

**Children & Families – Early Help and
Prevention Commissioning Strategy
2013 – 2016**

DRAFT

Contents (to be completed once final text/layout agreed)

Section		Page
1	Background and context	
2	Children & Families – ‘Early Help & Prevention’	
2.1	Key Principles	
2.2	Outcomes for children and families	
3	Proposed Model of Delivery	
3.1	Four levels of need	
3.2	Procedures and processes	
3.3	Workforce / training	
4	Universal Services (Level 1)	
5	Early Help (Level 2)	
5.1	Key Early Help Services for children and families	
5.2	Procedures and Processes	
6	Targeted Support (Level 3)	
6.1	Targeted Prevention	
6.2	Troubled Families Programme	
6.3	Processes	
7	Specialist / Statutory services	
7.1	Effective step down from Specialist Services (Level 4)	
7.2	Social care input into Early Help and Targeted Support	
7.3	Use of Early Help and Prevention services by social services	
8	Troubled Families	
9	Future commissioning of Early Help and Prevention services	
9.1	Early Help Needs Analysis	
9.2	Child Poverty	
9.3	Key elements of commissioning	
9.4	Directory of Early Help / Targeted Support services	
9.5	Monitoring & Review	
Appendix 1	Early Help Forum Areas	

1. Background & Context

Prevention & Demand Management - In recognition of the increasing demand for high cost specialist services, combined with the increasing financial pressures on public services, Northamptonshire County Council has been working with partner organisations and other stakeholders over the past two years to develop its approach to prevention and demand management.

The approach is based on the principle that prevention is better than cure. Reports released by a range of bodies and individuals (for example [Graham Allen](#) MP and [Frank Field](#) MP) support the principle that prevention and early help can both reduce service costs and also improve outcomes for people.

Based on this consensus, the purpose of the Prevention & Demand Management Strategy is to:

Enable individuals and families to access appropriate support as early as possible, to help them maintain their quality of life, prevent any problems getting worse and reduce the demand for high cost, specialist support services.

Three Strands:

Prevention and Demand Management commissioning activity in Northamptonshire will be delivered in three specific strands:

- Children & Families
- Vulnerable Adults (18-65)
- Frail Elderly

Services for Children and Families are delivered by a range of organisations, including health, schools, probation services etc. This document focuses on how the County Council will target resources to support Early Help and Prevention services for Children and Families. The opportunity exists for the Northamptonshire Children and Young Peoples Board to adopt the Strategy and support their commissioning of services.

The document should be read in conjunction with the Prevention and Demand Management Framework Document.

2. Children & Families – ‘Early Help & Prevention’

Northamptonshire County Council is committed to protecting and supporting the well being and achievement of the young people in the county. However it is acknowledged that children and young people are often the most vulnerable members of our communities.

While the Council continues to provide social care support to children and young people experiencing the highest levels of problems and vulnerabilities, the Council wants to work with its partners and communities to provide effective and co-ordinated help and support to children and their families at the earliest opportunity, to prevent them from having to experience such difficulties and the related distress in the first place.

The overall principle is to provide early and effective help and support to children and families when they need it, with the long term aim of ‘helping more families in Northamptonshire to be able to help themselves’ and thus improving their overall well being and quality of life. In order for us to be able to help and support families at the earliest stage a range of partners need to work together to plan and deliver services. Strong partnerships that understand the role each agency plays and the impact each service has on supporting families are essential. This strategy informs and focuses the Council’s commissioning activity in relation to children and families. However this is done in the knowledge that this strategy only works if it is part of a larger strategy that is currently being developed by the Children and Young Peoples Partnership.

Consultation – Extensive consultation has taken place over the last two years with existing providers and customers, to inform the approach to Prevention and Demand Management, and associated support for Children and Families.

During March 2013 a further round of consultation was held. This was intended to update stakeholders on the progress that had been made in developing the strategy and seek further feedback on the principles that had been developed following previous stakeholder consultation and engagement. This consultation has informed the approach to providing ‘Early Help & Prevention’ to Children and Families.

2.1 Children & Families: Early Help & Prevention – Key principles

- **Child first** – ensuring that the welfare of children and young people is the main priority and that the view of the child is considered at all stages
- **Think family** – acknowledging that working with families as a whole is often vital in achieving well being for children and young people. Parenting skills and practices for example will have a major impact on outcomes for children and young people.
- **Staying safe** – ensuring that any issues relating to the safety of children and young people are effectively and rapidly identified and addressed.

- **Easy access** – enabling people and practitioners to easily gain access to appropriate support
- **Early Help** – providing appropriate support as early as practicable, to prevent peoples problems getting worse and reduce demand for more intensive and expensive services
- **Consistent approach** – providing consistent information, advice and support by ensuring local agencies are working to consistent approaches and processes.
- **Skilled generalists** – for those families and individuals facing a range of issues and problems which meet certain needs thresholds, targeted support will be provided through ‘skilled generalists,’ practitioners who can assist that family / individual with a wide range of issues. This will help provide co-ordinated and consistent support to people and avoid them having to deal separately with a wide range of services.
- **Promoting independence** – encouraging and enabling families to maintain their quality of life through accessing provision in their local community (Helping them to help themselves)
- **Accessible & delivered locally** – where practicable, providing services within local communities.
- **Trust & Respect** – trying to develop a trusting relationship between children, families and support services, ensuring the views of all are respected when trying to work together.
- **Strengths Based Approach** – Recognising people’s strengths and building on them to help reduce risk.

2.2 Outcomes for Children & Families

The following key outcomes for children and families have been identified, both to improve the quality of life for children and families and to reduce the demand for high cost specialist services:

- All families are able to maintain healthy and stable living conditions
- All families are strong enough to manage stress over money, poverty and unemployment
- All families can give and receive support from friends, neighbours and the wider community
- All children and young people do well in education and this gives them the skills they need to find work
- All families maintain good health and well being for happier, healthier lives

- All parents support their children's healthy physical, emotional, learning and social development
- All families maintain stable and good quality family relationships

It is accepted that most families achieve the above outcomes whilst only accessing universal services, such as health visitors, schools, GP's etc. However there are some families that experience difficulties, are more likely to access high cost services, and are more at risk of achieving poorer outcomes than their counterparts. The services that NCC will commission as part of this Early Help and Prevention Commissioning Strategy will be aimed at achieving the agreed key outcomes for children and families in Northamptonshire. Apart from universal services, most services will be targeted at those children and families where an assessment of risk and need has been undertaken.

3. Proposed Model of Delivery

The delivery of early help and prevention services for children & families will be based around the 4 agreed levels of need that may be experienced by children, young people and families.

If children and families experience difficulties and those difficulties are not identified and addressed as early as possible, the family is likely to experience worse and more traumatic problems as well as needing increasing levels of support and intervention.

The aim therefore is to provide families with information, advice and support services to prevent their needs escalating and to enable them to be supported at the lowest level of need, and wherever possible be self sufficient

The levels of need are based on an assessment of the child and family's circumstances. This includes consideration of a range of factors including:

- *Baby / child development* - Learning & development, social, behavioural and emotional wellbeing, physical health, development and disability, self-care and independence,
- *Parents and carers* – Basic care, safety and protection, emotional warmth and stability, guidance boundaries and stimulation.
- *Family and environmental factors* – Family & social relationships and family wellbeing, housing, employment and finance, social and community resources.

3.1 The four agreed multi agency 'Levels of Need' are:

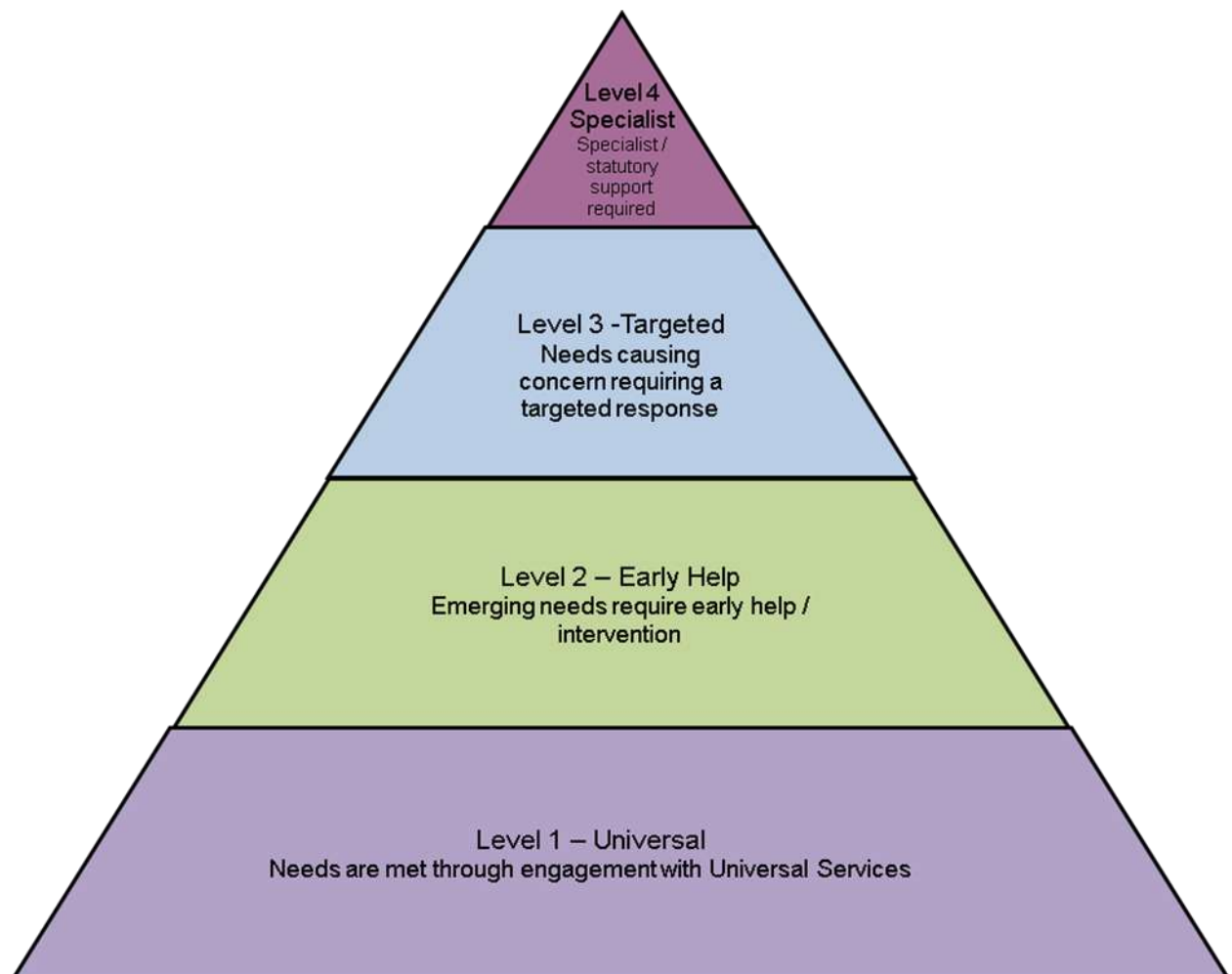
Level 1 – UNIVERSAL – Children, young people and families are generally progressing well and achieving expected outcomes. Their core needs are being met effectively by universal services without any additional support.

Level 2 – EARLY HELP / INTERVENTION – Children, young people and families are experiencing emerging problems which result in them not achieving expected outcomes. They are likely to require early help / intervention for a time limited period, to seek to help them move back to Level 1.

Level 3 – TARGETED – Children, young people and families who are experiencing significant additional needs, which may be numerous or more serious / complex in nature. This is having a significant impact on their achievement of expected outcomes and is likely to require more targeted support, potentially from a number of agencies. This may require the identification of a lead professional to co-ordinate the support provided to the family.

Level 4 – SPECIALIST – Children, young people and families who are experiencing very serious or complex needs that are having a major impact on their achievement of expected outcomes. Their needs will be such that they require intensive support from one or more specialist services.

The Four Levels of Need – Children, young people & families



At each level of need – appropriate services will be available to help families address any problems that they are experiencing, and to generally help them ‘get on with their lives.’ More details of the approach to each level of need are identified on the following pages.

3.2 Procedures & Processes

A key element to providing effective Early Help & Prevention is the consistent use across the children’s workforce of procedures and processes to identify and address the risks and needs of children, young people and their families. This will support high quality professional practice that ensures the interests of the child and young person are central and that children’s welfare is safeguarded. The document named below is the key document in supporting practitioners who work with families.

Northamptonshire ‘Thresholds & Pathways’ Guidance (formerly know as Integrated Working Procedures) - The County Council, working with partner agencies has reviewed

the Northamptonshire Integrated Working Procedures and this is now known as the 'Northamptonshire Thresholds & Pathways' guidance. These procedures provide guidance to practitioners and managers working with children and families, to enable them to assess levels of risk and need within a family and to identify an appropriate and timely response.

Safeguarding - The Northamptonshire Thresholds & Pathways documentation is also a key document in relation to assessing the risk of harm to a child or young person, and provides clear guidance on actions to be taken in the event of concern for the safety and welfare of a young person.

Common Assessment Framework for Families (CAFF) and CAFF co-ordinators – This is a key document in relation to recording an early assessment of need and risk within a Family and is referred to within the Northamptonshire Thresholds & Pathways Guidance.. This assessment process enables practitioners to assess a range of issues related to a families well being and its strengths and needs. This in turn enables practitioners to identify an appropriate course of action to address the family's needs through appropriate help and support. This process is supported by a team of CAFF co-ordinators in the local areas who can support and advise practitioners on the use of the CAFF process.

Early Help Forums - Early Help Forum meetings provide the opportunity for a multi agency discussion about a child, young person or their family with early help or targeted level needs. There are ten Early Help Forums in Northamptonshire and they each meet monthly. The core membership of the forums includes NCC Social Work senior practitioners to enable practitioners working with a family to access social work advice and guidance around cases.

The forum members each bring their knowledge about what services are available locally, and what interventions might work in specific cases. As a result of discussions held with in Early Help Forums there will be a better understanding of the needs to be met and the services to meet them. Actions will be recorded on an action plan, which will be shared with the 'referrer'. Forums will track progress made by children and young people discussed at their meetings, will check if actions have been carried out and record whether outcomes have been met at subsequent meetings.

3.3 Workforce / Training

Training the children's workforce to meet the needs of children and families is a crucial component of effective early help. The aim is to have a strong and effective children's workforce in the county, delivering support to children and families in an integrated and consistent manner, thus improving outcomes for children, young people and their families. This is recognised as a vital factor in delivering this strategy.

In order to deliver this, a Workforce Development Programme for the whole Children's Workforce in Northamptonshire is being developed and implemented (through the Local Children's Safeguarding Board). This includes:

Development of a **competency framework**:

- Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing.
- Communicating with children and young people
- Working with other agencies
- Safeguarding
- Value based, ethical and professional practice

Training – provision of an effective and accessible programme of training for the children's workforce in the county, to address the requirements of the competency framework.

'Skilled generalists' – At Level 3 (targeted support), workforce development will take place to create a pool of 'skilled generalists', capable of working effectively with a family across a range of issues and in particular working with families that are highly resistant to change.

Supervision – ensuring that staff working with children and families receive appropriate support and guidance through effective supervision. At Level 3, this will include case management and a review of professional decision making.

Processes – ensuring that there are effective processes in place to ensure that all sections of the children's workforce and its activities are integrated effectively. This will enable appropriate referrals between agencies and ensure that social work expertise and input is available to all professionals working with children and families.

4. Universal Services (Level 1)

Universal Services / Level 1 – AIM: Help people to help themselves to maintain and improve their quality of life and prevent significant problems occurring, through the provision of a range of 'Universal' information and support services which are available to all.

The majority of families will be able to grow and develop whilst accessing 'Universal' services that are available to everyone. They will be able to draw on public, private and voluntary sector services, as well as obtaining support from community networks such as their family, friends, neighbours and community groups.

By providing high quality information and universal services, the county council and its partners can enhance the quality of lives of these families and help prevent them experiencing significant problems. It should be noted that from one perspective Universal provision is that provision that is statutorily made available e.g health visitor services, as opposed to those services that are statutorily delivered, but which people choose whether to use e.g. libraries.

Examples of the types of universal services that children and families might access include:

- Libraries
- Children's Centre services
- Childminders / Nurseries
- Education provision including Schools
- GPs and other health services
- Training providers
- Voluntary and community sector groups
- Sports and leisure groups

A directory of services for families is provided through the Council's Family Information Service – www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/fis

5. Early Help (Level 2)

Early Help / Level 2 – AIM: If problems do emerge, identify them early and provide effective 'early help' services which prevent those problems getting worse.

At this level, families may be developing and coping generally well, but may be experiencing some emerging problems that need to be addressed to prevent them getting more serious and having a major impact on the family's wellbeing and quality of life. This could be a single issue that they need help with, or it could be a number of issues that combined are causing them some difficulty. The County Council has previously produced an Early Help Strategic Statement, which identifies its approach to the provision of effective early help in the county.

A key element in achieving the desired outcomes of the prevention and demand management strategy will be addressing these Level 2 needs of families through the delivery of an effective 'Early Help offer' in Northamptonshire. By identifying emerging problems at an early stage and providing effective support that helps to address those problems, a number of key benefits to Northamptonshire could be achieved:

- **Reducing distress** - By identifying problems at an early stage, the incidence of difficulty and distress for individuals and families should be minimised, thus improving their quality of life.
- **Better outcomes** - The early identification of problems means the chances of solving the problems and achieving positive outcomes is higher.
- **Reducing pressure on specialist services** - Early identification should enable problems to be addressed more easily and with 'lower level' help and support, thus reducing the pressures on more specialist services such as social care, health and the criminal justice system.
- **Saving money / resources** – Identifying and addressing problems early is generally accepted as being cheaper in the long term, preventing problems from getting more serious and reducing the need for more substantial and specialist help, which is usually much more expensive.

5.1 Key Early Help (Level 2) services to children, young people and families

Children's Centre Services

It is widely recognised that the early years of a child's life are crucial in determining their long term well being and the outcomes that they achieve. The County Council provides a network of children's centre services across the county, providing a range of services to children aged under 5 and their families. Children's Centre services enable a range of organisations (such as health services, job centre plus etc) to access and provide support to families in that area. This can address issues such as:

- Pre –birth and post birth support and advice
- Parenting skills
- Health & Wellbeing
- Learning & Development
- Advice & Support

- Play and social development
- Education and training opportunities

As well as providing or signposting a range of services to all families, the Children's Centre services are a key mechanism for providing 'Early Help' to families who are experiencing emerging problems, seeking to address those problems quickly and enable families to thrive within Universal services (Level 1).

Schools – Schools are a vital element in the provision of Early Help (Level 2) to young people. This is even more the case now that more of the available funding for supporting vulnerable young people is being passed directly to schools to enable them to deal with problems experienced by their pupils (for example the pupil premium). Working with schools to ensure that they are addressing emerging problems of their pupils, and helping to ensure that appropriate early help services or interventions are available to them to is a key element of this strategy.

Health - A range of health services will provide valuable support to children and families in relation to Early Help / Level 2. Where possible the delivery of these services will be integrated with other relevant services for children and families, to try to ensure that they are provided in an accessible and integrated way.

Supporting youth provision – the Council funds a number of organisations who provide direct support to young people, or who support the development of youth groups in local communities. These services cover a range of issues such as:

- Education and training
- Advice, advocacy and counselling
- Social activities
- Accessing health advice and services
- Support and funding to organisations working with young people.

While many of these services will be available to all young people, many of them are also aimed at more vulnerable young people.

5.2 Procedures and processes

By implementing the procedures in the Northamptonshire Thresholds & Pathways guidance (see section 3.2), practitioners will be able to identify the 'Early Help' needs of children and families and identify and put in place appropriate support. Key elements of the procedures are:

Levels of need thresholds

Common Assessment Framework for Families

Early Help Forums

6. Targeted Support (Level 3)

Targeted Support / Level 3 – AIM: Where peoples’ problems have escalated and become more complex, we will provide more intensive, ‘targeted’ support to individuals and families. This support will help them make significant change and improvement in their lives, preventing their situation from worsening further to the point that they require specialist and often expensive support or intervention, for example through social care, the criminal justice system or acute health services.

Level 3 relates to children and families who have more substantial needs and there are apparent risks in relation to achieving good outcomes for the Children within the family.. At this level the nature, complexity, range or intensity of the needs and risks, the children and their families are likely to require more intensive support and intervention, possibly over a longer period of time. This will include situations where current or previous interventions have not achieved desired outcomes.

6.1 Targeted Prevention – NCC Targeted Prevention Team and Children’s Centre Services Targeted Prevention Practitioners

A key element of the Prevention & Demand Management Strategy is the provision of Targeted Prevention Support to families at Level 3.

Targeted Prevention Support will offer a family a home based service that supports children, young people and their families to function in their natural settings of home, school and neighbourhood. Intensive intervention will be put in place when children and young people are at significant risk of being excluded from their families, education and community. The support will promote wellbeing and positive social behaviour whilst decreasing negative behaviours that might result in families escalating to Level 4 and requiring higher cost specialist interventions.

Skilled generalists - The support will be delivered by NCC’s Targeted Prevention Team and through Targeted Prevention Practitioners based in Children’s Centre Services. These practitioners will be ‘skilled generalists’ who will have the skills to work intensively with families to address a wide range of issues. The ‘skilled generalists’ will be tenacious, confident and persistent when working with families, in order to achieve significant benefits and improvements for those families. If additional, specialist support is needed; these practitioners will co-ordinate that support to ensure there is consistency and continuity, and that families don’t have to deal separately with a range of organisations or services.

The Targeted Prevention support will also deal with children and families who have previously been supported by Social Care (level 4). This will seek to ensure that children and families continue to progress once they no longer require Level 4 support and that their circumstances do not deteriorate resulting in them requiring further social care services.

Access to the Targeted Prevention Support will only be available through agreed referral pathways, to ensure that the support available is targeted at the most appropriate families.

6.2 Procedures and Processes – The Northamptonshire Thresholds & Pathways guidance also applies to Level 3 needs and will be used to ensure consistency in terms of the identification and addressing of problems for children and families.

7. Specialist / Statutory Services (Level 4) and step down

Specialist Services / Level 4 – AIM: Where people do reach the highest levels of need and require specialist support services, ensure appropriate referral mechanisms are in place and that the required support is provided in a timely and effective manner. Ensure that there are effective 'step-down' procedures from specialist services to lower level support services.

Level 4 needs relate to specialist service provision such as social care. Although children and families at this level will not be dealt with through the Early Help and Targeted Support services and approaches identified in this strategy, it is important to ensure that there are clear and effective links between Early Help and Targeted Support services and Social Care provision, to ensure that there are appropriate responses and the safe transfer of families between services. There are several key elements of managing the link between Early Help / Targeted Support (Levels 2/3) and Specialist Services (Level 4):

7.1 Ensuring effective step down from Specialist Services (Level 4)

When a child or family has received the support of specialist services such as social care or the criminal justice system, it is important that when they are 'stepped down' from the highest level of need / support, they are provided with appropriate lower level support to maintain their progress. By providing effective lower level support, this should ensure children and families continue to make improvements to their lives until eventually they do not need significant support or interventions from local agencies.

The Targeted Prevention Support provided at Level 3 will be one of the key ways in which children and families are successfully 'stepped down' from specialist Level 4 services. Appropriate referral pathways have been put in place and Targeted Prevention practitioners will be working with children and families to seek to further improve their well being and stop them 'bouncing back' to Level 4 and needing further specialist service provision.

7.2 Social Care input into Early Help and Targeted Support provision.

One of the key aims of Early Help and Targeted Support is to prevent children and families from needing the assistance of specialist (Level 4) services. In order to help achieve this, Early Help forums will involve senior social care practitioners. This should ensure that practitioners working with children and families are able to access social work advice and guidance early on in the process, to ensure they manage risk effectively and do not overly or inappropriately rely on specialist services.

7.3 Use of Early Help and Prevention services by social services.

It is recognised that in various cases, children's social services teams will purchase services that have been primarily commissioned to deliver services to Early Help and Prevention support at Levels 2 and 3. Work will be undertaken to ensure that Social services teams continue to have access to services that may be required to support social care eligible (Level 4) children and families.

8. Troubled Families Programme

The Northamptonshire Troubled Families Programme is part of a national programme and works with families in Northamptonshire based on criteria relating to worklessness, school absence or exclusion and crime or anti-social behaviour. Due to the nature of the national guidance Troubled Families may have needs or risk that equate to being on levels 2, 3 or 4 within the 'Triangle Levels of Need' (see section 3.1). The approach to working with 'Troubled families follows the same approach as working with any other family within Northamptonshire. The Thresholds and Pathways Guidance will be used to support Practitioners assess the level of need within a family and the CAFF will be used to record that assessment. The Council will work with their existing partners to co-ordinate resources for Troubled Families, as well as commission any gaps in provision that are identified within the principles of this Strategy. The focus of the Troubled Families programme to "turn them around" and improve their quality of life. This is in keeping with the strategic direction the Council has adopted for all families, in that the outcome desired for families is to thrive whilst only seeking support within Universal provision.

9. Future commissioning of Early Help and Prevention services for children and families

The range of services that contribute to addressing needs and the associated risks at levels 2 and 3 are currently commissioned from a wide variety of service providers. The complexity of different services and providers presents real challenges in terms of providing an integrated set of services to the local community and achieving the efficient use of scarce resources. The majority of the contracts, that NCC procures, including Children's Centre Services, are due to expire on 31st March 2014.

In order to strengthen the delivery of early help and prevention services and the achievement of the Prevention & Demand Management Strategy, early help and prevention services for children and families will be re-commissioned during 2013/14 with delivery in place from April 2014.

9.1 Early Help Needs Analysis:

In order to inform the strategy and the services to be commissioned, an Early Help Needs Analysis has been undertaken. The purpose of this exercise was to inform the Council and its partners' decisions around which early help and targeted support services to prioritise, plan and commission.

This analysis has looked at the issues that families most commonly present with when they come to the attention of social services. It also considered the county's performance on a range of other outcomes which are related to the prevention and demand management agenda.

The initial findings suggest that the strategy and associated commissioning should focus on:

- Reducing incidence of domestic violence
- Reducing incidence of abuse and neglect ;
- Reducing the number of adolescents with challenging behaviour;
- Reducing impact of drug and alcohol use on children and their families
- Services that support improved Mental Health / wellbeing
- Support for Parenting

Additional analysis has been undertaken to identify the early help and prevention activities / interventions that staff currently working with families would also like further support with. This information will be used to identify training/development issues for existing staff and to inform the commissioning of appropriate services in the future.

This initial Early Help needs analysis has focussed on understanding the broad issues that determine whether a family will need additional support and can be considered as Phase One of our Commissioning Work. Phase Two is intended to respond to issues that are Ages and Stages related, and may lead the Council and its partners to commission specific services to respond to very specific issues.

9.2 Child Poverty:

The provision of Early Help and Prevention to Children and Families is inextricably linked to addressing the incidence and impacts of Child Poverty in Northamptonshire.

In its strategy 'A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage and Transforming Families' Lives' (2011), the government identifies that child poverty is about much more than just household income levels. It acknowledges that it is also about strengthening families, helping people overcome barriers to work and improving disadvantaged children's future life chances by addressing lack of opportunities, aspiration and stability in their lives.

It states that the government will seek to address child poverty through a broader approach than just considering financial income. It will seek to address household income but will also consider wider measures of poverty relating to family situation, home environment, housing, early years, education and health.

The government's approach to child poverty is very closely aligned with the approach of this strategy, which seeks to support children and families to improve their overall well being and ultimately to thrive independently without the need for support from public services. By supporting the achievement of the outcomes for children and families identified in section 2.2, this Children & Families – Early Help & Prevention Commissioning Strategy will help address the negative impacts of child poverty, as well as supporting children and families to escape from long term poverty, through improving their ability to achieve economic and overall well-being.

The funding model that will be used to allocate resources for Early Help & Prevention also places a great emphasis on deprivation when allocating resources to specific geographical areas in the county, thus ensuring that those areas experiencing the most deprivation and need will receive the higher levels of support.

9.3 Key elements to the proposed commissioning process:

The Council has had to consider the assessments of needs and its statutory duties in relation to where to focus its commissioning. In considering its duties the Council has also considered the commissioning that takes place in partner agencies.

The priorities identified through the Early Help Needs Analysis have been previously identified; they are repeated here for ease of reading:

- Reducing incidence of domestic violence
- Reducing incidence of abuse and neglect
- Reducing the number of adolescents with challenging behaviour
- Reducing impact of drug and alcohol use for children and their families
- Services that support improved Mental Health / wellbeing
- Support for Parenting

Drug and Alcohol Services for Adults have already been commissioned for the period from 2013 – 2016, work is currently being undertaken to develop specific services for to support parents who have substance misuse issues. The re-commissioning of services to support Children and Young People who have substance misuse issues is also currently being

worked on. This work is led by Public Health colleagues in partnership through the DAAT Board.

Emotional well being and mental health are fundamental factors which impact upon the life chances of all children and young people. Promotion, early recognition of and effective help to address emotional well being and mental health issues are an important element of this strategy. The council is currently working with the health service on a review which will inform future joint commissioning of emotional well being and mental health services at the early help stage.

Therefore the Council's Commissioning will focus on:

- Children's Centre services – with a focus on early help and targeted support
- Services to address domestic violence
- Services to address challenging behaviour in adolescents
- Services to address the Council's duty to provide a 'youth offer'.
- Support for Teenage parents
- Support for Parenting

It is widely recognised that the 'Toxic Trio' of domestic violence, substance misuse and parental mental ill health have a major impact on the well being of children and young people. Effort will be made with partners who commission services that focus on specific issues to join up services effectively to support parents and their children.

Outcomes - The services to be commissioned will be based on achieving the outcomes identified for children and families:

- All families are able to maintain healthy and stable living conditions
- All families are strong enough to manage stress over money, poverty and unemployment
- All families can give and receive support from friends, neighbours and the wider community
- All children and young people do well in education and this gives them the skills they need to find work
- All families maintain good health and well being for happier, healthier lives
- All parents support their children's healthy physical, emotional, learning and social development
- All families maintain stable and good quality family relationships

Focus on Level 3 (Targeted Support) – The services to be commissioned will be focussed on the higher Level 3 needs, acknowledging that it is at this level that more specialist services are likely to be required and that it is at this level where efforts to prevent escalation to specialist (Level 4) is most urgent. (The exception to this will be youth services and parenting support where provision will be largely related to Level 2 (Early Help).

Evidence based – In order to ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources, a major focus of the commissioning exercise will be the requirement for bidders to provide robust evidence of the effectiveness of their proposed services on outcomes for families within their applications.

Services in localities – a key element of this strategy is the provision of integrated services that are accessible to the community. This will be built into the commissioning process which will require providers to deliver services in the districts / boroughs of Northamptonshire.

Fair and Equitable Funding Model – The funding allocated for the commissioning of Early Help and Prevention services for children and families will be based on a 'Fair and Equitable Funding model'.

In their strategy, Social Justice: transforming lives, the Government has identified clearly that the level of disadvantage faced by people is a significant causal factor of the difficulties they face and the poorer outcomes they achieve in life. The strategy outlines five principles which they have used to inform their approach to Social Justice which they define as '....about making society function better – providing the support and tools to help turn lives around':

- A focus on prevention and early intervention
- Where problems arise, concentrating interventions on recovery and independence
- Promoting work for those who can as the most sustainable route out of poverty, while offer unconditional support to those who are severely disabled and cannot work
- Recognising that the most effective solutions will often be designed and delivered at a local level
- Ensuring that interventions provide a fair deal for the taxpayer

The Fair and Equitable Funding Methodology (FEFM) was developed using the principles of the Indices of Multiple deprivation. The model can be used to analyse patterns of deprivation and identify those living in areas with higher levels of need and greater levels of disadvantage.

What is the Fair and Equitable funding model?

It contributes to a more sophisticated understanding of the issues facing local communities and the people in those communities and provides a framework to benchmark progress in key neighbourhoods and communities. It is driven by the need to use current resources more effectively and efficiently and recognises the need for The Fair and Equitable funding model which brings together a wealth of information that paints a broad picture of an area (Super Output Area /District / can be extended to Ward etc)and helps to describe local conditions.

It will allow us to allocate funding to different areas of the county based on need which is identifiable by the datasets. It is a multiple domain and indicator based system which can be used to measure the general "health" and the relative success of districts across the county. The Index is constructed from 29 indicators that have been grouped into the following seven domains

- Deprivation
- Early Years
- Young People

- Communities
- Adults
- Community Safety
- Access to services

9.4 'Helping you to help yourself' Directory.

In order to enable practitioners working with children and families to access the appropriate support, it is intended to develop a directory of Early Help and Prevention services. These services will initially be those that are commissioned by the council to deliver services to certain client groups, based on need.

The directory would be a source of information on appropriate services and interventions for families, for a range of people, including parents, schools, targeted prevention practitioners and social workers etc.

The directory would offer an element of quality assurance, enabling parents and practitioners to access effective services which they can have confidence in.

The provision of this directory acknowledges that a range of individuals and organisations will have both the remit / responsibility to provide Early Help and Targeted Support to children and families, as well as holding the funding for that purpose.

By providing good quality information to those individuals / organisations about effective Early Help and Targeted Support services, this should help ensure that more children and families can effective Early Help, improving their quality of life and preventing their problems getting worse.

9.5 Monitoring & Review

An important element in achieving the aims of the 'Children & Families – Early Help & Prevention' strategy will be the effective monitoring and performance management of the services and processes that are implemented to achieve the aims of the strategy. This will include both internal NCC services and those commissioned services that are delivered by other organisations, as well as monitoring of overall prevention processes and activity delivered by partner agencies. Only by generating and monitoring appropriate data will the council be able to measure and monitor the real impact that services are having for families accessing them.

In order to achieve this, a Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework is being developed. This will have a number of key elements:

Quality Assurance – identifying a set of standards that will be expected from internal council services as well as externally commissioned services.

Performance indicators and data sets – to allow progress of individual services and the wider prevention programmes to be monitored.

User engagement tools – a range of mechanisms to collect feedback from children and families actually using services and going through the processes that have been put in place.

Outcomes framework – to identify and monitor how the lives of children and families are actually being improved in relation to the outcomes identified in the strategy.

Appendix 1 – Early Help Forum Areas

Source: BIPI and Northamptonshire County Council Commissioning

Northamptonshire County

