

## 2.4 Early Help and Parenting Programme

### 2.4.1 Early Help

We believe that early identification of issues and the delivery of the right help, in the right way to tackle problems and prevent issues from escalating is essential to improving the life chances of Walsall's children, young people and their families. Support provided aims to build resilience of families and capacity in communities that will prevent crime, support education and enterprise, keep children, young people and their families healthy and safe and reduce the demand for statutory services.

Effective Early Help in Walsall's is everybody's business and the Safeguarding Board, the Early Help Steering group and its partners are committed to improving and coordinating Early Help in Walsall

The Early Help Steering group agreed the following definition of Early Help and is used by all agencies delivering across the Borough:

*'Early Help in Walsall means providing support as soon as possible to build family resilience and well-being. Support is evidence and needs led and can occur at any stage in a child or young person's life. It is our shared responsibility – all partners, all agencies – to work with children, young people and their families to keep them safe, build on strengths, reduce risk and prevent problems from escalating.'*

### National Context

Work carried out by the Early Intervention Foundation ([www.eif.org.uk](http://www.eif.org.uk)), the WAVE trust ([www.wavetrust.org](http://www.wavetrust.org)) and a number of reviews commissioned by successive governments have identified that providing help early can both enable children, young people and their families to achieve their potential and reduce demand on more reactive and expensive services:

- Munro, Prof Eileen, (May 2011), "The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report. A child-centred system"
- [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf)
- Tickell, Dame Clare, (March 2011), "The Early Years; foundations for life, health and learning,- an independent report on the early years foundation stage to Her Majesty's government" <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-early-years-foundations-for-life-health-and-learning-an-independent-report-on-the-early-years-foundation-stage-to-her-majestys-government>
- Allen (MP), Graham, (January 2011), "Early Intervention: the Next Steps" <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-intervention-the-next-steps--2>

- Allen (MP), Graham (July 2011), “Early Intervention: Smart Investments, massive savings.” [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/61012/earlyintervention-smartinvestment.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61012/earlyintervention-smartinvestment.pdf)

Ofsted undertook a thematic Inspection in January 2014 to evaluate the effectiveness of Early Help services for children and families provided by local authorities and their partners. The report, ‘Early Help: whose responsibility?’, published in March 2015 draws on evidence from 56 cases and the views of children and young people, parents, carers, practitioners and managers across 12 local authorities, including Walsall.

The report sets out following expectations for the local authorities and partner agency delivering Early Help to children and families:

- (i) Improve the quality and consistency of assessment and plans
- (ii) Provide professional supervision to all staff delivering early help and ensure that their work receives regular management oversight, particular in respect of decisions about whether families need formal help
- (iii) Ensure that all Early Help professionals have access to effective training
- (iv) Ensure that children’s needs for Early Help arising from parental substance misuse, mental ill health and domestic abuse are addressed in commissioning plans

Walsall’s work with Troubled Families is part of a national programme launched in 2012 that recognised that despite engagement with a number of different services families continue to experience problems and achieve poor outcomes. This in turn is putting high demand on services.

According to the national criteria a Troubled Family will have at least two of the following headline problems:

1. Parents or children involved in **crime or anti-social behaviour**
2. Children who have **not been attending school** regularly
3. **Children who need help**
4. Adults **out of work** or **at risk of financial exclusion** and young people at risk of worklessness
5. Families **affected by domestic violence** and abuse
6. Parents and children with a **range of health problems**

The programme advocates taking a different approach to working with Troubled Families which is based on the following approach:

- Interventions chosen on the basis of available evidence of what works e.g. Family Intervention Project
- Interventions are integrated so that families receive a bespoke package of support that meets the needs of individual families
- The existence of a Lead Professional who will assess the needs of the family and help them navigate public services more quickly, more effectively and in the right order
- Integration of services around the whole family not just individuals

- A focus on early intervention for 'at risk' families as well as support for those in crisis
- A clear focus on moving towards sustained employment as a core goal/aspiration for Troubled Families

Walsall's work with Troubled Families (Families with multiple complex issues) is a central part of its ambition to reduce dependency on public services and is part of Walsall's offer of early help to families.

## **The Walsall Picture**

Walsall's multi agency Early Help Steering group, chaired by the Police undertook an Early Help self assessment in June 2015 in order to inform a refresh of the Early Help Strategy.

In 2016/17, there have been 2,762 early help hub contacts, 1,303 contacts via MASH, 864 step down plan to early help from preceding child and family assessment and 5 from CIN review giving a total of 4,985 requests for early help services in the year. There were a total of 1,035 early help assessments, but there has been an increase in single agency targeted interventions from September 2016 onwards with a total of 1,353 undertaken throughout the year by the 0-10 locality teams. 85.8% of all early help assessments had an outcome star completed, 66.3% of which children and their families are reporting improved outcomes over more than half of the assessment areas. Our top three demands for Early Help requests were Domestic Abuse, Neglect and Behaviour.

## **Strategic Priorities for Early Help**

The Early Help Self Assessment identified the following strategic priorities:

- Refresh the Early Help Strategy to reflect our improved understanding of the demand for Early Help in Walsall, the key challenges associated with the effective and impactful delivery of Early Help and our partnership approach in addressing these challenges.
- Build capacity and engagement of the 3rd sector within the Strategic development of Early Help as well as the delivery within localities.
- Increase capability across the Early Help workforce through the development and delivery of a whole partnership workforce approach to early interventions to address the key Early Help demands, which includes parenting, restorative practice, assertive engagement with families, toxic trio interventions.
- Develop locality Early Help arrangements that include:
  - The development of locality profiles – understanding the needs/challenges which will help in proactively identifying vulnerable families and provide the basis for monitoring impact (learning from Troubled Families will be utilised).

- Local arrangements that identify the families that most need help / that we are most worried about (level 3 and 4), that drive local conversations, that ensure more effective and timely decisions about who is best placed to help , that commit the resources needed, provide quality interventions and that ensure impact is monitored and measured. Our learning from Troubled Families will support this development. This framework is used in other local authorities and ensures all partners take responsibility for the effective delivery of Early Help.
- Co located multi disciplinary teams (learning from AFST and Edge of Care will be utilised) to provide help to our most vulnerable/complex families.
- Design a better response to families needing our help because of a combination of domestic abuse, parental mental ill health and parental substance misuse and a future model of delivery that maximises the benefit of the partnerships reducing investment, delivering less demand for services in the long term. This will be achieved through additional investment, better design and commissioning of services and will include the creation of practical ‘hands on’ voluntary sector capacity, the up skilling of the workforce, the adoption of a more joined up and integrated approach across the system and the commissioning of specialist services to meet identified gaps

## **2.4.2 Evidence based Parenting Programmes**

A key element of Walsall’s Early Help response is the delivery of evidence based parenting programmes. To deliver objectives of Walsall Parenting Strategy (2106) Walsall has commissioned a suite of parenting programmes and trained over 300 professionals across the partnership to deliver either on a group basis or one to one with families. The suite includes universal, targeted and specialist parenting programmes as follows:

Teen Triple P 8 week parenting group programme, Teen Triple P Primary Care one to one programme, Understanding Your Child 10 week group parenting programme, Walsall Way of Parenting multi agency staff Awareness training using the Solihull Approach, Cygnet 6 week group Autism Parenting Programme for parents of children 5-16years, Understanding Me 10 week group Autism Parenting for parents of children 0-5years with Autism. Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities 13 week group parenting programme and Mellow Mums Group, Mellow Dads Group 14 week intensive parenting support programmes.

The impact of programmes have evaluated positively in Walsall, but refresh of Strategy in 2016 identifies that there is more to do to increase provision and improve access to programmes, particularly for high risk groups.

During 2014, the following parenting groups were run in Walsall: 56 universal groups, including 22 teen triple P sessions (157 parents, 80% completed), 18 Understanding Your Child sessions (176 parents, 67% completed), 12 Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities sessions (92 parents, 68% completed) and 4 Family Links sessions (32 parents). In addition, 9 specialist groups for autism were attended by 87 parents, and 8 specialist Mellow groups were attended by 102 parents. An additional 59 targeted one to one interventions were delivered.

During 2015 delivery of parenting programmes reduced. 35 Universal groups were run including Teen Triple P, Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities groups and Understanding Your Child behaviour groups reaching around 300 parents. Due to decrease in delivery training has increased, with over 100 parenting programme training places offered to multi agency, community and voluntary partners. During the year Targeted interventions reached 19 parents through one to one interventions and Autism groups (5 groups) reached 56 parents. Specialist Mellow parenting groups were ran throughout the year with 8 Mellow Mums groups, 3 Mellow Dads Groups and 1 pilot Prison Dads group delivered reaching over 100 parents and children with complex and vulnerable needs such as parental domestic violence, mental health, substance abuse issues, children CP /LAC. Preventative Freedom group programme for domestic abuse victims has additionally been offered to 63 parents as part of Walsall’s Toxic Trio response and online parenting programmes have been rolled out to increase universal offer of support.

### Strategic Priorities for Parenting

Moving forward we are working to review Early Help delivery and pathways of referral from Social Care and partners to increase the focus of our work with families around evidence based programmes that have greatest impact. The priorities identified in Walsall’s recently updated Parenting Strategy 2016 are detailed below:

Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reduce</b> LAC numbers by improving parenting skills and wellbeing of the most <b>complex families.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improve</b> the parenting skills and wellbeing of <b>vulnerable families</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support</b> universal parenting programmes for <b>all parents</b></li> </ul>
Key actions	Key actions	Key actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to help <b>prevent children becoming looked after</b>, and to facilitate those currently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a parenting intervention to all parents with a vulnerable 0-5 year old (including parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of universal parenting interventions to be</li> </ul>

<p>in care returning to their parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer appropriate parenting support to all parents of children on a child protection plan through developing specialist parenting provision in children centres.</li> <li>• Offer appropriate support to care leavers becoming pregnant</li> <li>• Provide parenting worker to support the “Edge of Care Team”</li> <li>• Work with Partners and the voluntary sector to deliver parenting support appropriate to this outcome.</li> </ul>	<p>who have learning disabilities/mental health needs; and children who have chronic conditions or disability)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the role of health visitors in level 2 parenting</li> <li>• Increase the role of specialist disability children centre workers in the delivery of parenting support programmes</li> <li>• Develop locality working and ensure parenting training is available to all staff across a locality</li> <li>• Promote public health messages which are aligned with Walsall Public Health Department priorities</li> <li>• Work with partners and voluntary sector to deliver parenting support appropriate to this outcome</li> </ul>	<p>supported by Healthy Child Programme, 0-19 services (school nurses &amp; health visitors), schools and other partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To <b>effectively</b> work with volunteers and partners to deliver a <b>universal offer</b> and to improve <b>referral pathways</b></li> <li>• Work with the voluntary sector to deliver parenting support appropriate to this outcome</li> <li>• Develop locality working partnerships with parenting support being a key offer in locality working practices</li> </ul>
<p><b>What can parents expect to see?</b></p>	<p><b>What can parents expect to see?</b></p>	<p><b>What can parents expect to see?</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive a highly specialised and skilled worker who will deliver a intensive parenting intervention (course or 1-1 sessions) appropriate to need at this level</li> <li>• Intervention delivered at the right time, in the right place by the right person.</li> <li>• Appropriate follow-up so that changes can be maintained long term.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers who are trained and skilled in giving parenting advice and guidance. A range of workers available to deliver a range of parenting programmes that best suit the parent’s needs in order to prevent problems early on that removes barriers to their attendance and engagement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A variety of trained people delivering parenting programmes including professionals, charities and volunteers, schools and community groups.</li> <li>• A range of courses, group sessions, online provision, printed media appropriate to need at this level.</li> </ul>

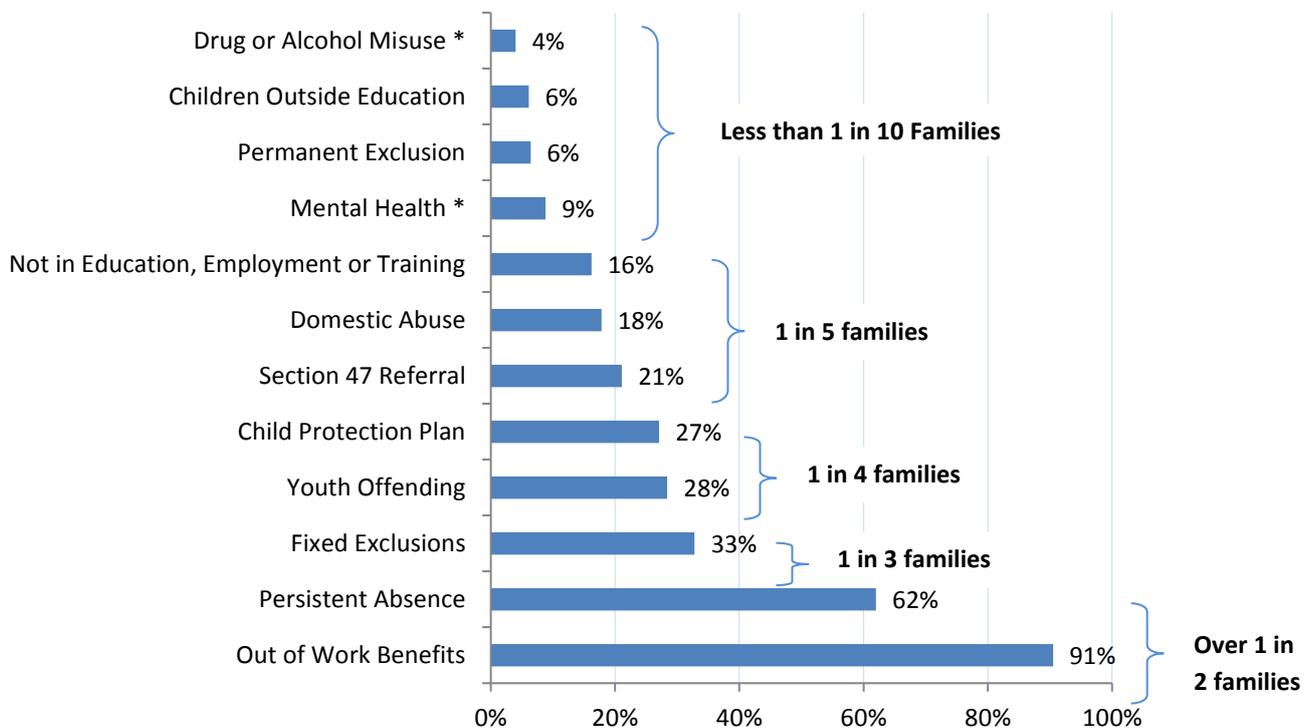
### 2.4.3 Troubled Families

Walsall received funding from Government in 2012 to work with 795 families out of 120,000 nationally which it successfully 'turned around' according to the government's success criteria. During phase 2 of the programme Walsall will work with a further 2,780 families by 2020.

In terms of the characteristics of families being worked with in Phase 2 of the programme as of May 2016 the following support needs were identified through initial assessments when the family was first engaged:

### Strategic Priorities for Troubled Families

**Presenting Needs of TF's in Phase 2**



<sup>i</sup> Definition used by the Early Help Strategy, approved by the steering group and the Children's Services Improvement Board in November 2013.