their story once, the professionals do the legwork

Older and vulnerable people living independently for longer

#### Providing more effective and efficient joined-up Services

Reducing higher need, higher cost acute services

Removing duplication in services i.e. contacts, assessments

Generic working

Investing in workforce development

Localised service delivery

#### Building Community Capacity

Empowering the community to be self-supporting

Working with the community to develop their own solutions

Increasing community capacity

Asset based community development

Flexible Fund to target resources where they are needed

**Families and older people:** Intervening earlier enables issues to be *'nipped in the bud'* and prevented from escalating into more intensive interventions for the families. Often this is because services set their criteria to deal later with these escalating issues, and therefore many fall under the radar. In order to identify emerging issues we have recruited Community Connectors to be the voice of the community as well as a conduit between the community and services. Community Connectors support families where they congregate e.g. playgrounds, pubs and community events. This has worked by creating a more informal, approachable route for residents to access early help services.

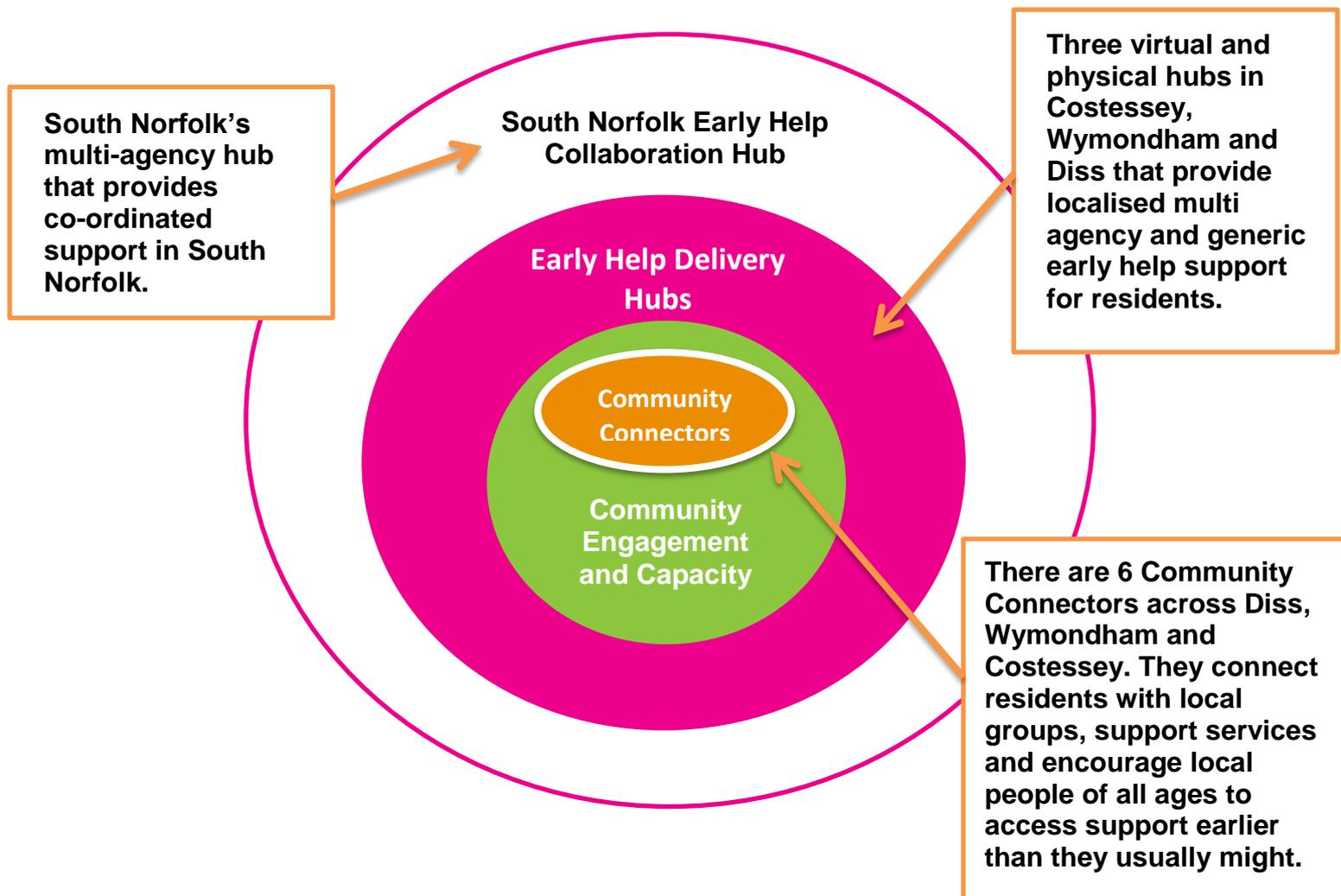
**Services:** The focus around services is based on shifting resource from acute services to earlier interventions which are far less intensive. This has been achieved through both tackling issues early to prevent escalation and working closely with families and children that have reached the higher tiers of need to allow them to step back down into lower tiers of support and eventually back onto the universal pathway.

In order to initiate intervention earlier it is important that residents are able to tell their issue to the person they feel most comfortable talking to, who is then able to support the resident to a level they feel comfortable with by having a generic knowledge of related services. Our collaborative culture makes every contact count: partners are encouraged to adopt a holistic approach and will liaise with other support services that the resident requires, this means that we can meet the needs of residents first time round through a holistic service.

**Communities:** Real early intervention empowers communities to identify solutions to problems emerging within their own neighbourhood, identifying assets within the community and working with services to make sure that right support is in place. This support can be offered through small grants to communities to develop their own initiatives that meet community need. We have and will continue to engage with communities to shape the services and, where appropriate, build their capacity to help us deliver them. This has helped to spread the message of our early help services and built trust amongst the community about the help that we can provide.

## Our Delivery Model

Our Early Help Hub is a preventative and collaborative model that focuses on ensuring families, older and vulnerable people remain on the universal pathway, preventing escalation of need, reducing duplication and inefficiency across sectors freeing up resource to focus intensively on reducing the number families and communities in greater need.



The Early Help Collaborative Hub embeds a cross-team working culture where partners disseminate vital information and pull together to provide support. The Early Help Delivery Hubs take the service to our localities, providing and linking residents to a range of multi-agency support tailored to their needs; an approach that moves beyond treating issues in isolation. The Community Connectors utilise the benefits of social media alongside face to face contact to engage with the community to build trust, providing a more informal and approachable way to access services.

## South Norfolk Early Help Collaboration Hub

The Early Help Hub has been developed to promote agencies to work more effectively and efficiently together with shared vision and goals. The Hub puts families, older and vulnerable and the community at the top of our priorities, giving them a single point of access for a wide range of services and agencies.

### *What our partners say...*

*"The Early Help Hub has helped me in my role considerably, it raised the profile of Stonham Youth mediation and allowed for inter-agency discussion about potential referrals for this service, it has also enabled me to work with other agencies to the betterment of my clients. I highly recommend the early help hub in Long Stratton Council Offices as a base from which to work."*

**Caroline Toes, Youth Mediator, Stonham Support Services**

## Early Help Delivery Hubs

During engagement activities residents told us that they *"wanted to access help and support in a comfortable environment"* and *"improved access to support in our locality."* We achieved this through our Early Help Delivery Hubs in Wymondham, Diss and Costessey. By taking the support out to our residents through our Early Help Delivery Hubs we have created a central point *"the front door"* service for providing support for residents in a safe and secure environment. This has transformed the way in which we engage and work with families, communities and agencies.

## Community Engagement and Capacity

First hand insight told us that residents wanted *"to be able to identify with those that offer support"* and *"to know what we mean and to be 'been there and done that'."* Our six Community Connectors based in Diss, Wymondham and Costessey do just that. They have an excellent knowledge of the local community and familiar with the services available. They connect with residents and steer them to local groups, support services and encourage people of all ages to access support at the earliest stage. Our Community Connectors have proven vital in engaging with families and the local community gaining their trust and confidence to enable them to achieve their potential.

## The Partners

We have 27 partners making up the Early Help Hub. This has increased by 12 in just under a year, resulting in quicker referrals informing decisions and reducing the demand and cost on the statutory thresholds for intervention.



The partners that make up the team co-located in the Early Help Hub provide a comprehensive range of services including:

- Family Support
- Youth mediation
- Support for parenting
- Support for getting young people into work
- Substance Misuse support
- Support to access community grants
- Dealing with crime and antisocial behaviour
- Independent Living services
- Debt Advice
- Care and Repair
- Handy Persons Services
- Support to set up community groups
- Revenue and Benefits Advice
- Housing Options Support
- Youth Mental Health Service
- Adult Mental Health Service
- Adult Wellbeing Services
- Support for getting adults into work
- Domestic Abuse
- Positive activities for Young People
- Attendance Improvement at School
- Preventing youth offending
- Fire safety in the home
- Road casualty reduction
- Support for early years health
- Nuisance (e.g. noise, odour, dust, smoke, insects, light).
- Environmental Crime

The early help approach has driven some organisations to make a real shift from traditional models of delivery to a transformative prevention and early help approach:

- The South Norfolk Police team have aligned their Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to work more closely with the pathfinder, empowering Officers to provide a proactive approach at the initial contact, to either deal with the issue, or encourage early support through a multiagency problem solving approach.
- The Health Visiting team have moved from three different contact points to a single duty officer system co-located within the Early Help Hub. Having this single point of contact based alongside other agencies, has allowed for the improved customer access, and streamlined their information and data sharing with partners.
- Children Services re-aligned their existing resource to create a new early help team made up of family workers and community capacity builders. This has meant more investment in preventative services and a local place based approach.

- South Norfolk Council refocused its services including Revenues and Benefits, Homelessness Advice and Debt Management to deliver a preventative approach supporting residents to return and then remain on the universal pathway.

## Resourcing for Early Help

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Early help is ultimately about using current resources in a more efficient and effective way; it is not about new money. All partners who signed up to the Early Help Hub rather than giving a financial contribution were instead asked to commit to using their existing resources (e.g. staff and buildings) in a more joined up and effective way. This helped ensure buy-in was received from an early stage. South Norfolk Council and Norfolk Children's Services did invest a small amount up-front to get the hub set up.

The ultimate rationale for adopting an early help focus and developing a series of localised Early Help Delivery Hubs is all about improving outcomes for families and the older and vulnerable. However, the long term savings and resource efficiency realised through the early help approach cannot be overlooked.

By rolling out our early help approach over 10 years, we anticipate **£1.02 billion savings** Norfolk wide, according to the New Economy Cost Benefit Analysis tool whilst most importantly, improving outcomes for families.

## National Recognition for our Early Help Approach

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Due to our innovative approach we were successful in receiving some funding to help build momentum behind the new approach.

**Our Place:** The Early Help South Norfolk programme has been successful in receiving grant funding and consultancy support from the Our Place programme, a joint initiative led by Locality (a network for community-led organisations) and the Local Government Association. **Our Early Help approach was recognised as one of the top twenty 'breaking new ground areas' out of the 140 total Our Place areas.**

**Delivering Differently Fund:** Our early help approach has been further supported through the securing of Delivering Differently in Neighbourhoods funding of £90,000. This funding enabled us to further roll out our approach across other localities in the District.

## Our Impact

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We expect to see the greatest impact of our early help approach over the next five years, however with our Early Help Hub only in its second year of delivery; indicators are already showing how our work with our communities has had significant impact in delivering positive outcomes.

<b>Young People and Families</b>	<b>What has been the outcome?</b>
	We have reduced the number of children in need by over <b>20%</b> .
	We have reduced the number of looked after children by <b>7%</b> .
	We have seen a <b>20%</b> reduction in persistent truancy cases in both primary and secondary education.
	We are reaching more families at an earlier stage and preventing escalation of issues through a <b>47%</b> increase in our Family Support Programmes.

<b>Older and Vulnerable Residents</b>	<b>What has been the outcome?</b>
	The Early Help Hub has contributed to supporting <b>3,498</b> older and vulnerable residents to live independently. In 2015-16, <b>87%</b> of these residents remained living independently in their own home – according to the New Economy Cost Benefit Analysis this has potentially saved over <b>£57 million*</b> from Health and Social Care services.
	The Early Help Hub has contributed to preventing 404 cases of homelessness. According to the New Economy Cost Calculator this has potentially saved <b>£1.7million*</b> in homelessness costs.

\*Please see appendix one for the calculations that total the above savings.

<b>Communities</b>	<b>What has been the outcome?</b>
	We have Increased community engagement with our Community Connectors making over <b>2,500</b> contacts with residents and reaching over <b>1,000</b> by social media.

<b>Services</b>	<b>What has been the outcome?</b>
	We have made more effective and efficient referrals that have led to decisions at the earliest opportunity through our Early Help Hub collaborative model with over <b>4,000</b> contacts by agencies for data and intelligence sharing.
	There has been a decrease in the number of cases reaching statutory thresholds for intervention, with <b>95%</b> of families that received help from our Early Help Hub having not seen their issues escalate.

The case studies provided at the end of the document further highlight the pivotal role that our Early Help Hub has played in transforming the lives of those in our community.

### **What next for Early Help?**

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In order for the Early Help Hub to continue its success in transforming lives with early intervention, we have set out clear priorities, activities and outcomes for the forthcoming years as detailed on the next page.

## Outcomes and measures

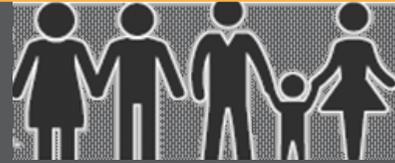
- Increased attendance at school
- Reduction on housing benefits
- Reduction in youth/adult unemployment

- Reduce the prevalence of obesity in children and adults
- Increase early access for parents to wellbeing services
- Reduce impact of substance misuse on families
- Improve low attendance rates and reduce disengagement with school
- Increase early support for debt / finance advice
- Reduce number of residents living with unmet housing needs.
- Work with partners to improve support to overcome barriers facing young people and adults into employment / training

- Reduction in obesity rates in reception/year 6/adults
- Reduction in sick days
- Reduction in substance misuse amongst parents

## Theme Activities

Improve the social, emotional and physical, wellbeing of families to enable children to reach their full potential



### Our Early Help Themes 2016/17

Improve support for residents in developing positive healthy relationships

Improve quality of life for our older and vulnerable residents through promoting independence

Raise aspirations and confidence of South Norfolk residents to create a resilient community

Residents live fulfilled, independent lives within their communities

- Increase in domestic abuse reporting
- Target reached for responding to request for support
- Reduction in number of days off work in South Norfolk

- Early identification of domestic abuse is embedded in usual working practice in key services
- Identify and promote pathways for support between agencies and ensure staff gaps are highlighted to relevant strategic leads
- Employers facilitated to recognise and support people who are at risk or victims of Domestic Abuse
- Improved awareness of healthy/positive relationships through high school engagement
- Proactive approaches are made to victims of abuse across diverse
- Target independent living support services to older and vulnerable residents at risk of falls to ensure they have access to DFG Support older and vulnerable residents to access attendance and carers allowance to ensure support networks are sustainable.
- Deliver targeted interventions such as warm and well promotion and boiler servicing to those residents identified as susceptible to excess winter deaths
- Offer grant funding to residents living with Dementia to encourage and support them and their carers to continue to living independently in their own home

- Reduction in repeat hospital admissions
- Prevention or delay of move into residential care
- Reduced number of excess winter deaths
- Reduced fear of crime

# South Norfolk Early Help Locality

## Customer

Mum and eight children, overcrowding in house. Dad has been asked to leave after allegations of abuse.

## Issue

- Mum has mental health issues and struggling to cope.
- Over 40 animals in property including 15 snakes which Dad kept and looked after. Contributing to overcrowding of property.
- School holidays approaching, mum and children needed support during holidays as coping with change of circumstances, and can be a stressful time in overcrowded house.

## Activity

- A request for support was raised and the following support was put in place for the family:
  - The housing team worked with the landlord to identify how the family could make better use of the space
  - Mum received support from Children's Services around her mental health issues
  - The Youth Advisory Board supported the family to access positive activities for the children during school holidays

## So what?

Early Help Hub model meant much quicker identification of partners who could support family. Access to funding and positive activities within days rather than weeks, helped to ensure a quicker and smoother transition downwards from section 47.

Housing situation improved enabling family to stay in accommodation.

Positive activities for children provided relief for mum to have time to develop coping mechanism, and provide a diversion for the children.

## Cost savings

Average cost of eviction: approx. £7,000  
 Average cost of homeless application: £2,600  
 Average cost of taking a child into care: £65,000

# South Norfolk Early Help Pathfinder

## Customer

Recently separated parents with three young children.

### Issue

- Dad has a mental health diagnosis and was anxious about the prospect of moving away from the family home.
- Young children were struggling with accepting that their parents were splitting up and were taking frustrations out on mum.
- Family were on verge of accessing Child In Need services.

### Activity

Through Early Help Hub, support was accessed to assist dad with finding suitable housing.

Mental Health Services were informed of separation and a plan was put in place should his mental health deteriorate.

Children were referred to youth services to provide them with additional support.

A course became available aimed at parents dealing with conflict within the home and building self-confidence; mum was linked into this.

## So what?

- Dad is settled in his property and has the children individually; this enables him to care for the children effectively and gives them special time with their dad.
- The children have all settled at home and enjoy attending their different youth groups.
- Mum completed her course and showed the most improvement in her confidence of dealing with conflict out of the whole group.
- Mum is looking at other courses which will help her with future employment.
- The family are managing well with a Family Support plan.

## Potential cost savings

Mental health services: £956 per year.  
Look After Child costs per year: £64,819  
Total potential saving per year: £65,775

## Appendix One

Potential Health and Social care cost savings are explained below:

87% of 3,498 older and vulnerable residents remained living independently in their own homes, this equates to 3043 older and vulnerable residents.

The average potential weekly cost of a resident in residential care is £359pw, over a course of the year this would equate to £18,668 per year for one resident (£359\*52 weeks a year).

Through our Early Help Hub we prevented 3043 older and vulnerable residents from entering residential care for a maximum of 52 weeks a year the total saving is £57 million (3043\*£18,668).

**Would you like to find out more on our Early Help approach or become a partner in our Early Help collaborative Hub?**

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