

## Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Partnership Early Help Forums

### Terms of Reference

#### Purpose of the Early Help Forums

Early Help (EH) Forums are part of Northamptonshire's Early Help strategy. EH Forums will:

- Provide help for practitioners and agencies working with children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families causing concern and where there is escalating risk or complex needs
- Prevent longer term, more costly, more damaging problems later.

#### Early Help Forums will:

1. Build skills and confidence in universal and targeted services and enable practitioners and managers in these services to manage and contain risk in cases below the level of children's social care services
2. Will be places to bring cases that are 'stuck'
3. Discuss cases of 'Children Causing Concern', including those with whole family issues. The cases will be those that are or are likely to become complex and require intensive and coordinated responses. (if there are safeguarding concerns members will be expected to follow their agency procedures)
4. Be solution focused
5. Build the skills and capacity of practitioners and managers to manage risk, and to build collaborative responses through conscious reflection on learning gained in meetings
6. Identify, discuss and provide solutions to issues in the community
7. Receive, interpret and act upon reports of local need in the area
8. Provide social care oversight and guidance to practitioners and managers in universal and targeted provision including Children's Centre Services and schools with the purpose of building the confidence and capacity of agencies around safe decision-making. For all these partners access to social care oversight will be provided solely through the EH Forums
9. Consider quarterly reports on activity where the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has recommended a CAF assessment
10. Organise annual 'Market Place' events in each of the four areas to build improved working relationships and mutual understanding between forum partners

#### Core membership

- Education Entitlement Service Officer
- CAF Coordinator
- Children's Social Care Senior Practitioner
- Targeted Prevention Senior Practitioner
- Police Safer Community Team
- Troubled Families Co-ordinators
- Educational Psychologist
- Health Team Facilitator (e.g. Health Visitor) – to be arranged
- Early Help Team for Disabled Children
- NCC Adult Mental Health Teams
- Children's Centre Services
- Schools

#### Extended membership

- Borough /Districts representatives (to be confirmed)
- Local Housing support agencies
- Northamptonshire County Council commissioned preventative services
- Educational Provision
- CAMHS Primary Mental Health Workers (through CAMHS Consultation Surgeries)

### Other members/Conflict of Interest

Early Help Forum meetings are open to all practitioners and managers of statutory and voluntary services working in the locality. EHF will not promote or endorse the services of an individual provider nor will the EHF engage in commissioning or procurement discussions.

This statement will be read out at the beginning of each meeting.

### Frequency, Number and coverage of EH Forums

Meetings of Early Help Forums will take place monthly in each area on a regular date set a year ahead. There will be ten EH Forums as follows:

Area	No. of LOTS previously	No. of EH Forums	Details and reason for change
Corby and Kettering	3	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Corby</li><li>• Kettering Town and Kettering Rural LOTS to be merged to form one Early Help Forum</li></ul>
Daventry and South Northants	3	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One based on the Daventry and Guilsborough LOTS 1 &amp; 2</li><li>• One formed from the merger of LOT 3 Chenderit and Magdalen and LOT 45 Towcester, Bugbrooke and Roade</li></ul>
Northampton	5	4	The areas that were previously LOTS C and D will be merged to form one Early Help Forum. The potential for the inclusion of Delapre and Far Cotton areas (in LOT D at present) in the area previously known as LOT E, will be explored.
Wellingborough and East Northants	3	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wellingborough</li><li>• East Northamptonshire</li></ul>

### Structure of the meeting

#### 1. Community issues and information sharing

(This section will be open to all members of the Forum (Core and Extended) and other agencies working in the area of the Forum)

#### 2. Case discussions

These will only be open to Core Members of the Forum and other relevant members from the Extended Membership. This part of the meeting will be that which enables access to social work oversight and expertise

### Governance

Issues not resolved by Early Help Forums will be escalated to the Integrated Service Manager and Targeted Prevention Team Managers and their governance will be linked to Area Based Commissioning arrangements and/or local Health and Well Being Boards.

## **Assumptions**

*It is assumed that the Early Help Forums will:*

- *Be part of the development of a Partnership Early Help strategy and will require endorsement from the Children and Young People's Partnership Board and the LSCBN.*
- *Be an integral part of the offer to child or family across the continuum of need.*
- *Work in a solution focussed way that identifies resolution to issues in providing appropriate support to children, young people and families*
- *Promote the development of those attending the meeting through the use of action learning set methodology*
- *Promote integrated responses to community issues that avoid more costly intervention*
- *Take place monthly in localities*
- *Be meetings where information on individuals will be shared safely and confidentially*
- *Have identified officers of the County Council, health trust, commissioned services and partners to attend*
- *Be supported by NCC Customers, Communities and Learning Area Business Support Officers*
- *Support the Troubled Families Programme*
- *Provide social work oversight to support practitioners in universal and targeted services to manage risk*
- *The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will encourage practitioners whose referrals do not meet social care thresholds to take their case to a Early Help Forum where they will have access to social work expertise*

## **Early Help Forum Coordination**

1. Early Help Forums will be coordinated primarily by CAF Coordinators, Targeted Prevention Team Senior Practitioners and Early Help for Disabled Children Team's Seniors (at least initially)
2. The Coordination of a EH Forum includes:
  - a. The setting of agendas for individual meetings with Business Support Officers
  - b. The mandate to follow up on actions agreed between meetings
  - c. The chairing of meetings
  - d. The promoting of the Forums
3. EH Forum Coordinators will receive
  - a. Strategic support from the Prevention Service Manager,
  - b. Supervision through Targeted Prevention Team Managers and the Integrated Services Manager and the organisation of regular countywide EHF Coordinator workshops
  - c. Peer supervision from other EHF Coordinators through continuous professional development opportunities

## **The organisation of meetings**

1. Administrative support is provided through Area Business Support Officers to each Early Help Forum to:
  - a. Act as the point of contact between EHF members and the Coordinator
  - b. Distribute agenda and records of actions from meetings
  - c. Type up action points and records of meetings
2. Dates of meetings and names and contact details of Early Help Coordinators and Area Business Support Officers will be circulated to Forum members and posted and maintained on the internet by Area Business Support Officers
3. Time slots will be allocated to discuss cases in the Early Help Forum and these will be circulated to members and the practitioner requesting a discussion
4. The cycle of meetings and communication of documentation will be as follows:
  - a. Week One – Forum members will be notified of the next meeting and asked for cases and issues they would like to see discussed
  - b. Week Two – Deadline for issues and cases for the Forum to discuss
  - c. By end of Week Two - Coordinators and Support Officers to review cases and agenda (including contacting EH Forum members)
  - d. Week Three – EHF Coordinator and Co-Coordinator confirm the agenda with the Area Business Support Officer who will circulate it
  - e. Week Three/Four – all core members check their own case management systems for details of children to be discussed
  - f. Week Four - meeting
  - g. Agenda circulated with decisions and actions agreed will be recorded by EH Forum Coordinators and sent to Area Business Support Officers within three working days
  - h. Action notes will be circulated to members of the Forum within one week of the meeting
5. Details of individual children will be communicated via email with password protected documents or via telephone to the Area Business Support Officer
6. Cases can be discussed anonymously if appropriate

**Early Help Forum**  
**Source: BIPI and Northamptonshire County Council Commissioning**

**Northamptonshire County**



