

# **Service User Feedback Report April 2019**

## **People: Early Help Team**

This report is an analysis of the service user feedback received from parents and carers who have been through the Early Help process. The Early Help team would like to gather feedback from families who have had support from a range of agencies including schools, health visiting service and children's centres to see what has gone well and helped families and what could be improved.

### **Methodology**

Since September 1<sup>st</sup> 2018, Early Help Team have been sending a paper form which was produced with the support of the Early Help Manager to families when their cases are closed as their support/intervention has come to an end. The forms are not sent to families where the cases are stepped up to social care, if the family move out of county or have an early help for SEND reasons. The form is sent out on closure of the case with a prepaid envelope for the completed form to be returned.

139 forms have been sent out since 1<sup>st</sup> September and 18 completed forms have been returned to the end of March 2019. 17 were completed by parents or carers and 1 by a caseworker/interpreter.

On the survey, there is a range of closed and open questions to be completed and these questions are designed to measure satisfaction with the quality of the service, the level of service provided by the staff and the ways the service could be improved.

### **Feedback Gathered**

Responses came from round the county:

Allerdale and Copeland – 33%

Barrow and South Lakeland – 28%

Carlisle and Eden – 39%

The people who lead on the Early Help Process and completed the assessment for the respondents were recorded as:

School – 66%

Children's Centres – 17%

Midwives - 11%

Children's Services staff - 6%

These are the results of the closed questions in the survey:

Question:	Yes	No
Did professionals explain what would be involved with the assessment?	89%	11%
Did you receive a copy of your assessment and plan?	89%	11%
Did the people involved work well together?	100%	0%
Do you think the people working with you listened to your views?	100%	0%

Some questions were closed but also asked for comments:

Question:	Yes	No
Has the Early Help Assessment made your families' life better?	94%	6%

Respondents were asked to comment on their experience and several talked about being **well supported** by agencies who helped them **develop strategies** to “work things out” with their child and **support** their children better. Several mentioned their children were now able to **progress better** at school and some that their children could **control their emotions** better. Some said the experience had built up their child’s **confidence**.

Several parents also talked about children **controlling their behaviour better** and others said the early help had reduced their children’s **stress and anxiety levels**.

Some comments that parents made in response to this question:

*“Early Help has made mine and my son’s life much easier. Having the school and Children’s Services involved together made communication much stronger”*

*“It helped my son get the help he needed. He was able to improve his handwriting and his posture. His coordination has improved also.”*

*“Having someone from Barnardo's to talk with my 6 year old about his anxiety and anger has really helped him. He is now more in control and we can talk about it more as a family.”*

*“Barnardo's assisted in trauma counselling for my 9 year old son, after witnessing domestic violence. He now has a new coping mechanism and communicates well.”*

*“They have helped us work well together as a family and understand how we can work things out together.”*

*“In a meeting, I was told children's study timetable and what can be done to improve way of life and socialising.”*

*“My daughter is much more settled, her anxiety was getting out of control!”*

*“I was not advised what an EHA would involve so I had no expectations of it. I was able to complete a 'Talking Teens Course' with Barnardo's which I think may have come from the EH Assessment. However I do not know if there were other things available which may have benefited our family.”*

<i>Question:</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Were the right services involved?</i>	<i>87%</i>	<i>13%</i>

There were only two comments made in response to this question:

*“The only gap in the service seemed to be the lack of information on the school website as to who was available to help one event of any mental health issues suffered by any child at the school. It was frustrating as I didn't know who to contact at school to get any help for my child and she had to go through some difficult times before any help was forthcoming.”*

*“Lack of information.”*

### **Responses to open questions**

**Question: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience of Early Help?**

There were several comments in response to this question:

*“At first the mention of early help was really daunting but having gained the experience of what early help is and it’s made such a fantastic family life and if I ever need the extra help I know where to go. It’s made the communication between myself, my son and his school much more stronger. Myself and my son are very grateful for the support, advice and the skills given by Stacey, she was a godsend.”*

*“I found it very useful. It focused on my son's needs and was able to help him.”*

*“It has been amazing, what a great service and thank you for the head teacher who spotted that we needed help.”*

*“The Early Help was very helpful, however, the initial form was long and painful to fill out. My child has received an ADHD diagnosis and the form is focused more on child protection as from my understanding - 1 form covers all things. There were no child protection issues with my child so the form went into lots of things that were irrelevant making it hard work to fill out. It was, however, worth it to get the help I needed for my child.”*

*“I think the school (Millom) have been brilliant with the EHA and I am pleased how it’s turned out and thank them for all their help and support they have given us as a family.”*

*“I was initially unaware that this service was offered as there was no indication on the school website that they could intervene and offer help at an early stage. It was only through trial and persistence that my child was able to access this service. It felt almost as if the school were keeping it a secret that they could help as no information was available on the school website.”*

*“Only downside of the process was the fact that assessment / support people involved kept changing, resulting in breakdown of communication, delayed responses and having to go through explaining the issues over and over again.”*

*“I do not fully understand what an EHA means. I know my son was referred to Children's Services by school but do not know what this means. Nobody explained this to me or my son. My son was seen by the Student Support Mentor at school which is possibly part of EH. I would have appreciated contact from somebody involved in the scheme for more information.”*

## **Strengths and areas for developments**

Generally the feedback received from families has been very positive. 89% of respondents were very happy with the explanations of the EHA process and said they had received a copy of the assessment and plan. 100% said the agencies worked well together to support them and also listened to what they had to say.

A very high 94% of respondents said that the support received from an Early Help Assessment made their lives better which is fantastic.

Families feel they have been well supported and helped to put strategies in place to help with children's behaviours and anxieties and that they were now progressing at school as a result. Also this support has improved communication within families so they are able to discuss issues and look for solutions. There were many comments saying how helpful the intervention has been to families.

Some of the areas for development mentioned by parents are:

- Lack of information about EH services available for families on school websites
- EHA form is long and painful to complete
- Personnel working on the EHA support changes too often
- Some respondents would like clearer explanation of EH process

### **Going Forward**

This report will be submitted to the Early Help Team meeting in April 2019 for discussion about:

- Wider distribution of report
- Response to issues raised in the report and actions proposed
- Ways to increase the return rate of forms

Once a distribution list has been agreed and the report circulated, the report will be uploaded to the Continuous Improvement Website.

A reflection tool will be sent with the report for actions to address any concerns to be captured.

Helen Leader/Business Improvement Team/April 2019