

Early Help

Powys Early Help Strategy

2020 - 2023



GIG
CYMRU
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WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd
Addysgu Powys
Powys Teaching
Health Board



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DYFED-POWYS

Dioelgu ein Cymuned - Safeguarding our Community

Executive Foreword

Early Help is everybody's business



What do we mean by Early Help?

Key to achieving our aims for supporting children and young people in Powys is a commitment to **early help** through a range of evidence-based interventions.

Early Help is a collaborative approach, not a provision.

All children and young people will receive **Universal Services**, however, some children, either because of their needs or circumstances, will require extra support to be healthy and safe and to achieve their potential. In Powys we have recognised that a timely response is essential for families who need some support and to achieve this we have developed our **Early Help Approach**.

Early Help may be needed at any point in a child or young person's life and we seek to offer support quickly to reduce the impact of problems that may have already emerged. Families are best supported by those who already work with them organising additional support with local partners as needed. **Early Help** is based on restorative approaches to working with children, young people and their families. Key are 'what matter' conversations between children, young people, families and any professional working with them. For children, whose needs and circumstances make them more vulnerable, a coordinated multi-disciplinary approach is usually best, based on an **Early Help Assessment**, with a Lead Practitioner to work closely with the child and family to ensure they receive all the support they require.

A range of **Targeted Services** are available to support these interventions. **Specialist Services** will be provided where the needs of the child are such that statutory intervention is required to keep them safe or to ensure their continued development. By working together effectively we seek to reduce the number of children and young people requiring statutory interventions and reactive specialist services.

Services for adults play an essential role in our Early Help Approach. Many adults have additional needs e.g. substance use, mental health needs, parental learning disabilities and domestic violence which can impair their parenting capacity. Services which predominantly work with either children and young people or adults need to adopt a **'Think Family, Work Family'** approach to secure better outcomes for children, young people and families with additional needs, through co-ordinating the support they provide.

Realising the Potential of Early Intervention – Early Intervention Foundation 2018:

'Leaving problems unresolved in childhood doesn't only impact on the lives of individuals and their families it also impacts on society and economy, by undermining the wellbeing of communities and reducing peoples' opportunities to live positive and successful lives. Acting early to support children at risk of poor outcomes can build healthier, happier and more productive communities and produce a range of economic benefits that significantly outweigh the costs of intervening'²

1. Munro Review of Child Protection (May 2011),
2. Realising the Potential of Early Intervention, Early Intervention Foundation (2018)

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The Scope and Purpose of this Strategy

The purpose of Powys Early Help Strategy is to establish a common understanding of Early Help and to ensure everyone can see how their contribution can make a difference to the lives of children, young people and families in Powys. The Strategy describes how we ensure that families receive accessible, co-ordinated Early Help when they need it. Early Help will happen across a continuum, from universal preventative approaches through to more targeted help where families are experiencing more complex and multiple difficulties.

The Strategy outlines our common purpose and is embedded within a whole family approach that builds protective factors and family resilience and enables families to help themselves.

The development of an effective Early Help approach is the responsibility of all strategic partners and requires a whole system/whole workforce approach across all services working with children. This strategy seeks to outline how we will work in partnership and as a community to play our part in helping those families most in need.

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Every person working with children and families has a responsibility to support the delivery of Early Help and to assist the family to access appropriate services to enable positive parenting. Without cross sector shared responsibility there is a risk of missing an opportunity to provide help as quickly as possible and address need as soon as it emerges.

No one professional will have a complete picture of a child's needs and circumstances. Everyone who comes into contact with children has a part to play in identifying needs, sharing information and taking action in order to provide the right help at the right time. Early Help is often best provided or led by a known trusted professional, this is the Everybody's Business Model.

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The uniqueness of Powys

Delivering services in Powys has its own geographical challenges. It is the most sparsely populated county in Wales with only 26 people per square km. Powys covers a quarter of Wales' landmass and has a population of 132,447 people³. As at the 1st of January 2020, there were 24,730 children between the ages of 0-18 recorded on the child health system⁴.

In Powys, there are a total of 59,666 households, 23% (13,556) of those households include children. Of the households that include children, 24% (3,208) are single parent/guardian households⁵. Powys is predominately rural, with over half its residents living in villages, hamlets or dispersed settlements. The infrastructure in parts of Powys is poor compared with more urban areas and the population is aging⁶.

People living in poverty face particular challenges and the Local Authority, alongside our partner agencies, should take account of this in helping to meet identified need. Early intervention can be critical in this regard. The Welsh Government funds and contributes several initiatives designed to help individuals and families receive appropriate help at the earliest possible opportunity and stop families escalating towards crisis. For instance, Families First is designed to improve outcomes for families, particularly those living in poverty.

Deprivation of an area can be determined via the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation Ranking that considers income, employment, health, education, access to services, housing, community safety and physical environment. In the 2019 rankings, Powys was identified as having no small areas of 'deep rooted' deprivation and is deemed to fare well as a county in every area except for 'Access to Services'. Significantly, 90% of Powys' small areas were within the top 50% across Wales of areas deprived by service access, illustrative of the issue across the breadth of the county⁷.

Powys is still subject to deprivation; considering all factors the top 10 small areas that suffer the greatest deprivation in our county are within or near to the highest populace communities of Newtown, Welshpool, Llandrindod Wells, Brecon, Ystradgynlais. This reflects the focus areas for Flying Start provision and will be mirrored by the placement of Early Help hubs providing Powys families with access to an Early Help service⁸.

The lives and needs of children and families in towns will often contrast with those who live in rural communities. Whilst some issues may vary the importance of timely Early Help is the same wherever families live. Help should be focussed, tailored and effective, involving parents and carers and extended family networks at every stage. Building on family and community resources will help to reduce the likelihood that extra help is required in the future.

3. ONS mid- year population estimates, StatsWales (Dec 2018),

4. Child Health System –Powys Local Teaching Board (2020),

5. ONS Census 2011,

6. Rural Cost Analysis of Powys (2018),

7. <https://gov.wales/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation-full-index-update-ranks-2019>

8. <https://gov.wales/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation-full-index-update-ranks-2019>

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The Drivers for Change

The National Context

Strong statutory framework and guidance to supports the delivery of Early Help and a broad range of legislation underpins this work, including but not exclusively:

➤ United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Governments are required to meet children's basic needs and help them reach their full potential. Central to this is the acknowledgment that every child has fundamental basic rights. These rights include protection from abuse and neglect, the right to be raised by or have a relationship with their parents and the right to express their opinions and be listened to.

Guided by the UNCRC, the Welsh Government has set out seven core aims as the basis of its work with children and young people. These aims inform decisions on priorities and objectives nationally and inform strategy and service provision locally:

- ✓ Core Aim 1 - have a flying start in life.
- ✓ Core Aim 2 - have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities.
- ✓ Core Aim 3 - enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation.
- ✓ Core Aim 4 - have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.
- ✓ Core Aim 5 - are listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised.
- ✓ Core Aim 6 - have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing.
- ✓ Core Aim 7 - are not disadvantaged by poverty.

➤ The Children Act (2004)

The Act sets out Local Authority duty to promote inter-agency cooperation to improve the welfare of all children in the local authority area.



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➤ **The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014**

Prevention and early intervention are at the heart of the Welsh Government's programme of change and there is a clear need to focus on these principles to ensure that social services are sustainable for the future. Promoting wellbeing must include a focus on delaying and preventing the need for care and support to avoid escalation. Information, advice and assistance must be made available at the right time and in the right place to enable people to retain control over their day-to-day lives and achieve what matters to them. Local authorities must empower people to produce innovative solutions for delaying, preventing and meeting the needs for care and support through local networks and communities.

➤ **The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

The Act is concerned with improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and sets out seven Core wellbeing goals. This Strategy and the Early Help Offer makes a contribution to achieving those goals.

➤ **Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018**

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 'encourages improved collaboration and information sharing between agencies, which are essential to ensuring that needs are identified early, and the right support is put in place to enable children and young people to achieve positive outcomes. The new legislation will be implemented in September 2021 and will:

- ✓ Ensure that all learners with ALN are supported to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential
- ✓ Improve the planning and delivery of support for learners from 0 to 25 with ALN, placing learners' needs, views, wishes and feelings at the heart of the process
- ✓ Focus on the importance of identifying needs early and putting in place timely and effective interventions which are monitored and adapted to ensure they deliver the desired outcomes'

The Local Context

This Early Help Strategy also links to a number of other local strategies ensuring a whole system approach; necessary to improving local partnerships and supporting agencies who are putting early intervention into practice. The provision of Early Help makes a substantial contribution to the delivery of:

➤ **Powys 2025 – Our Vision for the Future**

The Early Help Strategy is aligned with Powys Corporate Strategy; Powys 2025 – Our Vision, which focuses on key areas including wellbeing, early help and support and local coordinated support. Strengthening community development and resilience and support for communities to do more for themselves and reduce demand on Public Services.

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➤ **The Health and Care Strategy for Powys. ‘A Vision to 2027 and beyond’**

With its focus on key areas including wellbeing, early help and support and local coordinated support. Strengthening community development and resilience and support for communities to do more for themselves and reduce demand on Public Services

➤ **Powys Workforce Development Strategy**

Greater focus on preventative work and early help to enable children to have the support they need at the earliest opportunity rather than wait until they require specialist support. This will lead to reduced requirements for Children Looked After (CLA) and Child Protection (CP) teams resulting in less demand for specialist social workers, who are hard to recruit and retain. Changing the service will result in creating more attractive roles for social workers who want to specialise in particular areas, and this could result in better recruitment of staff, furthermore, changing the way people undertake their roles will help the service create a stable and sustainable workforce.

➤ **Towards 2040 The Powys Wellbeing Plan**

Sets the direction Powys Public Service Board plan to take, working with our residents, communities, town and community councils and others to promote and deliver well-being in Powys. The Powys Public Service Board is required under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to develop the plan. Having this long-term plan for Powys will help provide services either individually or together, in a collaborative and integrated way.

➤ **Powys Integrated Business Plan**

Children’s Services is working to ensure that Powys children and young people are safe, healthy, resilient, learning, fulfilled and have their voices heard, valued and acted on. In Children’s Services, we will:

1. Promote access to a range of Early Help services, which families can access preventing the need for statutory intervention.
2. Focus on early intervention and prevention ensuring access to the right support at the right time to keep families together, where possible and children safe; intervening at the earliest opportunity to ensure that children and young people do not suffer harm.
3. Work with children, young people and their families rather than ‘do to’, to co-produce plans which will bring about the changes children need as quickly as possible.

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4. Provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high-quality placements for children who are looked after to meet the diverse range of their needs and circumstances, keeping children as close to home as possible.
5. Achieve the best possible outcomes for those children in our care by providing good parenting, specialist support and clearly planned journeys through care into adulthood.
6. Ensure that the service has a skilled, supported workforce, equipped to provide a high-quality service to children, young people and their families, which is compliant with the legislative framework and in line with best practice.

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) undertook an inspection of services for children in Powys County Council during July 2017. The report highlighted that children and young people did not appear to be well served by the arrangements for accessing support services in Powys at that time. The report identified that the local authority:

- Needed to undertake further work in relation to implementing the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 to ensure an understanding at a corporate level in relation to the delivery of information, advice and assistance.
- Needed to work together with partners to develop a cohesive approach to the collection and analysis of information about the needs of communities, which includes the views of children and families. This should be used to inform the shaping of strategic plans to achieve effective alignment of service delivery between information, advice and assistance services, the preventative sector and statutory services.

More generally, Serious Case Reviews nationally and locally have taught us that the more swiftly we recognise a child's problems the quicker we take action. Furthermore, the better we work together and share information the more likely we are to avoid situations where children are placed at risk of significant harm

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The economic benefits of Early Help

It is estimated that the cost to Public Services of late intervention is £17 billion per year (nearly £300 per head of the population) across England and Wales. Whilst this figure is substantial, it is only the immediate financial cost, and does not capture any lasting effects into adult life and sometimes into the next generation, nor the wider social and economic costs⁹.

There is compelling evidence that for every £1 invested in prevention and early help £7 is 'saved' later in a young person's life¹⁰. Put simply, preventative interventions are less expensive than later, acute and specialist interventions.

Providing effective targeted early help is therefore critical in a time of significantly reduced public expenditure. When there is less money for resources it is increasingly necessary to ensure that resources are targeted where they will make the greatest difference. When the high costs of non-intervention and late intervention are compared to the significantly lower costs of early intervention, it becomes clear that intervening early will make the best use of our limited, shared resources and in the long-term early intervention can yield significant savings.

It is important to acknowledge that in the short to medium term an Early Help offer may escalate costs through raising awareness and increasing demand and 'turning the curve' will require a refocussing of already scarce resources. It is equally important to acknowledge that early help is not a panacea and some families will continue to require intensive and costly support.

Investment in early intervention will lead to ongoing benefits, not only in saving expenditure of higher cost services, but by enabling children and young people to have a greater opportunity of acquiring skills and resilience which will lead to greater opportunities in adulthood.

'Benefits from early intervention accrue to the whole of society and the wider economy, not just to Public Services and government bodies. The long-term 'pay-off' to society may be particularly large where early intervention offers potential for labour market gains, such as improvements in employment and earnings'¹¹

9. The cost of Late Intervention: Early Help Foundation (2016)

10. Field, Allen et al, The cost of Late Intervention: Early Help Foundation (2016)

11. Early Intervention Foundation: Realising the Potential for Early Intervention (2018)

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Cost Benefit Analysis – Early Help / YIS

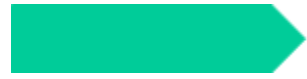
Costs Avoided for Q3/Q4 2019-20 using Welsh Government's Cost Benefit Tool

£782K

Cost Avoidance Total for Q3 & Q4 2019-20

£228K

Cost Avoidance Total for Q3 2019-20



Category Savings

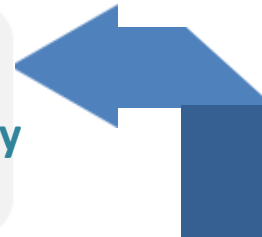
Crime:	£69,655
Education:	£346,513
Health:	£29,186
Mental Health:	£56,238
Employment:	£164,310
Housing:	£0
Social Care:	£115,718

£554K

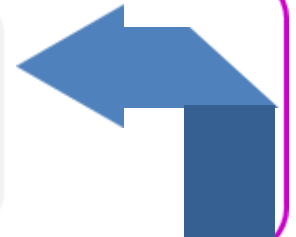
Cost Avoidance Total for Q4 2019-20

Based on
446
Closed cases

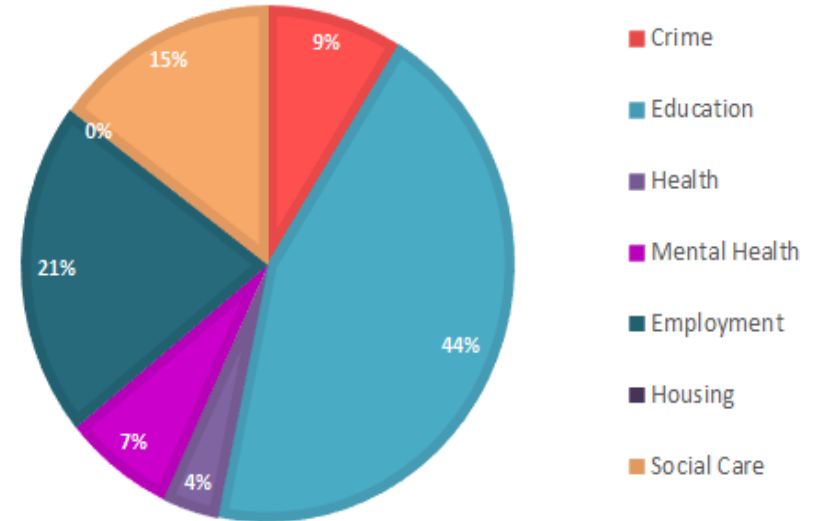
1126
Involved family
members



£1,752
Savings per
case



EARLY HELP & YOUTH INTERVENTION SERVICE COST
BENEFIT SAVINGS Q3/Q4 2019-2020



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5 Key priorities that underpin our Early Help approach

We have developed 5 key priorities that will underpin our Early Help approach. These priorities are aligned with Powys Children's Services Integrated Business Plan:

- ❖ To promote access to a range of Early Help services. Preventing families needing statutory intervention.
- ❖ Focus on early intervention and prevention ensuring access to the right support at the right time to keep families together, where possible, and children safe; intervening at the earliest opportunity to ensure that children and young people do not suffer harm.
- ❖ Work with children, young people and their families rather than 'do to', to co-produce plans which will bring about the changes children need as quickly as possible.



1. The early identification by universal, enhanced and targeted services of those vulnerable children and families who are at the highest risk of poor outcomes and who would benefit from early help.



2. To empower families by building positive professional relationships with them and by making a clear, non- stigmatising offer of local support that enables them to develop the capacity to resolve their problems and build resilience.



3. To deliver Early Help through partnership and a dedicated and trained workforce, thus enabling the development of a shared understanding, vision and practice around Early Help.



4. To deliver improved outcomes for children and families through the provision of effective, evidence- based interventions and support that reduce the numbers of families referred for specialist services.



5. To deliver high quality Early Help Services that improve outcomes, have impact and make a positive difference to the lives of families. The performance and impact of Early Help Services will be measured and monitored.

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The Powys Early Help Offer

Where we are now: Families and parents receive information, advice or assistance at the most appropriate level as part of a stepped approach. Children and families in need of Early Help often have a range of needs and different levels across a continuum. In Powys we have a shared framework known as the 'Regional Thresholds and eligibility for support Document; The right help at the right time for children young people and their families' which helps us to identify need as early as possible and offer a proportionate response to address need.

Level 1 Universal support

Most children reach their full potential through the care of their families, communities and a range of universally provided services such as schools, health and leisure services and voluntary universal groups.

Level 2 Enhanced Support

From time to time some children become vulnerable and will have additional needs because of their development, family circumstances or environmental factors. These children and young people are at risk of not reaching their full potential and life chances may be impaired without the provision of enhanced interventions such as evidence-based parenting programmes.

Level 3 Targeted Support

Children and families experiencing more complex or multiple difficulties that need intervention by an individual or single service, or a more coordinated response may be required as part of a 'Team around the Family' plan, ideally led by a known and trusted professional. Without timely targeted support these children and families may escalate up into statutory children's services.

Level 4 Assessment for Care and Support

Children and young people who have more complex and significant needs which may only be met through the provision of a care and support plan although they are still entitled to universal support. These children and young people will be at risk of social or educational exclusion. Their health, wellbeing, social or educational development is being impaired, and their life chances will be impaired without the provision of additional services.

Level 5 Protective support

Children and young people whose needs are complex and enduring. They are at risk of significant harm or removal from their caregivers. Children can move between and across these levels of vulnerability according to their particular circumstances and the divisions are not 'hard and fast'.

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Local Service Area Mapping

Universal Services	Enhanced Support	Targeted Support	Assessment for Care & Support	Protective Support
GPs	Flying Start	Youth Intervention Service	Tier 3 Services for Substance Misuse	Looked After Children Service
Midwifery	Substance Misuse Services	Cynnydd	Social Care – Children’s Services	Inpatient CAMHS
Health Visitors	School Action & Action Plus	Detached Youth Team	Safeguarding Leads in School	Secure Units
Community Nursing	Stronger Families	Education Welfare Officer	Youth Justice Teams	Secure Estate
Hospitals	New Pathways/Workways – Employment assistance	ALN Outreach	Protecting Vulnerable People, Police Units	Social Care Safeguarding & Child Protection Teams
Dentists	Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA)	Integrated Disability Service	Probation	A&E
Childcare & Nurseries	Homelessness Options	Advocacy Services	CAMHS	Police
Family Centres	Victim Support	Primary Mental Health	Education Psychologist	Probation
Housing	Youth Services	Youth Justice Service	Continuing Care	
Victim Support	Police	Educational Psychologist	Specialist CAMHS	
Citizens Advice	Homestart	Support for Families	Specialist Schools	
Education	Generic Community Support Service	Paediatricians		
Youth Services	Disability Services	Specialist centres		
Police	Advocacy Services	PRU		
School Nursing	Supporting People – tenancy services	Team Around the Family (TAF)		
DWP	Face to Face Counselling	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)		
Citizens Advice Bureau Schools	Breast Feeding Peer Support	Substance Misuse Services Refuge/Safe Accommodation		
Libraries		Counselling Services		

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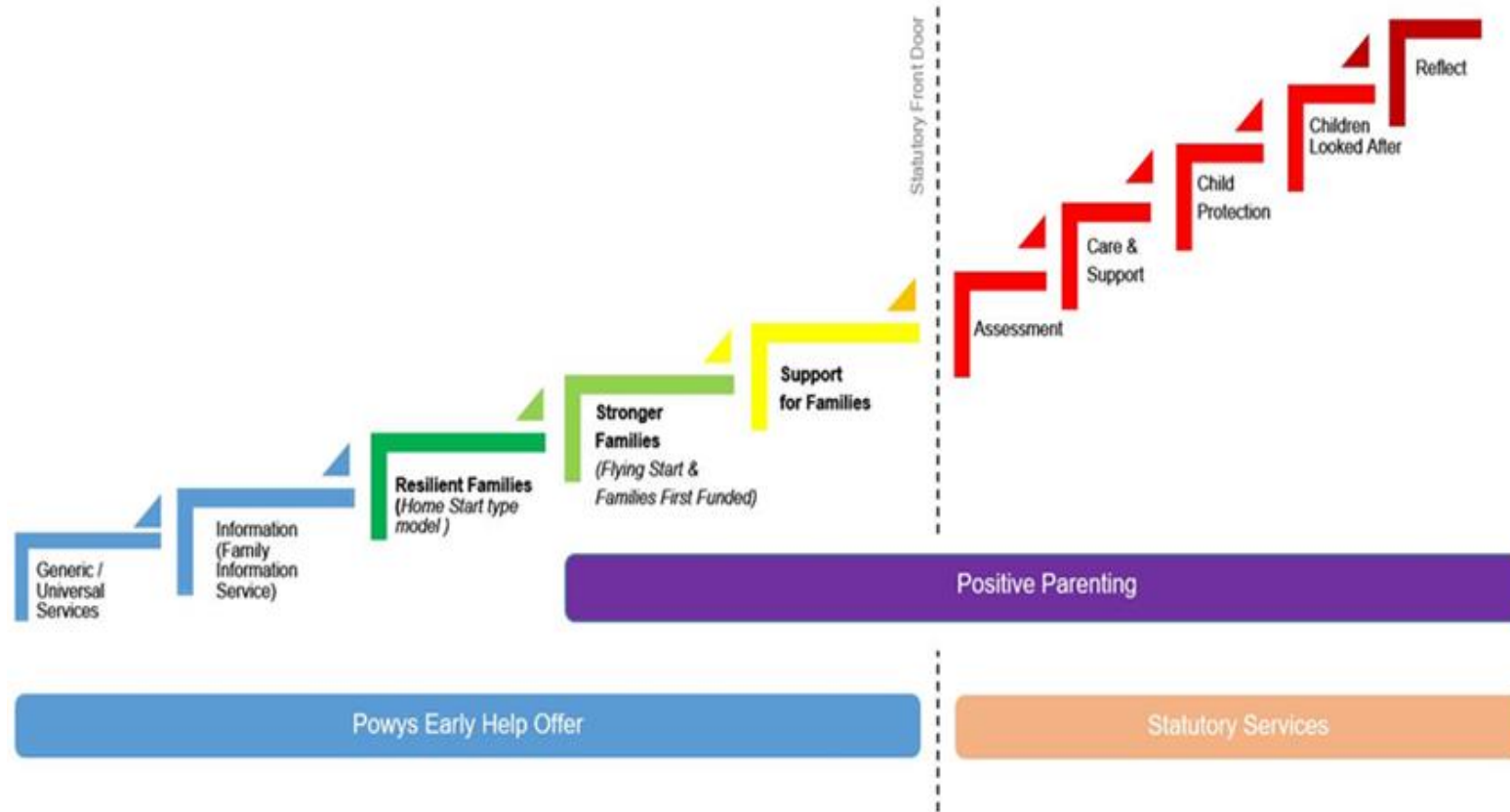
Early Help uses 'the continuum of need' also known as the 'Wellbeing Windscreen' in order to understand the needs, strengths and risks associated with vulnerable children, young people and families. Prevention and Early Help focuses on the delivery of support and interventions to children and families at level 1, 2 and 3 of the continuum.

The following diagram illustrates the continuum of needs that might apply to children and their families and the stepped approach to support:



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The stepped model below helps to explain Powys' vision of an early intervention service that will provide holistic and integrated packages of intervention for children and young people (0-18 years of age) and their families. This service structure will also continue to include, where appropriate, working with school and setting staff who are also working with referred children to ensure a consistent and holistic approach and enable capacity building within existing mainstream services.



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Universal Services

Recognising the support that is already provided by the wider children and young people's workforce as part of their existing roles. Developing and supporting the skills, knowledge and confidence of staff working in universal settings to identify need, talk to children, young people and families about what is important to them and provide information, advice and assistance at a community level.

- **Family Information Service (FIS)** - The FIS provides a range of information for children and families and helps families navigate their way around family information and support in Powys. FIS signposts to useful services, campaigns, projects, initiatives or other sources of information and support. We have an online presence which reaches families across Powys with our audience growing daily. From creating attractive and interactive information Facebook posts to being administrators on local Facebook community groups we can connect and engage families and communities across Powys.
- **Home start** - This service recruits volunteer parents to help support new parents. A Home Start service is successfully operated and embedded in other local authorities with proven evidenced outcomes when working with families. Data evidences that this will strengthen and enhance the Early Help offer for all families who have some difficulties but do not require coordinated support.

Enhanced services

- **Stronger Families** - We promote, co-ordinate and deliver parenting support in line with Welsh Government guidance in order to strengthen parenting capacity, develop and build resilience, sustain positive change and reduce risks. We provide evidence-based and structured parenting support through groups and 1:1 home coaching. The groups are both formal evidenced based groups such as Incredible Years (IY) parenting courses, as well as informal groups such as baby massage, bumps to babies and young parent groups. We support children, young people and families, to provide child centred interventions, based on the local need within their community. The groups not only support parents with building knowledge and confidence with positive parenting strategies, but also encourages them to build their social networks.

Targeted Services

- **Support for Families** - Support workers provide flexible and adaptable support, based on individual family's needs. The support workers work with all ages (0-18) and provide a holistic family approach working in both a planned and structured way, as well as being able to provide a more intensive support when families are in crisis. This area of the service tends to receive any step down of cases from statutory assessment teams and care and support teams. This is to ensure that the correct level of intervention is provided to prevent the need for a child or young person re-entering statutory services.
- **Youth Intervention Service** - The Youth Intervention Service (YIS) is a commissioned referral-based intervention, providing early intervention, help and support to young people aged 11-18 and their families in Powys. The work is carried out by professionally trained, experienced youth workers. Parents, carers and young people seeking support can self-refer via the Child and Family Assessment process (CAF). The support offered by YIS is one to one work with young people to address a range of issues. YIS also provide Take 3 Parenting groups.

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How do we know when targeted Early Help is needed?

An Early Help Referral/ Assessment is completed in order to progress a referral for targeted Early Help. Any agency / individual (including families themselves) can complete the Early Help Referral, outlining what the worries are as well as what the strengths and identified support needs are.

The completed form is sent into the central Early Help Team. Referrals are triaged on a weekly basis. A discussion is held with the family and the threshold eligibility for support guidance is used to inform what kind of support would be most proportionate and best meet identified needs.

From the point of triage, a case will either be allocated to a family support worker within the Early Help team, referred to a commissioned service (such as Youth Intervention Service), or the case may also be signposted to an appropriate support, providing the right help at the right time.

We also 'step down' cases from Statutory Services to ensure that all identified needs are met before we end our involvement with children and families, this reduces the likelihood that the family will be referred back to Statutory Children's Services as Early Help intervention will strengthen resilience and the family's ability to problem solve drawing upon their own strengths and support networks.

We have adopted an 'everybody's business' approach, where a multi-agency targeted response is required (2+ agencies) an Early Help Plan and TAF meeting will be convened. A lead practitioner will be identified, this may be a family support worker but equally could be any professional working with the family, such as health visitor, teaching assistant or a professional from a nursery. The purpose of the Lead Practitioner is to ensure that family have a supportive plan led by a trusted professional which is reviewed on a regular basis. Support for Families Co-ordinators, based in the Early Help Team support professionals and families in this process.

If allocated to an Early Help family support worker, a TAF meeting will be convened within four weeks to ensure that families have a clear and concise plan, where they understand which agency is doing what and what the desired outcome of the intervention is. The plan is the family's plan and therefore their input is vital in ensuring it is as effective as possible. The plan is regularly reviewed to ensure that the actions are being achieved.

Whilst the Early Help Team are there to support families, it is also focused on promoting **independence not dependence**. Our aim is to provide families with the information, strategies and skills they need. We will support families to be motivated to implement changes, then encourage them in their confidence in being able to sustain these changes. If longer term support is required, we will ensure that we access this support (befriending services, MIND, youth worker etc).

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Powys Integrated Disability Service (IDS)

The Team Around the Family (Early Help) model is also used by the Integrated Disability Service (IDS). Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Health Board have integrated services for children and young people with disabilities and complex health needs from Children's Health Services, Schools Service and Children's Services.

The IDS brings together staff teams (largely practitioners working at a specialist level) that work with disabled children and young people and their families, to meet their needs in a timely and co-ordinated way through shared assessment and planning.

The IDS aim to work with children or young people and their families to reach their full potential and maximise their independence. Early Help support is an important contribution to this and can at times avoid the need for escalation to complex situations.

The criteria for IDS TAF, is that more than 2 specialist practitioners are working with the same child drawn from the following disciplines:

- Speech Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Community Children's Nursing and Special School Nursing
- Portage
- Learning Disabilities Nursing
- Psychology
- Educational Psychology
- Education Sensory Impairment Team
- Transitions Social Workers (Adults)
- Community Support

Early Help Assessment is completed by a person who knows the child well and is sent to the Front Door or the IDS. Referral discussions take place at weekly Triage Meetings. These bring together Lead Clinicians and Managers from Health, Education and Children's Services to share assessment information for the children and young people who would benefit from this approach.

The 'person centred' Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting is then co-ordinated by the IDS with the lead practitioner who has completed the assessment. Where appropriate referral is made to Early Help team for parenting support, other specialist support or referred for a Wellbeing Assessment by an IDS Social Worker if additional disability support is required.

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Our shared ambition

In January 2020 there were:

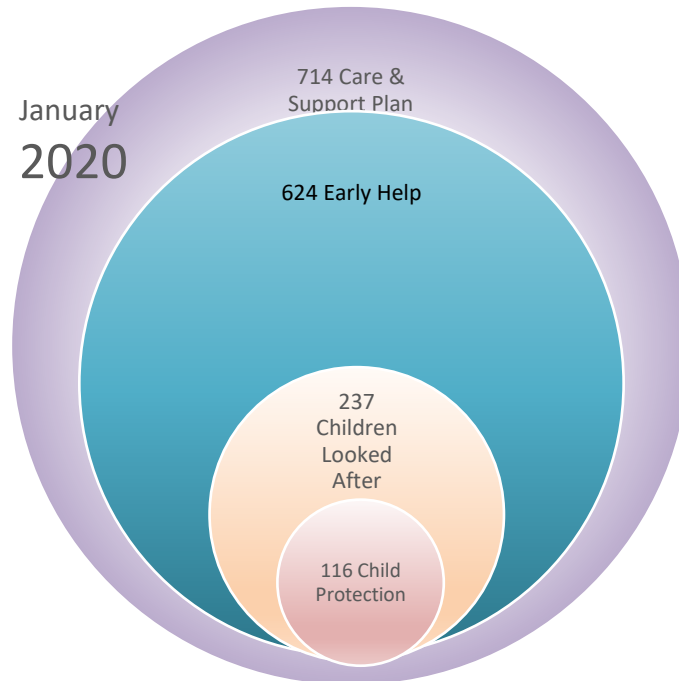
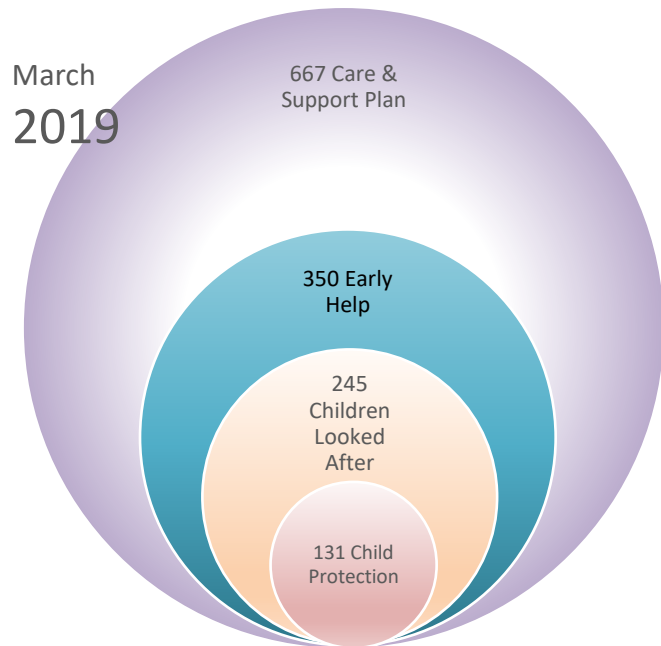
1, 043 children open to Children’s Services across Powys.

116 of our children were on the child protection register as at 31st January 2020, this has been decreasing in Powys from 131 at 31st March 2019.

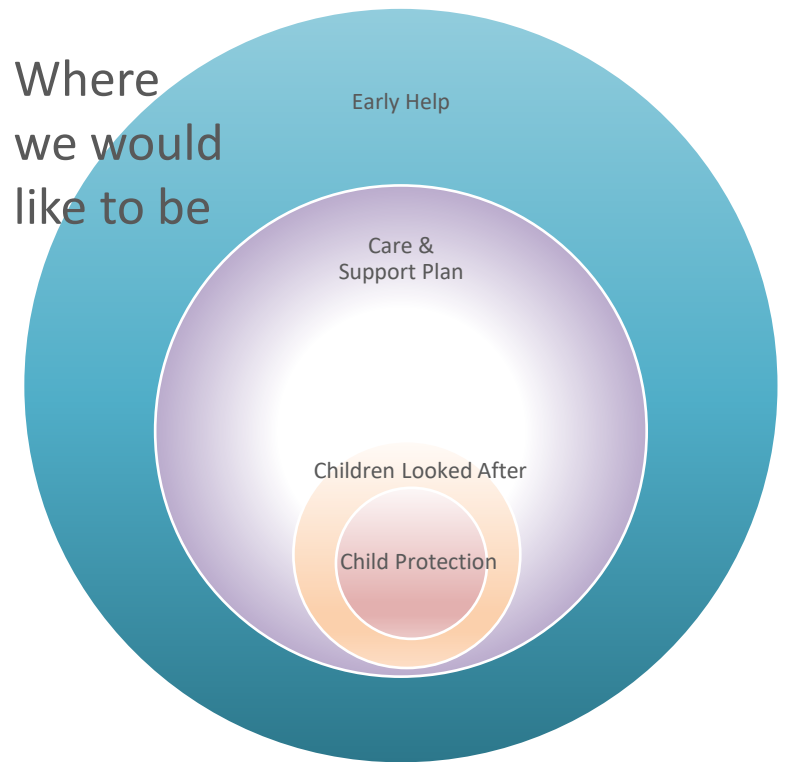
237 of our Children are ‘looked after’ at 31st January 2020, this has been steadily decreasing in Powys from 245 at 31st March 2019. The number of children looked after in Powys is lower than the welsh average; based upon Children looked after per 10,000 population of 99 for Powys comparative to the welsh figure of 109 as at 31st March 2019¹².

There is still much more to do and our Early Help Offer should help reduce the numbers of children looked after in the future. Despite our Children Looked After population being lower than the national average, the burden is higher per child due to the size of Powys; distance/time and strain on the workforce to meet the statutory visit requirements.

We have **714** children subject to Care and Support Plans and **34** children are currently undergoing an assessment.



Where we would like to be



12. <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/Social-Services/Childrens-Services/Children-Looked-After/>

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Key Indicators that Early Help is working:

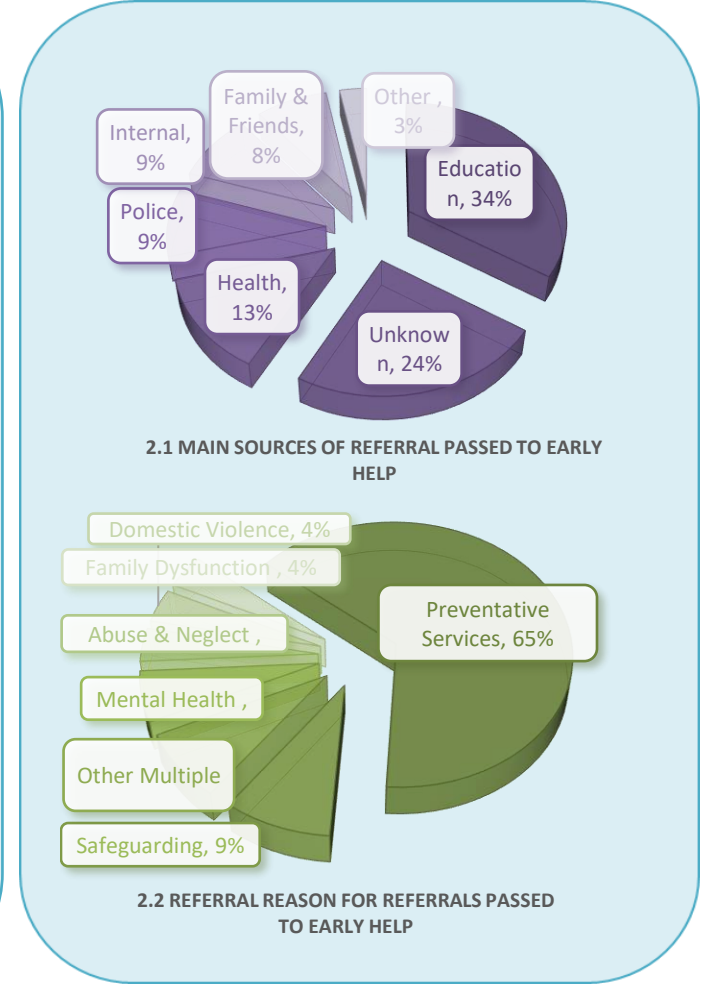
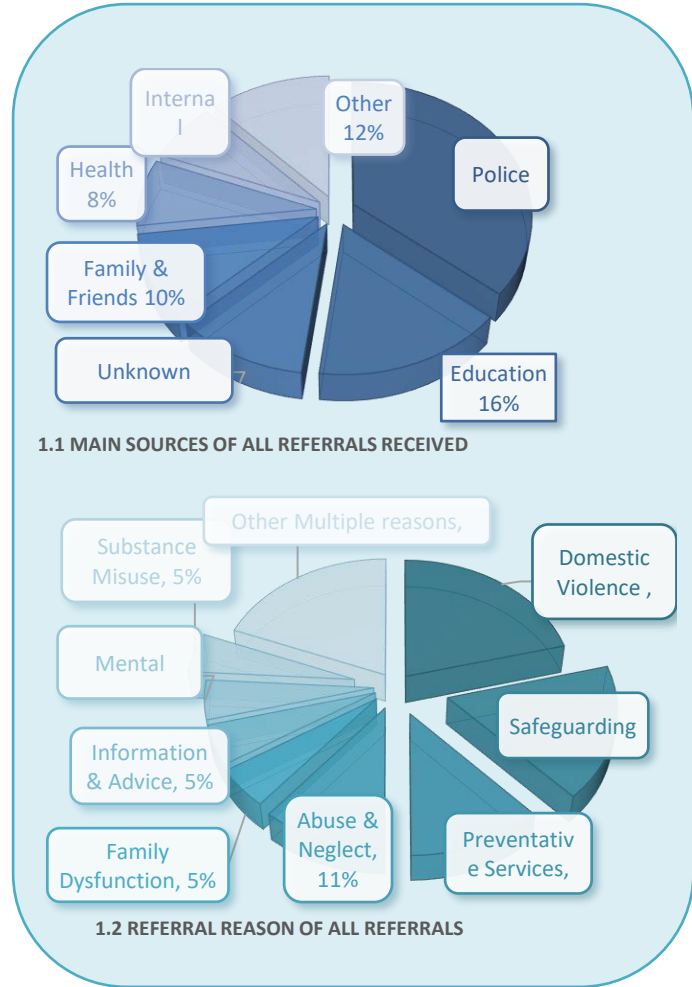
- ✓ A reduction of children subject to Care and Support Plans and Child Protection Plans
- ✓ A reduction in 'children who are looked after'
- ✓ A reduction in the number of children subject to Statutory Assessments
- ✓ A reduction in the number of Children closed to Statutory Children's Services following an assessment

Where our referrals come from and why:

The main sources of all referrals to Children's Services in 2019 were the Police, Education, Health and Family & Friends illustrating the necessity to work effectively with multi agencies (Chart 1.1).

The primary reason for those referrals were Domestic Violence, Safeguarding and Preventative Services (Chart 1.2).

Education, Health and Police were the main source of referral passed specifically to Early Help (Chart 2.1); for the most dominant reason to access preventative services (Chart 2.2).



Creating opportunities for greater partnership and integrated working

Early Help activity is happening across the whole of Powys and includes a range of agencies and professionals; from colleagues working in universal services, offering more informal Early Help, through to the more formalised Powys Early Help Offer described. Wherever possible we will seek out opportunities to collaborate with and complement this work with the goal of providing the right help at the right time, avoiding duplication and preventing families being bounced between services or falling through the gaps. Here are some examples:

Dyfed Powys Police: The principles of Prevention, Early Intervention and Partnership working are enshrined in key strategic policing documents both at a national level and Dyfed Powys Police Force level. Key documents state commitment to the preventative principle of the 'Wellbeing of Future Generations Act' (Wales) 2015. The National Police Chief's Council document 'Policing Vision 2025'¹³ refers to the need for links between communities and Police tailored to meet society's complex and diverse needs. A partnership approach is advocated to protecting vulnerable people.

Early Action Together: This is a Wales specific Programme funded by the Home Office and sponsored by Public Health Wales, that seeks to transform policing to a multi-agency, ACE informed approach that enables early intervention and root cause prevention. Ace Training has been rolled out across Powys and has included key partner agencies.

A Vulnerability Hub will be operational within Dyfed Powys Police HQ by April 2020 which will bring together internal (and external where possible) staff dealing with vulnerable people, including those requiring Early Intervention in order to secure a more joined up approach. Plans are in place for staff from the Hub to attend Multi agency meetings to develop integrated working

School Beat also known as the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme targets children at primary and secondary schools with dedicated Police School Liaison Officers working with schools to deliver educative crime prevention and safeguarding resources. The Police School Liaison Officers also offer bespoke support to schools and pupils where there is an identified need.

Neighbourhood Policing Team: Dyfed Powys Police has Neighbourhood Policing Teams operating in the force area, who actively engage with the communities they serve, to contribute to addressing community priorities. The approach is one of problem solving, focussing on Early Intervention and Partnership working.

Youth Offending Teams (YOT): The Police are a statutory partner in Youth Offending Teams and each YOT has a seconded police officer. One of the central functions of the role being to work at an Early Intervention stage to divert young people from offending behaviour.

To complement the focus on multi-agency working detailed above, Dyfed Powys Police employs a Partnership Chief Inspector and Partnership Inspector for Powys, whose focus is to represent the police and promote positive working relationships between the police and other agencies at all levels, including Early Intervention

CAMHS: There is £200K of Regional Partnership Board (RPB) funding to provide an improved Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service for children and young people, who do not meet a Mental Health criteria but still have identified need (the missing middle). This project will be funded for two years and will include additional CAMHS workers who will provide advice and assessment to those not meeting a CAMHS criteria. These workers will link closely with the Early Help Team and Early Help Hubs.

Additional Youth Intervention Workers (YIS) who will be able to work directly with young people to provide interventions and support. Xenon (Counselling Provider) who will provide Emotional Health group work across all secondary schools in Powys, delivering Resilience and Emotional Regulation skills. The Youth Service and the Sports Development Team who will deliver activities and informal social support for Young people.

13. Policing Vision 2025 (2015)

Youth Intervention Service: The YIS also run a project called Cynnydd, which is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) that gives us the opportunity to offer support and guidance to additional young people in Powys, to reduce the chances of them becoming 'NEET' (not in education, employment or training) when they leave school. This project has specific criteria, and young people are identified for participation through work with each high school.

Detached Youth Work Team: The Detached Youth Work Team offers support to young people aged 16-25 across Powys. We understand that everyone takes a different journey in life and we want to help young people with the things that might be causing them challenges to getting where they want to be. This could be help with employment, education or training opportunities, securing a safe place to live and helping them develop skills to enable them to live independent and fulfilling lives, now or in the future.

Incredible Years/ KiVa Anti-Bullying Programme: This is an evidenced based approach aimed at supporting the development of emotional health and wellbeing in young children (0-8 years) through a set of complementary programmes for parents/ carers, teachers, early years setting staff and primary aged children themselves.

The Powys strategy has been led by a Consultant Child Psychologist but has involved multi-agency planning at both a strategic and operational level. There has been investment in the development of a local supportive infrastructure and Powys is unique in the UK in being able to offer local, in-house, low cost training and support in all programmes. This means that the IY approach is used widely across primary schools and early years settings in Powys, as well as across a multi-agency workforce delivering both preventative and treatment interventions for parent and carers.

There is robust evidence for the effectiveness of the IY programmes in Powys. This is evidenced both through internal audit and evaluation and through partnership with Bangor University. A more recent and very successful development has been the introduction of a new IY parenting programme for parents and carers of children with autism.

The KiVa Anti-Bullying Programme¹⁴ is a highly evidence based, whole school programme for bullying prevention and intervention, which has been developed alongside the IY programmes in Powys primary schools. Research in partnership with Bangor University Shows significant reductions in bullying and victimisation in schools that have adopted the KiVa approach. The KiVa programme is an important intervention for developing emotional health and wellbeing in older primary aged pupils.

The Integrated Access to Services Task and Finish Group has a multi -agency membership whose aim is to explore ways in which key partners can align their Services to provide seamless support for children and families, prevent families being bounced between services or fall through the gaps. The potential for a single 'integrated front door' is currently being explored.

Monthly Multi Agency Early Help Meetings, chaired by managers from the Early Help Teams are well attended by a range of agencies; public and voluntary sectors, community/and or other services. These meetings provide opportunity to share ideas and information on services available locally. The meetings promote networking and strengthen multi- agency relationships. Partners are able (with consent) to bring for discussion, children and families whom they may have come into contact with and who have identified that they may benefit from Early Help.

14. <http://www.kivaprogram.net/wales>

Early Help Hubs

Flying Start is a Welsh Government funded programme offered in the most deprived areas throughout Wales. Children and their families are registered from pre- birth and remain part of the service until the child is four years old. There are four core components – Enhanced Health Visiting, quality childcare for 2:5 hours per day, each week from 2 – 3 years. Speech, Language and Communication support and Parenting, 1-1, in the home and evidence- based groups.

Central to our vision of an expanded Early Help offer in Powys is the development of locally based community support. The ambition, which is already underway, is to have 5 Early Help Hubs across the County. Each hub will be an open access community resource and a ‘one stop shop’ providing support, advice and information to children, young people and families. The Hubs will provide opportunity for co-located professionals working with children and families and offering seamless support to children, families and the community.

Within Powys, there are five Flying Start areas, these areas are **Welshpool, Newtown, Llandrindod Wells, Brecon and Ystradgynlais**. The Early Help Hubs will be developed in these areas but will be accessible to all families who wish to use the resource.

The Hubs will offer regular information, advice and support to families, for example:

- Drop in's with representatives from a range of providers / agencies such as Early Help staff, Health visitors, Speech and Language Therapists, Housing and Benefits and careers advice, Money advice and Neighbourhood Policing, to name but a few.
- Domestic abuse support and counselling
- Social events to promote community cohesion identity and resilience
- After school and Activity Clubs for children and parents



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Early Help Hubs – Our progress to date

Newtown Integrated Family Centre

- Newtown Hub is operational with a range of professionals co-located and offering seamless support to children, families and the community. The Newtown Integrated Family Centre is based around the concept of a one-stop shop providing services /organisations such as Powys Teaching Health Board, Children’s Services – Early Help Team, Family Support and Action for Children together in one place for families to access. The Hub houses after school clubs, young carers, star group for children affected by domestic violence and youth club. We also have an excellent Facebook page that keeps us in contact with the families we support and where we disseminate useful information.

Welshpool Hub & childcare at Oldfield School

- The new school will open in January 2021, allowing us to take over the vacated Oldford school site and begin refurbishment work to turn it into an Early Help Hub

Brecon Hub & childcare at Brecon Youth centre

- We are now progressing a co-produced project with the third sector organisation Cymryd Rhan, situated in the heart of the Flying Start LSOA s. In exchange for our capital investment, we will operate from the building, rent free for a minimum of five years. The vision of Flying Start and the aims of Cymryd Rhan are well suited for this project as Cymryd Rhan planning a building that serves the local community and engages with all ages, so there is a lot of crossover in what both organisations are looking to achieve.

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How do we know we've made a difference?

In 2015 Ofsted undertook a thematic inspection of Early Help Services across England to gain an accurate picture of how effectively local partnerships' early help services were improving children's circumstances, reducing risk and taking further action when needed. Whilst the Inspection focused on Early Help in English Authorities the themes identified and learning equally applies to our Early Help approach in Wales and locally, in Powys:

- The inspection found that local authorities and their partner's faced significant challenges in maintaining consistency and quality of practice. Understanding roles and responsibilities for Early Help provision was identified to be at the heart of these difficulties and early help appeared to be an 'add-on' rather than central to the core business of improving the life chances for children.
- The report's findings mirrored those in Serious Case Reviews that looked at Early Help and concluded that local authorities were failing to learn the lessons from Serious Case Reviews to improve Early Help services.
- There was very little evidence about the impact of Early Help to ensure children's circumstances are improving, risk is reducing or that further action is needed.
- Generating good quality evidence of impact, particularly of systems involving a range of agencies and services, is difficult. It takes time and requires capacity and resources. We need to generate and use evidence that our Early Help offer is making a difference. This means equipping those delivering Early Help with the skills and resources required to measure the impact of our service and in turn, to generate good quality evidence.

We are working with our partners in business intelligence that provides us with this evidence. We are already some way to achieving this with monthly reporting on a variety of measures including step down's to Early Help, Re- referrals and data on cases redirected from the Front Door to Early Help. We are improving and developing our methods of evaluating the effectiveness of the services we offer through feedback such as the Distance Travelled Tool and developing standardised evaluation tools for all Early Help activity.

We aim to further embed the use of the new Cost Benefits Tool led by Welsh Government. The Cost Benefit Tool has been used across 100% of closed cases in Q3/Q4 of 2019-20 and we aim to continue this into 2020-21 across Early Help and other funded services.

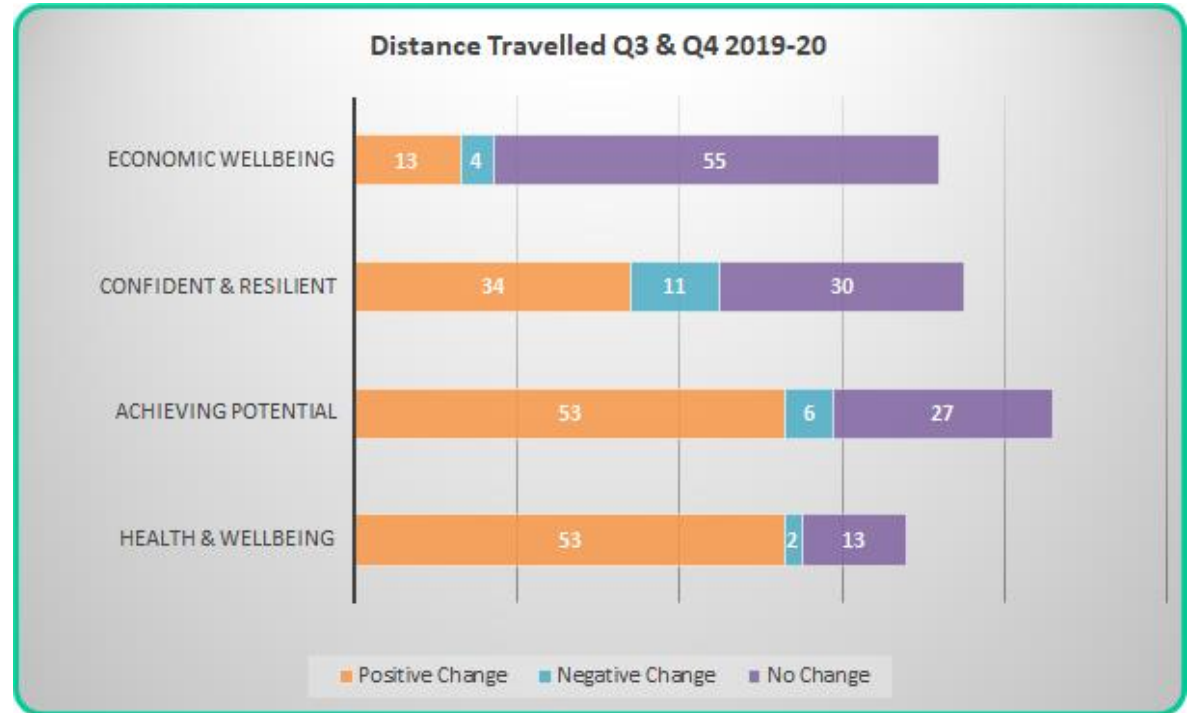
Distance Travelled Tool

78%
Individuals reporting a positive change in **Health & Wellbeing** Q3 & Q4 2019-20

62%
Individuals reporting a positive change in **Achieving Potential** Q3 & Q4 2019-20

45%
Individuals reporting a positive change in **Confidence & Resilience** Q3 & Q4 2019-20

6%
Individuals reporting a positive change in **Economic Wellbeing** Q3 & Q4 2019-20



Q3/Q4 2019-20: 8%
Q1 2020-21: 4%
Just 8% of individuals in Q3 & Q4 2019-20 and 4% in Q1 2020-21 reported **no** positive improvements following support from Early Help

DTT Q1 2020-21

DTT Measure	Positive Change	Negative Change	No Change
Health and Wellbeing	92%	0%	8%
Achieving Potential	62%	0%	38%
Confident, resilient	58%	17%	25%
Economic Wellbeing	9%	0%	91%
Totals	57%	4%	39%

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Workforce Development

It is evident from the number of contacts to Powys Front Door (between 400 and 500 per month) that some professionals working with children do not feel sufficiently skilled or well supported to engage and support children and families who are 'just below' the level of need which requires social care intervention and do not feel confident managing 'risk' effectively. Practitioners across organisations need to be better supported in developing their skills and confidence.

Since 2018 Powys Children's Service have committed to implementing Signs of Safety (SoS), which is a strength based, child protection model aimed at providing the service with framework to ensure consistency of approach in a very complex area of work. The model is based on the philosophy of Honour, Hope, Change and Growth Work with families and focuses on collaboration, and developing support networks to help develop a robust safety plan which build on the family's strengths.

The model uses a number of tools which can be adapted to support children and families within Powys in all areas of work including Early Help. Children's Service have a Signs of Safety implementation plan whereby we provide workshops to partner agencies, and these have been well attended with over 200 staff attending. It is clear from these sessions; practitioners see the benefits of adapting this approach in their day-to-day work.

We have secured funding to enable Children's Service to offer the full training course to partners from the Voluntary/3rd Sector, Police, Health, Education and Adult Social Services. The training will provide all who attend new skills, tools and knowledge which is transferable to use in their practice immediately. This approach will provide Powys with an exciting opportunity for all key organisations to consider how they can implement the approach strategically across the whole service area as Children's Services are currently doing. Practitioners have been brave using the new approach with children and families and the feedback is extremely positive.

Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance is a range of measures and activities put in place to ensure standards for the provision of Early Help remain high and the service is able to continuously improve. This will add value to the provision of services and embed quality assurance into everyday practice. It will include a feedback loop to ensure learning is applied and it will provide consistency of service delivery. Quality Assurance will improve organisational and reflective learning.

The Distance Travelled tool (DTT) has been improved and is incorporated into our Early Help Assessments and Plans, this provides us with scaling at the beginning and the end of our involvement, we are able to report on the effectiveness of Early Help from the child and family's perspective

We will develop an Early Help Quality Assurance Framework (EHQAF) that will be used to guide services to further embed the whole family and strengths-based approach, demonstrate robust assessments and Early Help Plans, and provide measurable outcomes for Children and families in Powys.

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Embedding the Early Help offer and eligibility thresholds

In its Inspection report¹⁵ Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales highlighted that the local authority must clarify the role and purpose of Powys People Direct (PPD), currently referred to as the 'Front Door' within the overall provision of information, advice and assistance and must ensure staff and partners have clear guidance to support decision making. Staff should be suitably trained, skilled and supported to deliver this role. The Report identified a need for clear strategic direction supported by operational protocols to enable partners to have a clear understanding of the purpose, structure and decision making in Children's Services.

Alongside expanding the Early Help Offer and defining our Early Help approach, work has been undertaken clarifying and strengthening the role and responsibilities of the 'Front Door'. Plans are in place to relaunch the service. There will be a launch of the expanded Early help Offer at the same time, targeted at our partners (a soft launch is already in progress) including a focus on the regional Threshold document and the Wellbeing windscreen. This will allow our partners to develop a clear understanding of the interface between Early Help and Statutory services and will clarify roles and responsibilities for our workforce and our partners.



15. Inspection of Children's Services: Powys County Council (October 2017)

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Feedback

Parent - I feel so far that the support, advice and guidance I'm receiving is very positive and encouraging. **I feel listened to** and the advice that I'm receiving for my son, I'm able to put into practice and feel confident in doing so.

Parent -The last session was good as I could still benefit from our session and do it in the comfort of my own home, thank you. (Pilot of 1:1 parenting via skype in the evening)

Parent - Since working with you I feel that I now have strategies and support that will help me with managing the behaviour of my son.

Parent - I feel better in myself; instead of arguing, **I am calmer in my parenting** and my tone has lowered. I am finding that I am able to deal with things better than I was before.

Child - I'm enjoying my 'Thrive' sessions with my worker, I don't want her to leave when it is time to go. I loved making my worry doll and I'm looking forward to making a dream catcher in my next session.
We talk and she is kind.

Parent - It feels that I can talk openly to you and **you do not judge me or my home.**

You always can find some good in what I have done no matter how bad things are.

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Implementing the Early Help Strategy

Implementing the Early Help Strategy:

Milestones for implementing the Early Help Strategy are detailed in this implementation plan. This plan reviewed and updated on a six-monthly basis with overview from Start well and the Early Help Workstream to ensure we are able to adapt to the pace of progress, as well as new developments, research and opportunities

Objective 1: The early identification by universal, enhanced and targeted services of those vulnerable children and families who are at the highest risk of poor outcomes and who would benefit from early help

Action:	Owner:	Timescale:
Develop and embed a clear coordinated Early Help pathway for children who have a variety of needs or risk factors.	Integrated access to services and Building Resilient communities workstream	1 year
Work towards Integrated access to services- providing a seamless service and preventing duplication, families repeating their 'story' and being 'bounced around' between services. Embedding EH Integrated access meetings to triage cases from a range of sources.	Integrated access to services and Building Resilient communities workstream	6 months
Develop and refine our Early Help Website, including online toolkit and resources for children/families and practitioners.	EH Service	12 Months

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Objective 2: To empower families by building positive professional relationships with them and by making a clear, non- stigmatising offer of local support that enables them to develop the capacity to resolve their problems and build resilience

Action:	Owner:	Timescale:
Develop Early Help Hubs across the County	Startwell /EH Workstream	3 Years

Objective 3: To deliver Early Help through partnership and a dedicated workforce, thus enabling the development of a shared understanding, vision and practice around Early Help

Action:	Owner:	Timescale:
Planning and delivery of joint training and development initiatives including Signs of Safety and eligibility threshold training across our partner agencies.	Signs of Safety Board	2 Years
Launch of the Early Help Service in conjunction with re launch of the new Front Door to both professionals and the public.	Integrated access to services and Building Resilient communities workstream	6 Months

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Objective 4: To deliver improved outcomes for children and families through the provision of effective, evidence- based interventions and support that reduce the numbers of families referred for specialist services.

Action:	Owner:	Timescale:
Continue to embed Parenting Pathway to support the delivery of a range of evidence- based parenting interventions,	EH Workstream	Ongoing
Increase opportunities to access parenting support, e.g. through online parenting groups	Early Help Service /Commissioning	12 Months

Objective 5: To deliver high quality Early Help Services that improve outcomes, have impact and make a positive difference to the lives of families. The performance and impact of Early Help Services will be measured and monitored

Action:	Owner:	Timescale:
Develop and refine Performance indicators / Business intelligence data and measures that evidence we are making a difference	Early Help Team	6 months
Embed Early Help into the Quality Assurance Framework	Early Help Team	12 months

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Appendix 2 – Early Help Flowchart

