

# Summary of questions posed at the Early Help Strategy Launch webinar and answers provided by Jackie Difolco, Head of Service- Early Help and Prevention at Leicester City Council 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Q: Is there going to be an opportunity to have a refresh on the liquid logic system?

Absolutely.

Access is available to people who will be actively using the liquid logic system. There will be the opportunity to book on to training via the [workforce development programme](#) along with a range of other training programmes such as how to chair a good team around the family meeting, how to have difficult conversations.

Q: Is there a maximum time early help family support workers will be allocated to families?

If we're talking about family support workers from the City Council, then we say on average their intervention can be from 3 three months to 12 months. It really does depend on the needs of the family. I think what's more important is that there is a multi-agency approach in place, rather than a set period of time to be involved.

It is certainly my view is that we wouldn't be working with families for longer than 12 months. If we haven't been creating a change in that time we have to question to what difference we are actually making and looking at what other services might be better placed to support the family.

Q: Can you tell us a bit more about the pilot that was undertaken to combine early help assessments in education, Health and care plans for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities?

Absolutely. So some of you won't know about this piece of work, but I'll take it back to three years when I was chairing a multi-agency support panel meeting. This is a panel where we look at stuck early help cases from across the partnership.

I will never forget the meeting where the case involved a family with five children, attending 3 different schools, with an Early Help Assessment and 3 of the children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in place. The mum was just in the middle of attending multiple meetings at different schools and with different services all the time and not really getting the support she needed and I thought, this is crazy!

And that really made me think about our partnership and what we could do to tackle this kind of situation. So we spoke to the local authority areas, I went and spoke to LASS (Leicester Association of Special Schools) and talked to them about the idea of how we could develop a process to merge the two plans together to create one plan 1 multiagency process with one focus outcomes for the whole family using the whole family approach. The special schools blew me away with their response. They recognized that they were spending a lot of time firefighting wider Family issues while trying to really support the child and ensure the education health care plan wasn't compromised.

I was fortunate to be able to work with a former head teacher of Ellesmere and LASS commissioned this pilot.

The pilot lasted for a full school year and in that year we explored the concerns and worries of staff. Our objective was to have this one plan whole family approach. We couldn't create one plan that was completely independent of the EHCP because we needed that to still be the sole focus. But we were able to wrap the whole family plan around that EHCP process.

So we started off with the special schools leading on one early help assessment, encouraging them to become part of the early help allocations hub. I certainly think that that made the key difference for schools, that they were not on their own, but they were the lead, but they had this wraparound support.

We took feedback and found that a concern shared by lots of schools had been about this being extra work moving from a process of one annual review to two/three meetings a year per term when actually they found they were doing less firefighting with the whole family approach, outcomes are improving for the whole family, and it was making the difference in actually reducing the work going forward.

So where that is now, we've got our evaluation report that I'm happy to share with you and we're now expanding that pilot to do that within mainstream schools. We've got a bespoke guide for schools in place and I'm really looking forward to us doing it with mainstream schools. We met with a group of mainstream teachers and heads who were really excited by the project. We did that in February and then obviously lockdown happened so. We're not leaving it, it's just postponed and it will start again in September or when normality resumes really? But a great project and actually in the East Midlands we are the only local authority that had done a pilot of that nature. So great for us.

[Q - Will there be a condensed version of the strategy which we can share with frontline stuff?](#)

We didn't plan to but I think it's something we absolutely can do. We try to make this strategy quite user-friendly, quite readable, but yes, we absolutely can do that. So if that's the feeling that many of you have, then we will certainly put that into place and maybe create a one page summary or something.

*Please note, following discussion after the event it was agreed not to create a new summary as the one [on page 4 of the strategy](#) already does the job*