

## Minutes

<b>Meeting title</b>	Early Help Board
<b>Date</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> June 2016
<b>Present</b>	Debbie Forward, Charlie Moat, Marcia Burgham, Sue Evans, Julie Evans, Gia Hancock, Tina Cosham, Mandy Gardner, Sue Wordsworth, Jo Lewitt, Kerrie Smith, Paula Bromley, Lucy Fordham, Marie Porter, Charlie Moat, Claire Riggs, Rebecca Potter, Kevin Thatcher, Amanda Davies, Caroline Dowson
<b>Apologies</b>	Penny McKissock, Alice McColl, Michelle Mohammed, Jackie Fielder, Sally Churchyard, Sara Willis, Zoe Clifford, George Samios, Denice Burton, Jason Pegg, Sue Anderson, Tracey Pullen
<b>Date of next meeting</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> September 2016

	Action
<p><b>Think Family Presentation</b></p> <p>KT gave an overview of the police Think Family initiative and shared slides from a presentation which was put together for staff within the police force. Think Family links closely with the national Troubled Families agenda and locally with Connecting Families. KT has been working with PB in B&amp;NES and Kevin Sweeney in South Gloucestershire, looking at lower end families who would meet Connecting Families criteria to do early intervention work. Kay Wozniak is the lead officer for the police force.</p> <p>The plan is to train neighbourhood police staff, Beat Managers and PCSOs in the early intervention work. A lot of the families will be ones already known to the police and will also be being worked with by the Connecting Families team. The aim will be to get to know families and work with them to prevent and reduce crime, domestic violence and anti-social behaviour. The police officers will be working alongside other agencies and making referrals to other services where appropriate.</p> <p>It has been a challenge to identify the families to start working with. KT attends all Connecting Families Board meetings and is starting to go along to the Operational Board and Allocation meetings.</p> <p>The role of PCSOs will be to work with 1 family from their beat for an average of 6-12 months. They will create an action plan for the family, work with them to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and address wider issues through signposting and referrals. Although acting as lead professional, the police officer will not be in the role of key worker. The Beat Managers will supervise PCSOs, allocate cases, review progression and provide support.</p> <p>PB has given KT contact details for other services, but there may be other agencies and teams who could also work alongside the police providing early support. Services to think about inviting PCSOs to find out more about</p>	

<p>their service as part of their induction.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Send KT a list of early help services.</p>	
<p><b>Housing Discussion</b></p> <p>DF suggested a housing discussion with the LA and key providers to talk about key issues and ways of working together and to explore whether there are any actions to take forward for early identification of families with children before the breakdown of tenancies.</p> <p>SW shared a presentation to prompt discussion.</p> <p>There are over 30 social housing organisations in B&amp;NES, with Curo and Knightstone being the largest. The main concentrations of social housing are located in Bath and Keynsham. A large number of social housing will be for single occupancy.</p> <p>The Housing Options Team in B&amp;NES deal with homesearch and give advice around preventing homelessness. If any agency is working with someone at risk of homelessness, they are advised to refer to the Housing Options Team as soon as possible.</p> <p>Discussion amongst the Board highlighted specific concerns and areas in which people were struggling to help families they work with meet their housing needs. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns that some tenants being evicted are not always being placed by the Housing Options Team, creating crisis situations. There may be different reasons for this, one being that there is no statutory duty to re-home if it is found that the family/ individual in question is becoming intentionally homeless. There may be a lack of understanding in families about what this actually means.</li> <li>• Housing Options need to know as soon as possible that a family is at risk of losing their tenancy, once served with an eviction notice is often too late. They are then able to provide preventative advice and support to the family.</li> <li>• Capacity is a concern. There are thousands of families in rent arrears, who could potentially get into more arrears and risk their tenancies.</li> <li>• There is a shortage of housing in the area, with an average wait of 14 weeks for a family 3 bedroom house through homesearch.</li> <li>• Families transitioning to Universal Credit are finding themselves in financial difficulties. Of approximately 180 people who have already transitioned, half started in arrears, but all are now in arrears. There is a 7 week wait before receiving money.</li> <li>• Families are offered support from both Curo and Knightstone to help with budgeting and building up some reserves for moving home. Knightstone have Income Officers who talk to families early on. Families don't always act on the advice given. Families need to be helped to understand the implications of their tenancies breaking down. This may be challenging when families are already in very stressful situations and unable to help themselves.</li> <li>• Curo and Knightstone have found it hard to access housing related mental health support, due to long waiting lists. RP recommended trying REACH who have a rapid response service.</li> <li>• Connecting Families have had an instance of paying rent arrears for a</li> </ul>	

<p>family who were still taken to court and then had to also pay court fines.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <p>Establish a Task and Finish group to progress the actions identified below. Group to include: Marie Porter, Debbie Forward, Marcia Burgham, Julie Evans, Gia Hancock, Tina Cosham, Paula Bromley, Kerrie Smith, Sue Wordsworth, Children’s Centre representative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training need to be addressed in services on welfare reforms and housing issues</li> <li>• Consider the role of Income Officer in social housing as an opportunity for providing early warning</li> <li>• PB to write up 5 case studies where vulnerable families have become homeless to be looked at by the T&amp;F group to see what, if anything, could have been done earlier or differently to prevent homelessness.</li> <li>• MP advised that she has an interface role with social care and that she and CDs team would be able to offer training in CAFs for housing staff.</li> <li>• Invite representative from DWP to join the Early Help Board</li> <li>• SW offered to look at creating an information graphic on becoming intentionally homeless, with all its implications.</li> </ul> <p>DF thanked SW for putting together the presentation and requested that all Board members look through the slides, which were circulated prior to the meeting.</p>	<p>T&amp;F group</p>
<p><b>Family Information Service- changes</b></p> <p>Two papers were circulated prior to the meeting; one written by Mike Bowden and one by AMc and JF reminding people of the services which FIS currently carry out. FIS will cease and move to a more minimal service, operating through customer service in One Stop Shops. The telephone helpline will go and outreach support will stop. It would be useful for services to think about how they might be affected by the lack of the FIS service. 1 Big Database will still be maintained and updated. The Early Help App will hopefully be a useful way of accessing information quickly. RP advised there is a ‘Wellbeing Options’ website, which is the adults version of 1BD. The section on community support on there will be expanding. Thank you to Jackie and the FIS team for all the help and support they have provided.</p>	
<p><b>Updates from Task and Finish Groups</b></p> <p><b><i>Improving Access to Information</i></b></p> <p>The Early Help App is being developed for practitioners in B&amp;NES to give easy access to early help services available and links to tools for use with service users. Families can still access 1BD for information about services, as well as a B&amp;NES residents App and a wellbeing App (ROVA). MB reported that the survey which went out to practitioners received 96 responses and work is now underway to develop the App based upon the</p>	



circulated.	
<b>Early Help Action Plan</b> Actions from the housing discussion will be added to the action plan. DF asked all to look through the action plan and send any updates.	<b>DF/ EW</b>
<b>AOB</b> CM reported that the CAF QA group needs new chairing arrangements going forward. SC will be the interim Chair. There will be a review being carried out about how we do quality assurance, which will include Suzanne Cheng (lead commissioner for social care), CD, CS, DF/ MB. Proposals to be brought back to EHB.	
<b>Next Meeting</b> 12 <sup>th</sup> September 2016. Agenda to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LSCB themed review of early help</li> <li>• Position statement on the early help action plan</li> <li>• Feedback from housing discussions</li> <li>• Progress update on the early help App</li> </ul>	