



SCC Early Help Partnership Forum
09 February 2023

Partnership Forum Summary



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

Summary

On the 9th of February 2023 SCC partnered with New Possibilities to facilitate an online Partnership Forum. The session focused on how as a partnership we can place children and families at the centre of Surrey's Early Help System and enhance partnership working.

The group was split into six break out rooms to ensure everyone's voice was heard. Five questions were shared with participants before the session to allow time for consideration. At the end of the session New Possibilities presented back to the group what they had heard which is documented in slide 11.

This slide deck summarises the key themes from the Partnership Form session and captures the feedback shared by partners.

Key themes established during the session

- [Inclusion and Accessibility](#)
- [Multiagency Partnership Working](#)
- [Whole Family Approach](#)
- [Resources and Funding](#)
- [Contractual Obligations](#)
- [Trust and Reliability](#)
- [Simplicity](#)
- [Data and Knowledge Sharing](#)

Participant Breakdown

Total: 60 people
SCC Staff: 14 Staff members
New Possibilities: 2 people
Partners: 44 partners



Questions

1. If things could be exactly right for families how would things have to change?
2. If you didn't hold back on putting families at the centre, what would you be doing?
3. If you knew that a collaborative approach was the best way to respond to an invitation to tender, how would you support it?
4. If you found out that another organisation was successful in a tender that you had gone for, how would you respond to ensure the family remain at the centre?
5. What are you assuming is unrealistic about putting the family at the centre of the commissioning process?

Theme 1: Inclusion and Accessibility



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- *Partners shared that the Early Help System needs to expand and provide easily reachable services for families living in rural areas.*
- *Partners would like to see improvements in interpreter services for individuals who find communicating in English challenging.*

- *Partners would like to see the availability and accessibility of mental health services enhanced.*
- *Partners believe it is important to ensure services are flexible enough to manage the needs of different communities.*

- *Partners acknowledged the value of engaging and bringing together members of different communities.*
- *Partners believe it is important we place a strong emphasis on listening to a diverse set of voices.*

- *Partners stated it is important to remove possible stigmatisation attached to accessing Early Help services.*
- *Partners shared that utilising available community assets and ensuring buildings can be shared between different organisations involved in Early Help would enhance accessibility.*

- *Partners highlighted that Early Help services should be provided by people that understand the particular needs of children, young people and families and have knowledge of the local area.*
- *Partners shared that all families are unique and services must cater to their specific needs.*

- *Partners emphasised the importance of creating a relaxed atmosphere for children, young people and families which embeds a sense of belonging.*
- *Partners stated that more needs to be done to encourage families to consistently interact with the services available.*

Theme 2: Multiagency Partnership Working



Partners embrace collaborative working across multiple services with clear pathways and strong relationships.

Partners believed it is important to provide more drop in sessions with multiagency professionals based in Family Centres.

Partners want SCC to promote collaborative tendering opportunities to enhance partnership working.

Partners want SCC to share a framework for how to enhance partnership working and work together to fill in gaps in the Early Help system.

Partners highlighted the importance of communication especially during periods of transition.

Partners noted the importance of clear communication between all partners.

Partners felt that more could be done to ensure an organisation's business priorities and processes do not create a barrier to collaborative working.

Partners noted the positives of joint agency visits to families.

Partners stated that Early Help system should build on the expertise and specialities of partners by working together.

Partners suggested hosting regular district and borough area meetings between professionals involved in delivering Early Help services in each area.

Partners want to assist the development of young people by further joining up with the voluntary sector and providing them with additional volunteering opportunities.

Partners place value on a greater join up of services including contribution from schools.

Theme 3: Whole Family Approach

Partners already work with families, they review activities and implement realistic plans.

Partners want to build more effective relationships with the families by providing support to the whole family.

Partners want to make sure families are kept updated and informed about changes or feedback to reduce any anxiety.

Partners want more training for staff and volunteers that have the families best interest at heart.

Partners support sharing best practice on how to ensure children, young people and families voices are heard and acted upon.

Partners felt that they already place families at the centre on what they do.

Partners want to continue empowering children, young people and families to build resilience.

Partners would like to see the removal of "levels of need" and work with the whole family including children in different age cohorts.

Partners said revisiting families to find out how they are getting on once they have been through the Early Help system is important.

Theme 4: Resources and Funding



Partners want more affordable and accessible training for frontline staff.



Partners want help to find alternative methods of raising funds to support families.



Partners felt that additional funding is required to continue 1 to 1 support for families.



Partners noted a risk that small providers might not be successful in the recommissioning therefore negatively impacting their ability to deliver services in Surrey.



Partners stated they need more funding to manage increasing demand.



Partners expressed that they have been negatively impacted from the cost of living crisis.



Partners would like to see longer contract terms to help provide security around funding



Partners highlighted the risk around recruitment and retention of staff during the recommissioning process and the possible negative impact on staff morale.



Providers want freedom over allocation of resources to ensure providers can deliver the best services for the local communities.



Partners raised concerns around the development of waiting lists if they do not have sufficient resource in place.

Theme 5: Contractual Obligations



Partners want key performance indicators to focus on the families' needs.



Some partners believe that the timescales within Early Help can negatively impact families as they may need more time to engage with families.



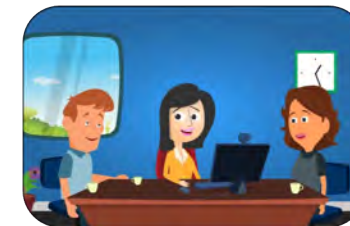
Partners have noted that families are presenting with complex needs and would like to see the threshold document reviewed.



Providers believe it is important to have conversations between partners and SCC before writing tenders and legal documentation.



Some partners want to reduce the number of performance conversation meetings.



Some partners felt that the current arrangements can feel process led e.g. ensuring Key Performance Indicators are met rather than focusing energy on working with the family.

Theme 6: Trust and Reliability



Partners want to help create a space where families feel safe to visit and engage with Early Help services.

Partners support the use of services being flexible to meet the needs of families to help families build resilience.

Partners noted the importance of families being able to access support at the earliest points at the right place and at the right time.

Partners stated how children, young people and families have built trusting relationships with current staff members. It is important to them that this relationship is not lost after the recommission.

Partners want to help remove the stigma of receiving help from the Early Help System.

Partners value the co-location of professionals which helps families access services in a familiar setting.

Theme 7: Simplicity

Partners believe in implementing simple language and staying away from complicated jargon to create clear communication.

Partners want to reduce confusion families may feel while trying to access services.

Partners want to reduce tick box exercises so that Early Help professionals can spend more time with children, young people and families.

Partners felt it is important to avoid duplication and ensure families only have to tell their story once.

Partners shared the importance of clearly explaining the support they will receive to families.

Partners stated the importance of timely handovers to support children, young people and families during transition periods.

Theme 8: Data and Knowledge Sharing

- *Partners want a greater focus on sharing appropriate information between partners as each organisation possess unique helpful insight.*
- *Partners placed importance on signposting children, young people and families to other staff or services personally ensuring a warm handover.*

- *Partners suggested the need to think of ways in which current staff in one organisation can help staff from other organisations.*
- *Partners would like to create more joint bids for tenders rather than competing against one another.*
- *Partners emphasised the need to promote training opportunities available in the Early Help System.*

- **Partners believe there needs to be shared agreed values and priorities in the Early Help System.**
- **Partners outlined the importance of gathering data to produce a funding breakdown.**

- **Partners want providers to have an open mind and embraces sharing data, and knowledge which can helps families.**
- **Partners want clear and detailed timetable for commissioning process to be shared with Early Help professionals.**

