**Early Help Service User Feedback September 2019**

This report is an analysis of the service user feedback received from parents and carers who have been through the Early Help process and the EHA has closed. 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 1st 2018, the Early Help Team have been sending a paper form which was produced with the support of the Early Help Manager to families when their case is 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 or if the family move out of county. The form is sent out on closure of the case with a prepaid envelope for the completed form to be returned and also has the Survey Monkey link, and since April 2019 along with the paper form the Early Help Team have also telephone contacted families asking if they would like to feedback in this way.

148 forms have been sent out since 1st April 2019 and 45 responses to the end of August 2019. 44 were competed by parents or carers and 1 by a ‘family group’.

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. It was agreed in August 2019 to add on an age question which would help give a breakdown of the age of the child included in the EHA.

**Feedback Gathered**

Responses came from round the county (unfortunately as part of the update the geographical data for this time frame has been lost but the next report will have full information as usual to the geographic data of the SUF).

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

School – 62%

Children’s Centres – 9%

Health Visitor – 9%

Other – 20%

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

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Question: | Yes | No |
| Did professionals explain what would be involved with the assessment? | 81% | 19% |
| Did you receive a copy of your assessment and plan? | 67% | 33% |
| Did the people involved work well together? | 86% | 14% |
| Do you think the people working with you listened to your views? | 89% | 11% |

**Some questions were closed but also asked for comments:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question:  Has the Early Help Assessment made your families’ life better? | Yes | No |
| 70% | 30% |

**Respondents were asked to comment on their experience** and most talked about that the **Early Help support had helped and made a difference** **for their child** “*M was very behind at the start but with the help of all involved she has come on leaps*” and another parent said “*Due to better understanding of condition, his confidence has come back*”.

There were **some parents who said that the Early Help had not made any difference** “*I feel like they let me down*” whilst another said “*The problem was more in school than home and so nothing really changed*” and one who said they had been given the information about Early help but had decided they did not need any further support “*I had information about Early Help and didn't need any further support as it was basically me and school”.*

Other parents commented that **it had made life better for the child and family** “It certainly put us all (my family and me) on to the same agenda, dealing with everything the same” and another parent said “It helped us re-connect as a family unit, focus on good behaviour, not bad”

Other parents commented that the **Early Help had been beneficial but that they may need further support** “*In a way. I do still feel that my son needs to talk to somebody*” and “*Better than it was. Probably could do with more help - I can speak to school*.” One parent had sought further support and said “*Yes it did - still on-going still having different treatments and Early Help is very valuable to adults and kids in distress.”*

**Some other comments that parents made in response to this question:**

“*Absolutely in a really bad place, I was having a nightmare and my daughter was and the school suggested Talking Teens course and Joanne from Talking Teens got everything rolling and it was great.”*

*“Completely flipped it upside down for the better.”*

“*I don't think the outcomes are any different but having someone to discuss and explain problems to and having them document for evidence was good. I have had Social Work contacts and with the Early Help I was able to have a professional point of view to show everything is fine*.”

*“By far. It helped me to see I was in an abusive marriage and my child was in it too, and it pushed me to see this and now we are very happy and free- just me and my son. I have moved house and we are closer to my family now and had and have lots of support.”*

*“Made me feel more supported and listened to.”*

*“My son is so much happier and much more self-aware and knows what he needs and asks for it”*

*“Made life a lot easier.”*

*“Not sure as we are waiting to see if the help works from the Educational Psychologist.”*

*“Our daughter is generally happier and more stable, so there is less conflict at home.”*

*“Didn't notice any changes.”*

*“We have worked with the school and our son is now much more settled.”*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Question:*  *Were the right services involved?* | *Yes* | *No* |
| *80%* | *20%* |

Comments made in response to this question included that there had been no gaps in services or once support had started it was positive. Some comments focused on parents saying they had not been fully informed about the Early Help and so could not answer this question, whilst the rest of the comments talked about waiting times for services and one comment was about TAF attendance:

*“A positive experience for us. This isn't a comment on the Early Help scheme; but better i.e. more mental health resources are needed in Cumbria for young people / children. Agencies work together well but long waits for counselling etc. lessen the effectiveness of the scheme.”*

*“Medical staff - not turning up for TAF meetings”.*

**Responses to open questions**

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

Comments included:

“*If we got into difficulty with behaviour we wouldn't hesitate to get back in touch. All advice and help was dealt with professionally*.”

“*I didn't know they were coming until my child arrived home from school to say. I have had no feedback from it or as to why it was arranged.”*

“*Our experience was very positive, my son received lots of help and we were offered it as a family as well I believe my son is so much happier as a result. Thank you.”*

*“I never met anybody, didn't have any feedback, my son didn't find it helpful at all.”*

*“It was absolutely brilliant and they couldn't have done anymore.”*

There were several comments in response to this question which have been summarised below:

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| --- | --- |
| **Strengths** | **Areas for development** |
| • Friendly staff  • Great support  • Professional approach  • Family approach  • Positive outcomes for the child(ren)  • Happier children  • Clearly explained information, consistent communication throughout. | * Lack of Early Help information available for families * EH process not followed (lack of clarity for families) throughout the EHA. * Lack of information to families about services which could help. * Families disappointed with the outcome of the EHA. * Timescales from referral to the start of support took longer than families expected and in most cases parents said they felt the waiting times were too long for some services. |

**Strengths and areas for developments**

Generally the feedback received from families has been very positive. 81% of **r**espondents were very happy with the explanations of the EHA process but only 67% said they had received a copy of the assessment and plan, however, some respondents said that they ‘could not remember’ if they had received a copy.

A change from last time is a drop to 86% of feedback saying that the agencies worked well together to support them and also a drop to 89% who felt that what they had to say had been listened to.

A 70% of respondents said that the support received from an Early Help Assessment made their lives better and a number gave glowing comments about the fantastic support they had received but 30% felt that it had made no difference or had been a negative, unhelpful experience.

Overall feedback again showed that families feel they have been well supported and helped to put strategies in place to help with children’s behaviours and anxieties which had improved the overall situation at home and also at school. 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:

* Early Help support should be more easily accessible – such as GP referrals? – This is already in place but this family had not been made of aware of this
* Parents did not know about the Early Help plan, progress or outcome of the support.
* Timescales for services was commented on by a number of parents.
* Not being given information about who to ask or about services which may help as part of Early Help support.
* Non-attendance by practitioners at TAF meetings.

**Going Forward**

This report will be submitted to the Early Help Team meeting in September 2019 and the Early Help sub-group October 2019 for discussion about:

* Wider distribution of the report
* Response to issues raised in the report and actions proposed

The report will be uploaded to the Continuous Improvement Website and also to the Early Help Website within the Quality Assurance section.

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| --- | --- |
| **Areas for Development April 2019 Report** | **Actions/response to date:** |
| • 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 | The Service User Feedback is being circulated to primary and secondary networks.  The EHA forms have been reviewed and updated including support guidance for completing the EHA.  The SUF has been reviewed by the Early Help sub group.  The EH process has been reviewed and all EH documents have been checked and updated for ease of use. All available of the CSCP website. |

Ros Rowcroft/Early Help Team/September 2019.