Early Help Support Panel
Terms of Reference
1. Introduction

Since the launch of the Early Help Strategy (April 2012) the underpinning operational infrastructure to deliver on its objectives have been developed and are now in place. Elements of this are:

- The Early Help Assessment Team and clear pathways to link with the CART;
- Multi-agency threshold descriptors;
- Family CAF;
- Early Help Outcome Framework;
- Families for change delivery plan

However, existing services within the borough have been delivering effective early help to children, young people and/or their families for many years, though they haven’t before been integrated into broader early help strategy. These include:

- Education Welfare
- Targeted Family Support
- Parenting Provision
- Children’s Centres
- Integrated Youth Support Service
- FRP (with additional capacity to respond to the FfC cohort).
- Health Visiting Service
- School Nursing Service

What has been lacking is a formal forum in which practitioners can seek a solution to operational challenges and ensure that services are aligned and coordinated to meet the needs of families. In particular, the links between children’s and adult services has proven a gap where parental capacity to change is impacted by underlying issues, such as adult attachment, substance or alcohol misuse or mild to moderate mental health conditions.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of establishing an Early Help Support Panel, operating on a borough-wide basis, would be to provide a forum which will:

- Inform services where there is a need to mobilise services to support (whole) families appropriately;
- Ensure that services are mobilised effectively without duplication;
- Ensure that services are accountable for progressing interventions with families
- Ensure that the leadworker role is shared equitably and appropriately between agencies
- Provide oversight of the quality of Family CAFs undertaken across the borough
2.2 In addition, the Early Help Support Panel can provide a forum to discuss / challenge cases that have not been accepted, either on the threshold between Early Help Services and Social Care, or on the threshold between Early Help Services and a single-service response. The Early Help Support Panel will ensure that no cases are allowed to fall through gaps in services, with a risk that the needs may escalate. Members of the Early Help Support Panel will be expected to make decisions in relation to accepting referrals into their services as required and to be pro-active in resolving these cases through collaborative working.

2.3 Finally, the Early Help Support Panel will ensure that emerging and unmet needs arising from all Family CAFs within their geographical areas are logged and actively used to inform planning and commissioning decisions across the local children’s workforce.

3. Scope and Role of the Early Help Support Panel

3.1 Nature of Families Discussed
The group will be aimed at vulnerable families whose needs exceed those that can be met within universal provision but are below the threshold of Children’s Social Care and other statutory complex or acute services.

3.2 Multi-Agency Case Monitoring
The Early Help Support Panel will examine up to 10 individual cases per meeting, on the condition that written consent has been given by the young person/parent/carer for the case to be presented: this is implicit if cases are brought to panel with a Family CAF completed If consent has not been obtained for a case to be shared, cases will be considered on an anonymised basis.

Cases will be presented by the Families for Change Coordinator and/or lead worker where they have been unable to solve the following issues at a local level. For these cases the Early Help Support Panel will offer a trouble shooting role where:

- There has been difficulty in identifying and appointing a Lead worker
- The Team Around the Child/Family is not well established or working effectively
- There have been difficulties engaging relevant agencies /services or there has been a level of professional difference affecting multiagency planning and service delivery
- There are difficulties identifying appropriate services / intervention
- The Family CAF action plan is not progressing within timescale

Cases will be provided to panel members at least 5 days before the panel is due to take place.
3.3 ‘Step up’ to the Family Recovery Programme and other specialist services

The Early Help Support Panel can recommend a referral into the Families for Change Family Recovery Programme who can work with more complex and acute family need.

The Early Help Support Panel will consider cases below the threshold of statutory services and the CART will continue to deal with cases which meet this threshold. If there is disagreement about the ‘step up’ to CART this may be discussed at the Early Help Support Panel, though a clear evidence base for the exhaustion or inappropriateness of early help provision must be provided. However, it is expected that any and all threshold disputes are managed in the first instance by adhering to the Rotherham LSCB Practice Resolution Protocol.

3.4 Family CAF case reviews

If the Early Help Support Panel considers it necessary they can agree that a case needs to come back to them after a specified amount of time to ensure that it is still on track. Alternatively, the Panel will also hold a remit for providing sample audits of cases to review progress. All cases will be subject to tracking of some kind.

3.5 Family CAF Data Oversight Role

The Early Help Support Panel will consider the overview of Family CAF activity in relation to all Family CAFs undertaken. This may prompt further promotion of the Family CAF within particular Learning Communities if there appears to be under-representation or further work required to more fully embed the Family CAF working arrangements to ensure that the right children and young people are being appropriately offered multi-agency services.

3.6 Family CAF Data to inform commissioning and planning

The Early Help Support Panel will identify and log emerging and unmet need arising from Family CAF case discussions, as well as from the overview data, and will require the relevant Panel member to formally communicate this back to the relevant lead for provision/commissioning within their agency. (For example with CAMHS and the relevant Health Services).

3.7 Multi-Agency disagreement

The Early Help Support Panel will consider lessons to be learned in relation to multi-agency disputes or conflict in relation to multi-agency working. The Support Panel will be informed of any current multiagency disagreements by the Families for Change Manager, Family Recovery Programme Manager, Early Help Assessment Team Manager or any other lead worker presenting a case.

3.8 How Family CAF related cases will be nominated for presentation before the Early Help Support Panel
If practitioners are unable to engage other professionals in the Team Around the Family (TAF), there is a degree of professional difference or where the Family CAF action plan and review process has stalled, the lead worker will try and resolve issues at a local level. However, if they are unable to find a solution, or if there are issues arising consistently these cases should be brought to the attention of the Early Help Support Panel.

4. Membership

Membership will include senior representatives and operational providers of activity from:

- RDaSH CAMHS
- RMBC Children’s social care (borough-wide services)
- RMBC Early Help provision (including FRP and FfC)
- RMBC SES Outreach Team
- RMBC Education Psychology
- RDaSH Alcohol & Substance Misuse services
- RDaSH IAPT
- RMBC Neighbourhood Services
- SYP Vulnerable Person’s Unit
- RMBC Early Years
- RMBC Education Welfare
- RMBC Commissioning Support
- RMBC Integrated Youth Support Services
- The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust
- Domestic Abuse services

Commitment should extend to ensuring a representative/deputy in the absence of a named member, with responsibility for actioning tasks prior to the next meeting and feeding back on any associated outcomes for tracking cases presented.

5. Frequency and Timing of the Support Panel

It is proposed that the Support Panel would meet monthly, for a morning, from 9am to 12 noon. It is recommended that the frequency and length of meetings is reviewed after two meetings to ensure that it is sufficient to meet demand.

6. Referral Process

Referrals into the Early Help Support Panel can be made by any practitioner. Cases will be prioritised for consideration on a “first come, first served” basis, though where a senior manager requests precedence for particular case (e.g. due to immediacy of eviction etc), re-prioritisation may be applied.

The form included in Appendix A outlines the information required. The completed submission – inclusive of a completed Family CAF and/or any
relevant single agency assessment details – must be emailed to the address included on the form. Where a lead worker is emailing information from a non-RMBC email address, they assume responsibility for ensuring that the departing server is secure and confirms with the requirements outlined in Rotherham's overarching Joint Information Sharing Protocol.
Appendix A

RO ThERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICES
Safeguarding, Children and Families

Early Help Support Panel
Front Sheet and Proposed Action Plan

To be completed and returned to need EHSP@rotherham.gcsx.gov.uk, before 12.00 noon 8 calendar days prior to the meeting.

The most up-to-date Family CAF and any single agency assessment or relevant case notes must also to be returned

Please complete ONE form per household. ALL FIELDS ARE MANDATORY

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<th>Lead Worker:</th>
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<th>Address</th>
<th>Gender M/F/U</th>
<th>D.o.B.</th>
<th>School Attended</th>
<th>NHS Number (if known)</th>
<th>Open to social care Y/N</th>
<th>Statement of SEN Y/N</th>
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Child/Young Person and their Family Details (Children and Adults)

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<th>D.o.B.</th>
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1. Please mark with an * any siblings subject to the same referral.
2. Please ensure details of extended family members are included on the form.
3. Please highlight above with a % if there are any household members are currently residing in the same household as the child on the referral form

**Summary of Concerns:**
(Include your comments on the outcome of Family CAF – bullet point issues/concerns/ strengths detail any connected persons considered and outcome, as well as a summary chronology of action to date)
Appendix A

**Type of Resource Requested** (Please indicate previous and current resources and views of child and family to this request)

**Manager’s Comments** (Please indicate your authorisation of this request and any additional comments)

**Panel Advice**

**Resource Approved/Recommended**
Appendix A

Detail any Exit Strategies that are in Place

A copy of the Early Help Support Panel form will be kept by the Local Authority and may be associated to a child’s file should they become subject to involvement with social care.