



Coventry Safeguarding Children Board

Effectiveness of Early Help

Audit Summary

Objective

- To explore how the early help offer within Coventry impacts on the lives of children and families who receive support through the common assessment framework

Key lines of enquiry

- The impact of early help support on improving the lives of children in a sustained way
- The extent to which early help services are outcome focused
- How effectively partners are able to work together to provide early help
- How the wishes and feelings of children inform work to support families and their opinions on their life following early help support.

Summary of Findings

- Some good evidence of collecting, expressing and using the voice of the child to shape early help work but practice is still inconsistent
- Evidence of good sustainable outcomes but more focus on reflection and analysis to get to the heart of the presenting issues is required
- Good relationship with a consistent lead professional is a key to successful outcomes
- Best outcomes were achieved where early help was provided as part of acting early forums, where holistic multi-agency working is well embedded
- Outcomes are defined at the start and broken down into manageable steps but tended to be too overarching. More needs to be done to make sure that outcomes are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time focused.
- When invited to take part in or made aware of early help work, agencies participate and there is good multi-agency working.
- Action should be taken to resolve the confusion among partners about the purpose of early help support and the common assessment framework process. Specifically, the understanding of when early help support is appropriate should be improved, through the consistent application of thresholds.

Recommendations

- Improve the communication of new LSCB Thresholds of Intervention Guide, so that it can be used by frontline staff and supervisors.
- Celebrate what works in Early Help to ensure that good practice is shared achieving a better consistency of practice.
- Develop post intervention tracking and reflection with families to assess success and sustainability.
- Ensure that steps to change and signs of safety are fully embedded as ways of working across the partnership.
- Use the development of the family hub concept to improve the co-ordination of response and interagency communications in the delivery of early help.