

Health and Care Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet – Early Help Strategy

The Health and Care Scrutiny Committee undertook virtual scrutiny of the Early Help Strategy over the weekend of 6/7 February 2021.

The Committee welcome the Strategy and Members' observations are as follows:

- Early intervention strategies are rightly being focussed on and there are some exciting proposals in the pipeline.
- Localised one stop family hubs sound like they could really help communities. Consultation and engagement with local communities on the development of these is really important (and may have been done already?). Communities need to feel that they are part of a community and something to be proud of. That will need to engagement as they become operational. Communities need to feel that the hubs are not being imposed on them or put there to keep an eye on them. Flexibility in how these hubs develop operationally may be needed so that they meet local needs – e.g. issues in Welshpool maybe different to those in Ystradgynlais.
- With the support/ services provided by the hubs – will there be cross-over with Youth Services?
- There is reference in the Health Impact Report of health services being provided in the hubs. What level of involvement have the Health Board had with planning this? This could be good opportunity to have collaborative working to provide early mental health support (there is reference to CAHMS in the report). As has been raised with officers previously, there have been concerns raised that the threshold for mental health services only kicks in after crisis point.
- It was good to see the resource implication. However, once the hubs are operational, checks/reviews need to be in place to ensure that their value is measurable in terms of early intervention and the long term reduced financial impact of that.
- It would be good for scrutiny to have insight at the various development stages of these hubs so that we will know how they will look and operate.
- With multi-agency working etc there needs to be clear governance and accountability structures in place with defined roles and responsibilities for each part of the jigsaw puzzle.
- As an outsider reading this report, there could be concerns that there may be cross over or unnecessary duplication with some services provided. This is

probably not the case, but an assurance that services are distinct with clear roles/responsibilities maybe helpful.

- Children's well-being has been in decline for much of the past decade. We need more services based in the community to support the emotional health of our children. These types of services then prevent escalation to later mental ill-health. Is it possible to consider in the report how we are going to tackle this more specifically? The Covid 19 pandemic will have a huge impact on our County's children's mental health and we may need to start considering now how we are going to tackle this so that it does not escalate into bigger problems in the future.
- like the recognition of the interdependence with Adult SC, insofar as ASC issues may impact parenting and children's home situation.
- The strategy also references other agencies (CAMHS, midwifery, Integrated Disability Service, etc) and multi-agency referrals, which were understandably not mentioned in the covering paper. Nevertheless, the list of 'opportunities for closer/better co-operation' unintentionally witnesses to a good deal of current shortfall.
- Home Start is clearly new to Powys and it would be good to scrutinise in six or twelve months in to assess whether it delivers on its potential.
- Early Help Hubs should also be subject to scrutiny in six to twelve months - the ambition is there but we will want to see evidence of achievement of outcomes.
- The revamp of the 'front door' is definitely overdue

Members of the Health Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee: County Councillors A Jenner (Chair), J Gibson-Watt, S Hayes, E Jones, S McNicholas, G Morgan, K Roberts-Jones, D Rowlands, L Rijnenberg, A Williams, R Williams and J M Williams