

## **Briefing for staff working with children and young people in Bradford**

### **Services for Children who need help and support in Bradford:**

#### **Early Help, Threshold of Need and the Front Door to Social Care**

### **Background**

Bradford is one of the youngest districts in Europe. We have many young people and their families in the District who at some point need additional help and support. We also have young people about whom a safeguarding concern arises. We have a strong set of current arrangements in place to provide this safety net of support, and we also have plans moving forward to transform the way in which we provide services.

### **Current Arrangements**

Early Help: currently in Bradford every year, hundreds of children and young people receive early help from individual agencies. Their needs are identified in school, in health or in another setting and they are offered support and help either by the same agency or a referral is made to another partner. This includes work done by learning mentors, school nurses, GPs surgeries, children's centres, teachers; youth work staff in the statutory and VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector), Connexions, the Police and many others. In assessing the needs of children and young people and forming action plans, all of these agencies make use of CAF (Common Assessment Framework) which is our current early help assessment. Some agencies also use other assessments for example Outcome Star or Family Support Plan where this is felt to better meet the needs of the child. The important thing in the current system is that all children receive an assessment of their needs and a plan to help them.

All of these interventions are about dealing with the problems children and young people face early in the life of the problem, and we have a strong track record of this happening in the District.

Children and young people who are identified as having needs that cannot be met by Early Help staff, or about whom there are safeguarding concerns, are currently referred using our Threshold of Need and referral form to the "Front Door" of social care, through our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (the MASH). Practitioners making the referral use the Threshold of Need document and referral form. Depending on the nature of the issues and concerns identified, they will come through the initial contact point and through the MASH into one of five routes. These are:

1. The Missing Children Hub
2. The CSE ( Child Sexual Exploitation) Hub
3. The Domestic Violence Hub
4. The Education Safeguarding hub ( for children currently in education this is currently being developed )
5. The duty suite ( for children not fitting the above areas)



Each of these five routes involves specialist assessment and then a set of actions that arise from this. This includes moving to a Single Assessment and then potentially a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan or being referred to a range of partners for other types of help. All of our services are underpinned by our Threshold of Need document which is on the Bradford Safeguarding Children Board website and which has been in place since 2010.

### **Moving forward**

Although this system has worked well in Bradford, we face a number of real challenges and in 2015 a review took place. As a result of the review, partners agreed that we needed to develop our Early Help model to offer a more consistent way of putting in place support for children and families, with a specific focus on reducing the numbers of children and young people who are supported by specialist services. We believe as a partnership that we can prevent many problems escalating by intervening earlier.

As a result, we will be putting place early help hubs which cover the Bradford District.

Referral for any sort of additional help will be through one Front Door which will be a gateway to both Early Help and the MASH depending on the needs of the child. This development is part of our Journey to Excellence programme. It is currently being piloted in Keighley and BD5 (where it started in April 2016) and will be rolled out across the District from autumn 2016. As part of this we are developing a new Threshold of Need and a new Early Help assessment which will replace CAF. The new assessment will be based on Sign of Safety, which is a new approach to how we work with families. (Based on a national model, the Signs of Safety approach uses straightforward language about the concerns about the family and builds on their strengths to identify what needs to happen to put an end to the concerns) You can find out more about Signs of Safety at <http://www.signsofsafety.net/signs-of-safety/>

Many children and young people will continue to be identified in one setting and their needs will be met by staff within this setting. This will not stop but will be supplemented by a system to support those whose needs cannot be met without the involvement of other partners and whose issues, if left, are likely to escalate.

**These are plans for the future and when they are launched all partners and children's workforce staff will be informed. Until this point we are still using CAF, the Threshold of Need and the current Front Door arrangements which will remain in place until the new system is implemented.**