

Early Help Evaluation Report 2

What Families Say

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Contents

Background	4
Methodologies Used in this Report	4
Summary - What Families Say	6
Families General Perspective of the Early Help Service	7
What Families Value the Most about the Council’s Early Help Service.....	11
How Families Feel About Closure	103
What could be Different	109

Background

There are seven reports making up the evaluation of Early Help case work. This is report 2 – What Families say. The collection of reports are detailed below.

Table 1 – Early Help Evaluation Reports

Report Title	Description of Report Contents	Pages
Report 1 – Summary report	A summary of the key findings	48
Report 2 – What Families Say	Families perspective of Leicestershire County Council’s Early Help service – in-depth insight into what families value and what could be different	122
Report 3 – Early Help key worker confidence survey	Leicestershire County Council’s case-workers level of confidence against a number of key requirements of their role in supporting families ¹	17
Report 4 – Multi agency and other asset based strengths	A multi-agency perspective of Leicestershire County Council’s Early Help service and further in-depth insight from families into multi-agencies as well as other asset-based strengths and deficiencies within families and communities	191
Report 5 – Understanding demand better	In-depth analysis of nine different groups of Early Help families - Understanding how their needs interrelate and which families make the most and least progress	113
Report 6 – Theory of change and theory of action	Provides information on the theory of change and theory of action underpinning the Early Help evaluation and some further detailed findings around families progress around key domains where change is measured	150
Report 7 – Technical report	Background and technical details of the scope and methods used to inform the evaluation	37

Methodologies Used in this Report

Theory of Change and Theory of Action

A key methodology incorporated in this evaluation is the use of Theory of Change (TOC) and Theory of Action (TOA).

More Information

For more information around Theory of Change and Theory of Action see

REPORT 6 – THEORY OF CHANGE AND THEORY OF ACTION

REPORT 7 – TECHNICAL REPORT

¹ Additional worker feedback can be found in report 2 & 4

Parent Voice

An important approach for gathering insight on families experience was through in-depth semi-structured interviews with parents. These interviews were translated into journey maps to understand the most important experiences and dependencies from the families' perspective and as well as testing the findings against the Theory of Action and Theory Of Change to understand what was working well and what could be improved.

More Information

For more information around the journey maps and parent voice see
REPORT 5 – UNDERSTANDING DEMAND BETTER
REPORT 7 – TECHNICAL REPORT

In addition, parent voice was captured from adults who attended a 'pop up' event at Twycross Zoo and from adults who participated in some younger children's voice work for Children's Centres (see below).

Child/Young Person Voice

A 'pop up' event was held at Twycross Zoo. This was a whole day event and children and young people were invited to leave their views using a range of techniques.

It was important to recognise that this event wasn't as suitable for capturing the voice of much younger children, so during February and July 2017, for those families being worked with as part of case work at Children's Centre's, workers collected child voice through observation and recordings at families regular settings.

More Information

For more information around child and young people's voice see
REPORT 7 – TECHNICAL REPORT

Most Significant Change² (Front line workers)

From November 2016 to August 2017, every quarter, all frontline staff were invited to complete a survey identifying a family or an individual person in a family that they had been working with where they felt they had seen the Most Significant Change (MSC). This change could be positive, negative or both. This exercise aimed to identify where key change was happening, what the barriers to change were, which activities and approaches the Early Help Service had within its gift which enabled change to happen, what other enablers of change existed such as contributions from wider partners and family resources and what the overall impact was.

² Davies R and Dart J (2005) The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use. Available at: <http://mande.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/MSCGuide.pdf>

More Information

For more information around Most Significant Change see
REPORT 3 – KEY WORKER CONFIDENCE SURVEY
REPORT 6 – THEORY OF CHANGE AND THEORY OF ACTION
REPORT 7 – TECHNICAL REPORT

Where quotes in this report are assigned with a name, these verbatim quotes have been taken from journey maps following the depth interviews with fourteen families. The wider context of these quotes can be made available on request. Quotes from families can feature across multiple themes but have only been stated once.

Summary - What Families Say

On the whole, families have a very positive experience of the Early Help service and recognise whole family working. Families mostly recognised support from their Early Help key worker but many also recognise support from multi-agencies. Families value:

- Having good relationships with their key worker
- Time
- Whole family and multi-agency working
- Family voice
- Visits to home and school
- Getting children and adults involved in groups, courses and activities (in welcoming buildings and environments)
- Helping them with relationships
- Pointing them in the right direction, generally and in relation to parenting, finance and debt, employment, housing and their housing environment
- Support around education and SEND, health, mental health and wellbeing, substance misuse, domestic abuse
- With appointments
- Obtaining items
- With reassurance, praise, encouragement and helping them to see change happen
- Flexibility
- Persistence and challenge
- Helping keep them and their families safe
- Support with sanctions and other practical and emotional support

Many families feel self-sufficient at the end of the intervention but for some their issues remain unresolved, often around other multi-agencies remit such as education and SEND or around their family relationships and mental health.

Whilst some families aren't ready or don't want the support to end having support available after the intervention is particularly welcomed, for example in groups, being able to contact their worker should an issue arise or through other agencies.

Whilst on the whole the family experiences are positive there are areas that could be different. Areas specifically identified by families included:

- Earlier support
- A better understanding around mental health issues
- Some specific feedback in relation to groups, courses and activities
- Relationships with workers
- Improvements around whole family working
- More time with workers
- Worker’s providing more feedback around their family’s progress

Families General Perspective of the Early Help Service

Of the hundreds of individuals who provided feedback for this evaluation, families in general had a very positive experience of the Early Help service with many saying the service had helped them and their families and had improved their future outlook. Children, young people and adults say how much their lives have improved since Early Help involvement, how they are able to manage things on their own when previously they couldn’t. Over 40% of the children, young people and adults we spoke to at one event explicitly said they had no suggestions for improvements.

“I cannot find any fault in the service at all and they came into my life at a low time and have helped me so much to get to where I am today”

“I am very grateful for this service as my support worker helps me with so many different things which is hard for me to deal with. She is amazing and I just want to write a big thank you to her and the rest of the team”

“I have found the Early Help service the best service I have ever had, they help us with so much”

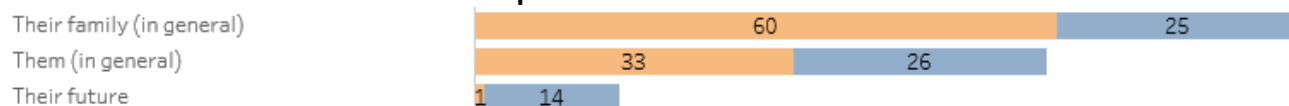
“Early Help help more than any of the social workers”

“I wouldn’t change a thing, we have the best workers, thank you”

“Our worker has brought us out of a crazy place we were heading”

Parent’s feedback

Dashboard 2a: From one of the techniques used to collect feedback from families³



³ Children and Young People (orange bar), adults (blue bar)

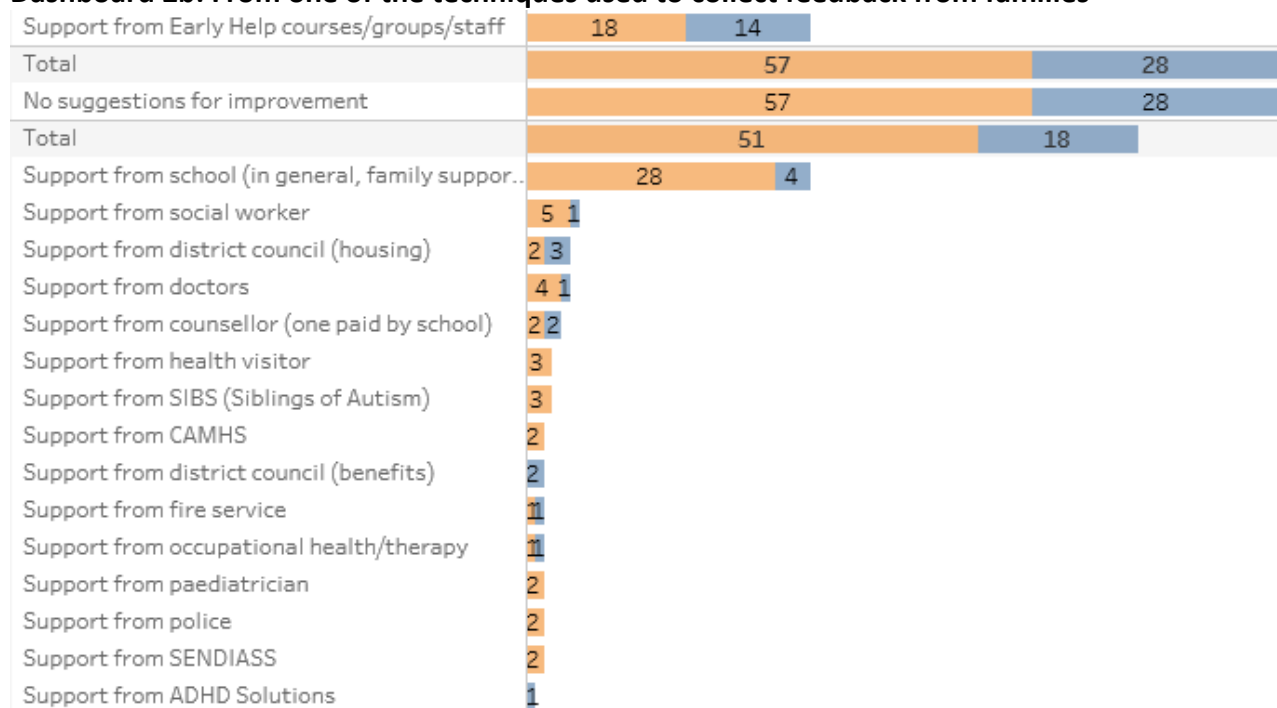
Workers also identified an improved future outlook for families and the importance of other Early Help workers in cases of most significant change

- *“Mum is no longer negative when I visit and has started talking positively about future plans for the whole family”*
- *“She wants to achieve something for herself”*
- *“Has a more positive outlook for her own future”*
- *“The young person has really engaged with her youth worker and the outcome of that has been really positive for her. She now talks about how she is feeling to me, her dad, her siblings and her friends and peers which in turn has helped her feel happier, supported and less stressed. By offloading her worries and feelings this is reducing her need to self-harm”*
- *“I was able to talk to my peers about things I was unsure of or if I was getting frustrated when things slipped back”*

Families Feel They Get the Most Support from their Worker and Other Early Help Workers

As the service is a keyworker model it isn’t surprising that many families said they had no help from any other service or that their worker had helped them access help from other services.

Dashboard 2b: From one of the techniques used to collect feedback from families



Other Areas Where Families Get Support

Families cited the following services as also helping them:

Education and SEND

Many families recognised the support they got from schools, specifically mentioning family support workers in schools, pastoral workers, SENCOs, counsellors, a school attendance officer, school nurses, teachers and head-teachers.

Other SEND and Education Services

ASBA, ADHD Solutions, Educational Psychologists, First Class Solutions/Education, Menphys, Mental health and education practitioner, Nurseries, SENDIASS, SIBS (Siblings of autism group), Specialist Teaching Service (STS) and the Toy library.

Social Care

Adult social care (Care services), Disability Team, an Inclusion support worker, Social workers and Strengthening Families' workers.

Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing Services

Accident and Emergency, Adult mental health workers, Autism special nurse, CAMHS, Care Navigators, Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN), Counsellors (New Dawn Counselling, Family Therapy, Living Without Abuse, Bereavement), Crisis Team, Disability Team (special nurse), Dentist, Doctors, a healthy fitness course (physical activity/weight management intervention), Hospital (intensive care, special baby unit), Laura Centre (child bereavement), Mental health and education practitioner, Mental health children's home, Mental health institution, Midwives (including mental health midwives and teenage pregnancy midwife from Connexions), Mother and Baby Mental Health Hospital, Nephrology, Opticians, Orthopaedic surgeon, Paediatricians, Psychiatrists, Psychologist (at Westcotes), Rape Crisis Charity, School nurses, Speech and language therapists, Vista and the Wellbeing Service.

Carers Services

Barnardo's and carer's groups (in general).

Housing Services

District Councils, Housing Associations, HomeStart and The Bridge.

Criminal Justice System

CAFCASS, Child support agency, Court, Police and Prison.

Domestic Abuse Services

Children's Domestic abuse worker, Domestic abuse workers (general), NSPCC, Refuges (and mother and baby units/hostels), UAVA and Women's Aid.

Fire and Rescue Service

Fire Care.

Substance Misuse Services

Exario, Swanswell⁴ and Turning Point.

Finance and Employment Services

Adult learning courses, CAP, Charity Link, Child Support Agency, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Family Fund, Food banks, Job Centre, Jobs, PACE, Toy Appeal and volunteering opportunities.

Other Third Sector and Community Groups Not Included Above

Adult youth workers (church group), Mormon Church, Rape Crisis Charity, Volunteer drivers Children's Centres and Youth Centres.

Non Casework Support at Children's Centres

More detail of other support at Children's and Youth Centres is included in the WHAT FAMILIES VALUE CHAPTER in this report.

Specialist Interventions

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), Dynamic psychotherapy, Recovery programme, Start programme, DART programme, Freedom programme, Parenting programmes (including Solihull), Triple P, Group therapy (child mental health) and Play Therapy were also cited by families as specialist interventions they had received.

Other

An interpreter and driving lessons. Many children, young people and adults recognised the support they had from other family members, friends and their wider support network.

More Information

For more details of families perceptions of support from schools, other agencies and families own networks see

REPORT 4 - MULTI-AGENCY AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS

⁴ Turning Point took over the substance misuse contract from Swanswell

What Families Value the Most about the Council's Early Help Service

There were a wide range of things families valued from either their worker or the Early Help service. Below are the areas that are mentioned by families more frequently:

Good Relationships with Workers Including Worker Qualities

It was clear from the feedback from children, young people and adults that there were in the main good relationships with their workers. There were differences in the qualities children and young people valued compared to adults. Children were more likely to refer to their workers as:

Fun, funny (makes me/us laugh, makes things fun, crazy, exciting), gives good hugs, nice, pretty and cool (plays good music in the car), with adults more likely to say supportive, friendly and approachable

Children, young people and adults regularly referred to their workers as:

Brilliant, fantastic, good, excellent, amazing, caring, loving, nice, lovely, sweet, supportive, smart, always there, friendly, kind, understanding, always happy, smiley, positive, cheerful, encouraging, efficient, trustworthy and calm

Children and young people also referred to their workers as: honest, down to earth, inspirational, generous, special, welcoming, committed, courageous, involved and truthful

Adults referred to workers as: good communicators, committed, efficient, interested, motivating, bothered, honest, persistent, non-judgemental and open minded

Other qualities adults valued about the relationship with their worker included:

- *“Always being there for them, especially when there are emergencies”*
- *“Giving them light at the end of a tunnel”*
- *“Coming when they say they are”*
- *“Being able to ask them anything”*
- *“Follow through on actions”*
- *“Offering invaluable advice”*
- *“Making a huge difference to our family”*
- *“Doing what they say they will”*

Below are quotes from families of what they felt helped build good relationships between workers and their families’.

“My worker talked to me like a human being. When you go to the doctors sometimes they talk down to you...you feel stupid...my worker felt like a friend coming to see me more than a professional because she understood, didn’t make me feel judged...I immediately felt comfortable with her which is a really good quality to have because I’ve seen a lot of professionals in the last year and there’s not many make you feel like that...we both love gardening and it was a way of motivating me to get me out of the house”

Katrina, age 30

“I thought she was going to come in, judge me, tell me what I was doing wrong, tell me what to do but actually it was nothing like that. I was petrified before she came, I was nervous when I first met her, my anxiety was that high I can’t remember much...I didn’t know what to expect. She rang first, said who she was, put me at ease and told me I didn’t have anything to worry about. Then she came out and spoke to me first, what she was here to do and who she was. She did put me at ease, made me feel like she was here to help. She said she was here to meet all the kids, not just Luke”

“I find males less patronising than women so it was good that my (second) worker was a male”

Natalie, age 31

Michelle feels she had a good relationship with her worker:

“In another world we’d have been good friends but you can’t underestimate the professional...when you’re in people’s lives feelings are involved and some of that gets taken away when we’re all trying to be so professional”

Michelle appreciates how her worker saw how she did things, “by listening and talking with her, telling her things straight...being good at saying things that need to be said, but kindly, as you need someone on your side but neutral to say what about this, what about that”

Michelle, age 53

Emma feels that because her worker was the first person she met when she moved:

“I grew an attachment...there were other people at the centre but I hadn’t seen them or spoken to them because I’d always spoken to my worker. I’d had different midwives, so having someone to talk to that I didn’t have to constantly explain everything to again was really helpful...it was rather like a friend being here than somebody official. The children felt comfortable around her. Sometimes when professionals talk to you and children try to butt-in some professionals say I can’t talk to you because I’ve got to talk to the parent...but she wasn’t like that”

Emma finds it helpful that she had her workers telephone number:

"If I didn't have credit I could text as it was a mobile, said that I didn't have to feel as if I needed to speak to her just text or if I didn't want to personally talk to just text and ask for what I wanted"

Emma, age 33

Isobel feels she can trust her worker, knows:

"She won't go anywhere unless she has to...all she does is help...I can tell you what's happened and I know I'm safe to do so whereas before I was in fear of being honest and the repercussions...I only told my worker a few months ago I was coming off drugs when she met me...she knew, thought there was no helping me then but couldn't do anything about it until I told her"

Isobel, age 38

Stacey finds she gets on well with her first worker from the beginning:

"We got on really well, like a house on fire...she helped me with loads. I could speak to her about anything...I loved her, she was an amazing worker"

Stacey finds that she doesn't get on as well with her new worker:

"We're too alike and don't see eye to eye and we're both very abrupt...say it like it is...I don't get on well with people the same as me but otherwise she's lovely and she's the one that's made me better"

Stacey, age 24

Jessica is contacted at first by her worker on the phone which Jessica finds helpful due to her anxiety levels. She also finds it helps that her worker is a woman. Jessica said that:

"Group work was the only thing I didn't really want to do...that I would really struggle with that and my worker was really accepting of that"

Jessica, age 23

"People at the Children's Centre knew the situation I was in...nobody was judgemental, wasn't prying. My worker didn't pressure me, said to tell her when I was ready if I didn't want to talk about it...sometimes that's what you need, not to be pressured"

Sofia, age 28

Mandy was allocated with a brief intervention worker who worked with Mandy for a couple of weeks before referring her for more intensive support as she realised Mandy need more support than housing. Mandy felt the brief intervention worker helped with things and started to *"put things in place, housing, introducing me to my Family Support Worker"*

Mandy, age 47

Other quotes around worker relationships from adults included

"She has been great and helped our family so much. My most complex child sees her as

family so she is great”

“I had a lovely lady and she was just the best person ever as she knew what it was like when people judge you and she made me feel like the person I am and I’m so blessed to know her”

“Her supportive nature, even when I’ve let myself down”

“Our worker didn’t try to change our mind about parenting ways and I liked that our worker and the Early Help service has been very helpful to my family even in hard times”

Other quotes around worker relationships from children and young people included:

“I liked that she buys us nice things, presents, colouring sheets and fun activities”

“I like her, she listens, never judges and I can tell her everything. Trust a lot”

“I’d like my worker to be my grandma”

“I like it when she holds my hand and makes me laugh”

Workers also identified the importance of aspects of their relationship with families in cases of **most significant change** and observations which largely focus around trust and being non-judgemental:

- *“Mum had to feel confident that she would be supported and not feel judged as she worried about being judged”*
- *“She wasn’t judged when she admitted to hitting”*
- *“For her to be able to trust me and to be able to express herself without being judged”*
- *“I was able to empathise with mum’s level of understanding. There was good communication, listening and I was non-judgemental”*
- *“The relationship between myself and the parents and the young person in that they trusted my referral to the group would help”*
- *“Building the families trust, asking difficult questions, being non-judgemental, taking to other professionals and being caring and supportive”*
- *“Trusting me to advocate on her behalf”*
- *“Building trust was the most important factor as the family had felt criticised and judged by professionals in the past and so were understandably resistant”*
- *“Mother appreciates all the support she has accessed through the Children’s Centres and her outreach workers and she has a lot of trust and faith in our service and tells people so”*
- *“Mum to trust me as a worker and listen to the things I was saying”*
- *“Trust was very important when working with this family due to dad being a looked after child who had little faith in services”*
- *“Encouraging the family to trust me and other professionals and be open and honest with them”*
- *“It was necessary for the family to engage and trust my involvement, which they did”*

- *“The most important part of this work was gaining the child’s trust for him to want to work with me and also want to make a change”*
- *“Mum has been able to tell me when she finds it too much and has been able to step back from meetings, trusting me to advocate on her behalf”*
- *“Building a relationship with father so that he understood we were trying to help him and his family and not judge his situation”*
- *“Gaining trust was a key aspect in order for change to occur”*
- *“I needed the parent to trust me and to act upon the strategies offered”*
- *“They needed to trust in my knowledge and skills about development”*
- *“My relationship with the family to gain trust was essential to this work”*
- *“Another factor was to build up trust with the family to allow open, honest conversations. Both family members needed to have a good relationship and trust in the worker”*
- *“She needed to trust the team of workers around her as she felt let down by agencies previously”*
- *“For her to be able to trust the worker and be able to express herself without being judged”*
- *“Allowing time for trust and rapport to be built which encouraged mum to engage with the service and see the support that can be offered to break the cycle of mistrust in services”*
- *“Mum had to trust me. We agreed to be open and honest with each other at all times”*
- *“Building a trusting relationship was probably the biggest factor”*
- *“Mum and dad both having a positive relationship with the Early Help worker”*
- *“Building a good relationship and being consistent”*
- *“Mum feeling comfortable with me”*
- *“Good working relationship with both parents and grandparents”*
- *“A change of staff/worker”*
- *“He felt comfortable receiving support from myself”*
- *“I had developed a good relationship where mum felt comfortable and knows I am working with her and not against her”*
- *“Because of a parent’s quote: you were really understanding and didn’t talk down to me like I was stupid”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers identified the families’ relationship with worker in 32% of cases as key to change taking place in families. This included trust, families being able to be honest and changing workers if required.

Time

In general, having time with families enabled relationships to develop, particularly where workers had to gather a lot of evidence or where issues needed to be solved or different strategies needed to be tried to support families to see and sustain their changes and “to get them back on their feet”.

Below are quotes from families illustrating how time was important to them.

Michelle's appreciated her worker meeting with a teacher at primary school who had seen all of Michelle's boys go through primary school. This meeting highlights *"the boys had 100% attendance, that I was part of the Parents, Teachers Association (PTA) etc."*

Michelle feels the meeting with the teacher and others helped her worker *"get a bigger picture...she could go back to the secondary school and say I don't know where all this about Michelle is coming from, I've met people who've known her since her eldest was in reception...because she had the big picture...they were able to overcome preconceived ideas that I didn't care about my children"*

Michelle feels that whilst relationships take a while to develop, she developed a close relationship with her worker due to the intensity.

"We got to know each other as she came to see me once or twice a week and supported me in meetings and by coming to meetings with me, seeing how I was fighting for it all"

Michelle, age 53

Other quotes from adults illustrating the importance of time to them included:

"I have liked the intense help"

"Our worker has considerable understanding and looks at the bigger picture, doesn't listen to rumours. She has been supportive, understanding and patient"

Workers also identified the importance of time in cases of **most significant change**

- *"My case demonstrates the need to sometimes work with a parent for more than six months to develop enough trust within the working relationship to really make a difference"*
- *"Allowing time for changes helped, this family were open to me for a year and needed this year to maintain a gentle slow approach due to their mental health capacity"*
- *"It has taken time to get to know them and be able to access what support was required"*
- *"Having the time and being allowed and encouraged by my manager to take a step back when appropriate from risk safety and being allowed to approach it in softer ways spending time with the young person relationship building – most of the poignant information came out at these times"*
- *"The year's work has been slow and steady but the impact has been huge with some positive changes being made that may not have happened if intensive support was not offered to this family"*
- *"Understanding where her barriers lay and giving her suggestions and support to overcome them and giving her time and listening to her worries and concerns"*
- *"Ongoing visits"*

- *“Allowing time”*
- *“From gathering more evidence and spending time with the children to gain their voice it was evident that dad’s substance misuse was having a huge impact on the whole family including mum’s mental health”*
- *“It’s been a long process of drip feeding information to the parent and extended family”*
- *“The changes happened gradually”*
- *“By building relationships with staff slowly over the group attendance she relaxed and seemed more engaging”*
- *“Few weeks to build a relationship”*
- *“Time and patience”*
- *“Over time”*
- *“Over the weeks we have taken steps to leave the house and reach agreed destinations”*
- *“Time and space with continual support from worker without being overpowered”*
- *“Continued support until the change is more embedded is important”*
- *“Regular visits and contact”*
- *“Worker supported the parent to use a graduated approach”*
- *“I am sure that with time and encouragement from me then she will attend in groups”*
- *“It was important to keep things simple for mum and go at her pace”*
- *“Families pace”*
- *“Listen to them when they were in crisis i.e. arguments, give them time to reflect and work out what they could have done differently”*
- *“Reflecting on my work, what makes my service different compared to the other services that have tried to work with the family, thinking of how I could change my way of working as in the past mum has appeared difficult to work with”*
- *“Mums attitude towards reflecting on her parenting to make changes”*
- *“Whilst they not have liked some of the things they were hearing they were able to reflect and discuss matters further at a later date”*
- *“Mum also had some ‘me’ time and this encouraged her to reflect upon her parenting in a positive way”*
- *“There is still a long way to go yet”*
- *“A trajectory will be in place for ten weeks to ensure continuity and to build on what’s been achieved”*
- *“I shall continue to work with this vulnerable parent for the foreseeable future to ensure she may reach a positive outcome for herself and her family”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified time, space and patience in 10% of cases

Whole Family Working/Multi-Agency Working

In general, as illustrated in dashboard 2a above, children, young people and adults valued being helped themselves but they also recognised and valued other members of their family being helped. This also supported good relationships between families and their worker. General things families valued included helping them to access other services, filling out forms and applications and accessing things for their children.

Below are quotes from families which illustrate how whole family working and multi-agency working was important to them

Mandy sees the workers main concern is for her children but finds it helpful her worker also sees Mandy's health issues. Mandy is welcoming of her workers referral to an outreach domestic abuse worker and finds her "a lovely lady" and feels further supported by a psychiatrist and a counsellor

Mandy, age 47

"He asked if I would accept his help and I said yes... I need help because I do need help...I'm tired. I'm tired now, it's not easy having three kids and two have bad needs...he spoke to me about my worries and the children. He asked what sort of help he could give all the children even though I thought he was just here for Luke...I liked it that May had someone to talk to. May felt just as important as Luke as he gets all the attention so it was good for her to get some attention and that made me feel better...he spoke to my partner once because him and Luke were always at each other...my partner didn't understand why Luke needed help. They went through stuff, he listened and it was helpful"

Natalie, age 31

Isobel feels the support she gets from her worker was "all round support...not just concentrating on the kids...my wellbeing too...having to go to different agencies for help with the kids...everyone knows what's going on with whoever's involved... the priority and work is with me...but we all have a good relationship with her and the kids trust her too"

Isobel feels the support doesn't just extend to her but her own mum too, "if I'm doing my mum's head in my mum would ring my worker or if my worker can't get hold of me she'll ring my mum to find out where I am"

Isobel, age 38

Jessica feels she would still be in the same rut if she hadn't got support from her worker , the rape crisis charity and her mental health worker, that she "wouldn't have got over what he did...would still be having flashbacks...would still be there"

Jessica, age 23

Sofia feels she had good support following Sebastian's birth, "because after I had him a mental health worker came out to see me, a health visitor came out, a worker from the Children's Centre came out a couple of times, the doctor...I had quite a lot of support which I needed at the time"

Sofia is supported by various agencies around her housing situation.

"I had letters from everyone... Women's Aid, the Children's Centre, my health visitor, the doctors"

Sofia, age 28

Suzanne's worker gets in touch with a few people and gets Suzanne access to First Class Solutions to enable Seb to be home educated.

Suzanne, age 42

Afia's worker helps Afia fill in forms, makes phone calls and contacts the school if there is anything that needs sorting out.

Afia, age 40

Other quotes from adults which illustrate the value they placed on whole family and multi-agency working included:

"She's not just helped my children, she's helped us as a whole family. The worker we were assigned to was a massive help to us to bring together as a family. She was a god-send to us to help with problems with the children and helped the children with problems"

"Our worker has helped me and the boys loads and supported us after having such a bad year"

"She tries to understand both sides"

"I have liked everything. Helped me and my children get back on track with everything"

"I have liked all the extra help and support I receive for me and my family and most of all the support my son has had to help him"

"Our worker is very supportive to me and my daughters needs and has given lots of information for other support groups"

"Our worker helped me understand what my partner was going through and support us a family"

"We have accessed things for the children that we wouldn't have been able to (without Early Help)"

"Thanks to my worker we also have other services involved – Inclusion support and Occupational Therapy"

"My worker referred us to Menphys"

"Our worker has helped my family massively, accessing services we were unaware of giving us massive support"

“HomeStart haven’t got back to us yet but I will speak to my worker when I see her on Monday”

Other quotes from children and young people illustrating the value they placed on whole family and multi-agency working included:

“She makes us fill out a sheet to look at who you could talk to. She talks to all of us, sometimes on our own. She has a giggle and stuff”

“My worker helped me make an Easter bonnet hat. She’s helped my brothers. She helped mummy be a caretaker of me”

“She helps our family a lot, especially my dad with finance and medical problems and my brother with emotional problems”

“Our worker has helped everyone. She takes care of us all. I believe that our worker helps our father the most, she helps him with issues – medical, financial, his teeth and my brothers PIP”

“Great family days out!”

Workers also identified the importance of multi-agency working and whole family working in cases of **most significant change** and observations:

Whole family working:

- *“This is a youth case for the daughter who suffers with anxiety. The anxiety was coming from the family home due to money worries. Without supporting the parents I couldn’t support the daughter”*
- *“I have very much used a whole family approach, working with all four children even only the two youngest fall within the Sure Start age remit. This was necessary as it is clear that the older children in particular continue to be affected by the history of domestic abuse”*
- *“Having a family meeting and agreement with the family as a whole”*
- *“Both parents and children voiced they were happier, changes were made that benefitted both the parents and the children”*
- *“Taking a whole family approach has helped understand the young person’s world more”*
- *“Using words and pictures to help child understand siblings additional needs and mums mental health”*
- *“Several issues were identified by each family member and solutions were discussed to resolve conflict situations”*
- *“Supported grandmother with working with the school”*
- *“To build the trust and relationship with all family members, including older siblings”*
- *“Working with the whole family and gaining all the views and looking at the whole”*

picture”

- *“Whole family focus”*
- *“Began to realise they all had to work together if things were going to get better”*

Multi-Agency working:

- *“I supported the parent to access a health visitor, speech and language support and a hearing test for her child”*
- *“I was able to support the family to access appropriate services. Adult Social Care, CAMHS and their GP”*
- *“Through multi-agency working with the police, education, health and CAMHS, both children have a final diagnosis for ADHD”*
- *“CAMHS visited and reinforced what I had said about children with attachment issues and also backed up my suggestions for improving relationships”*
- *“By working together with mum in a multi-agency way (NHS, school and housing all providing support) mum has found the motivation to keep going, growing in confidence as she completes each step of her journey”*
- *“Support from homeless charity, drug agency, ADHD solutions, health service”*
- *“Jointly working with health we were able to educate her regarding achievable options for nutritional food and to encourage her to implement more regular meal times”*
- *“Child is making positive changes to his behaviour and is involved with different professionals. Parents are emotional with child starting pre-school but are happy they are getting help to cope with his behaviours”*
- *“I supported and encouraged a referral to the Specialist Teaching Service”*
- *“Twenty Twenty support has been put in place for child”*
- *“The housing officer was made more aware of the family’s situation so more support was offered to the family”*
- *“Working with UAVA, Women’s Aid and First Response Social Workers”*
- *“The child has been supported by the Specialist Teaching Service due to the worker identifying that he required support”*
- *“Getting support for the family made up of CAMHS, SENDIASS and the School tutoring service*
- *“The head teacher supported the family before I was allocated and provided lots of information to me about the case and we shared information”*
- *“The family needed a worker who could help co-ordinate what other professionals were required, in order to make the best possible changes for the family”*
- *“CAMHS, autism outreach, SENDIASS, GP and school involvement”*
- *“Liaising with primary and secondary school and the police. A referral to FireCare also resulted in positive action”*
- *“This family shows what positive changes can occur by multi-agency working through a signs of safety meeting”*
- *“Regular meetings with the family were held to share information and multi-agency work”*
- *“I think that this family shows what positive changes can occur by multi-agency working through a signs of safety. By considering the family needs as whole, all*

family members will benefit from these changes”

- *“It was necessary to liaise with both Job Centre Plus and housing to ensure mum was in receipt of the right information and support”*
- *“For changes to occur it was important that father and mother were happy to engage with all services. They needed to understand the role that each agency/professional could play in improving family life and safeguarding for their child”*
- *“Other agencies getting on board with the families issues”*
- *“To work closely with other services like children’s mental health, the GP and school to ensure we are all offering the correct support”*
- *“The eldest daughter is now attending school regularly and phone sexting issues reported to police, who are dealing with it. She is attending an Early Help girls group and enjoying it. Behaviour management strategies are in place and working well at home so son’s behaviour is more positive. Mum is attending family focus mornings and would like to become a mentor for Early Help. Family attended Early Help activity in the school holiday and enjoyed it”*
- *“The health visitor and myself were in regular contact which meant we were able to offer a consistent approach and support each other when mum disengaged”*
- *“She has the innermost desire, strength and support structure with Early Help, a domestic abuse worker and the police to make these changes happen”*
- *“With the family, Early Help and the school pushing, the GP made another referral too CAMHS and it was accepted”*
- *“Liaising closely with school, CAMHS, Educational Psychologist and the school nurse”*
- *“Through observations and discussions with school, Adult Social Care, Cares, family members, school nurse and CAMHS”*
- *“Through Early Help arranging meetings with professionals and parents”*
- *“Advocate and communicating with health services”*
- *“Mum has started to engage with professionals to help support her own mental health, accepting support from perinatal mental health nurse, Family Action and Children’s Centre programme”*
- *“Partnership with the pastoral manager at the Academy”*
- *“Services working together to enable this change to come about: School, Early Help youth worker, social worker and the police”*
- *“The joint visit had been made as the health visitor had found difficulty arranging a home visit”*
- *“Contacts with other services involved”*
- *“All the changes have been completed through a multi-agency approach”*
- *“It was necessary for all the agencies to work together as not one agency was able to do the work on their own”*
- *“Being able to draw on other health professionals where necessary”*
- *“This was a tangible change and shows how working with multi-agencies can work”*
- *“School staff, CAMHS, GP, Emotional health and wellbeing nurse, Children with medical needs department”*
- *“Working in partnership with LIP and Prospects”*
- *“Regularly liaising with other agencies to address any issues as they occurred to prevent any relapse”*

- *“I was able to support a referral for further support from either CAMHS or the post adoption team as a consensus of options from school and home was found”*
- *“Supportive links with education and housing”*
- *“Involvement of more services i.e. The Bridge, council, Falcon Centre, Educational Welfare Officer, First Response*
- *“Other professionals at multi-disciplinary team meetings have noticed the difference in mum”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified the following enablers as key to change:

- Schools e.g. availability of settings, appropriateness of settings, support and understanding of issues for parents and children, (in 30% of cases)
- Whole family working (20%)
- General services e.g. housing, DWP, police, Educational Psychologists (20%)
- Other specific services (15%)
- Self-referrals and referrals from services to Early Help (12%)
- Specific services for substance misuse and domestic abuse (11%)

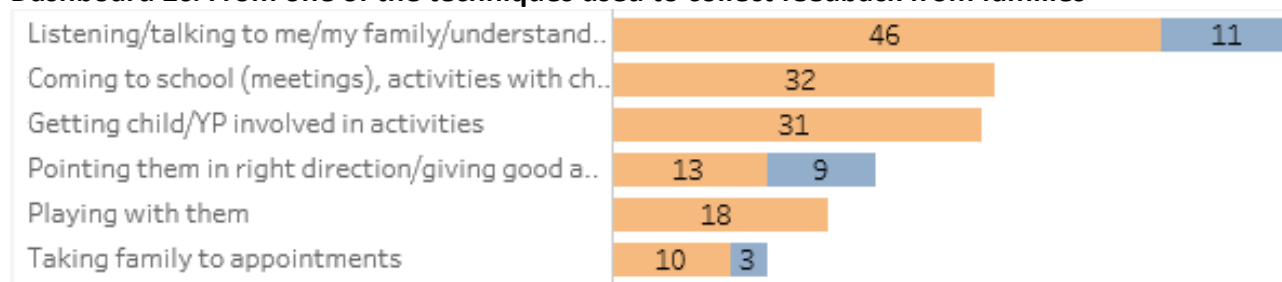
More Information

For more details and family voice on multi agency working see **REPORT 4 - MULTI-AGENCY AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS**

Family Voice

It was clear from children, young people and adults that they valued their worker listening to them, being talkative, talking with them and their family members about their feelings and understanding their feelings, spending time with them and helping them to understand their child’s development and needs. It was important for families to be able to talk to their worker if they were worried about anything, to talk about what they wanted to achieve, their end goals and strategies.

Dashboard 2c: From one of the techniques used to collect feedback from families



Below are quotes from families illustrating how family voice was important to them:

“My worker picked up on certain things about Luke’s anxiety. He’s a bit odd and when my partner’s watching football he would be stressing that the player was going to get hurt and break his leg and that would bother him. He told my worker that and once we knew we offered him to watch TV in another room...I’d been listened to...even he said Luke was

'wacky' with his anxiety...someone had finally seen what I'd seen with Luke"

Natalie, age 31

Jessica's worker visits her son at school but he doesn't open up about his dad and the things he has told his mum. Later the worker does words and pictures with Euan and he opens up about his dad. The worker creates a book which helps explain to Euan where his dad is (in a mental institution).

Jessica, age 23

Claire gets a worker and is relieved to *"finally have someone there"*. Claire's worker discusses with Claire *"what I want to achieve, my end goals and strategies. She works with me for around a year, sometimes seeing me every few weeks, sometimes more regularly"*

Claire, age 43

"I can say anything to her, ask her anything and she listens"

Afia, age 40

Mandy has also enjoyed the voice 'pop up events'.

"One was for James's birthday at Twycross and we had a brilliant day...at another one we enjoyed it"

Mandy, age 47

Other quotes from adults illustrating the value they placed on family voice included:

"It's good to have someone to listen and understand problems rather than just giving advice"

"Somebody to talk to and always looking for ways to improve the situation"

"Thank you for an amazing day (voice pop up). We have all loved a day out we wouldn't normally be able to afford"

"I like how our worker talks to my son and gets his voice/opinion"

Other quotes from children and young people illustrating how they valued family voice included:

"She listens, actually listens to what I have to say"

"She always helps me out when I'm feeling low at school and I just need someone to talk to about what's been going on"

"My worker is very understanding - after a few weeks. I got to speak freely if I had a problem at school and she makes sense of what I mean. I talk to her about problems, she helps me, helps me to deal with problems after the burglary"

"I went on the Wii with my worker. I taught her the thumbs up game to help with communications. When I really like something I give thumbs up"

"Our worker makes us look at how you feel, she tries and explains that there is no need to be worried. She talks to mum when I'm at school"

"I like that she sees me at school. Fill out a questionnaire. What I like and don't like. Bullying in school. Issues with dad. We talk about things in school"

"It really helped daddy out by talking to others"

"My worker takes me out for a drink, she talks to me about how mums getting on. She talks to my mum. The support I get from her helps me to think about if I'm being naughty, how I'm going to act"

"I like that a go to McDonalds for a cheeseburger. She makes me laugh and we do cooking together with my dad"

"I like that my worker lets me colour and play games and talks about how you feel"

"Our worker really listens to what we want. Mum included, she doesn't just have a tick list of tasks but takes the time to listen"

"I like colouring together with my worker. She visits me at school and we do writing together. She talks to me about how I'm feeling and makes me feel happy"

"She takes us out and gets us a drink and asks if everything is alright at home. She always calls and asks how we are"

"Talking about our feelings helps. Playing games, helping me be happy"

"Helps us understand our emotions"

"Child enjoys his one to one sessions with Early Help as this allows him to talk about things that are upsetting"

"I completed words and pictures as to why I don't see my dad. I was proud of this and spoke about things with my family"

Workers also identified the importance of family voice in cases of **most significant change** and observations, including the importance of in-depth knowledge of families, their history and voice work around past, present and future

Family voice:

- *“Mum recently attended a voice pop up event with her children and she loved it. She said ‘by doing more of these things she is getting her confidence back”*
- *“It was important to include the young person’s father and brothers with the work as previous interventions showed that contact was mainly with mum and the young person. This allowed me to gain the voices of these individuals which then provided me with a process of what needed to happen and when”*
- *“As a result of me capturing the family’s voice, gaining an understanding of the difficulties experienced and the impact they have I was able to support the family to access appropriate services such as adult social care, CAMHS and the GP”*
- *“The family feeling that they are being listened to, understood and believed”*
- *“The family meeting held with parents and partners from both children’s homes worked really well to help build parents confidence to manage behaviour more consistently and effectively”*
- *“Family meetings are increasing the understanding and communication between the family members and his voice has been heard through direct work with him and family meetings”*
- *“One-to-one sessions with children and meetings with family ensured children’s voice was heard, helping parents to see impact of their conflict on the children”*
- *“Trying to understand their fears but also trying to mitigate those fears”*
- *“Asking mum what she would like to do, taking children’s opinions on board”*
- *“I provided the family with emotional support, advocated on their behalf, listened and understood the family’s concerns and difficulties and assisted the family to share these with agencies involved”*
- *“Child and parent voice, independently and together”*
- *“Following a family meeting in a signs of safety format”*
- *“Getting their voice and acting on this”*
- *“All their views”*
- *“Dad is likely to receive a prison sentence. During a signs of safety meeting parents have agreed to complete words and pictures to help the child understand prison should dad be sentenced”*
- *“Understanding of family story”*
- *“Both identified areas they would like support in and areas they need to improve between themselves”*

Adult voice:

- *“Mum able to chat and work through her thoughts with me”*
- *“I selected this family and change because it evidences how important it is to work holistically with a family and explore parent’s childhood experiences as it shows how they themselves present as parents today. By doing this a worker is not just working with present issues arising through referral but are getting a deeper understanding of how a family work”*
- *“Mum said she feels supported and heard for the first time ever since professionals have been involved with her family”*
- *“Mum finds talking to her worker helps her deal with difficult situations better”*
- *“Aunt’s confidence has increased over this period with support and listening”*
- *“Mum felt that she was being listened to”*
- *“Looking at the goals my client wanted to achieve”*
- *“Mum opened up to me about her mental health”*

Child and young person’s voice:

- *“The children felt as if they had their voice heard”*
- *“Having met the young person in school on a regular basis, he began to discuss how he viewed his relationships with his family and the reasons why he sometimes got angry. This was fed back to parents and siblings which allowed them to work with the young person and reduce tensions”*
- *“Voice work completed with two youngest to gain their views on what support they require and concerns they may have”*
- *“Having discussions and gaining child’s voice on how he feels and it was important for him to feel listened to. Listening to the family members and gaining the family voice”*
- *“Through child’s voice and schools feedback mum had a clearer picture of her daughter’s peer groups and social interaction and what school are doing to help her daughter manage any concerns”*
- *“Child enjoys his one to one sessions with Early Help as this allows him to talk about things that are upsetting”*
- *“Voice work with the children was completed to help them understand and enable them to share worries about dad’s situation. The children understand the importance of dad going away. Mum and dad were supported and prepared for the big changes of dad moving away for six months”*
- *“Words and pictures have been completed to help the child understand the family breakdown and the separation of her parents. Voice work has been completed in school to gain the child’s voice”*
- *“The daughter is aware that she can discuss issues about her dad in other ways such as words and pictures. She decided she did not need to get involved in the words and pictures work but knows it’s an option if she changes her mind”*
- *“The child felt that she had had the opportunity to share her worries, thoughts and feelings and that this will help her mum and dad to understand her more”*
- *“In-depth knowledge and background of the child”*

- *“For the child to attend one to one work with me to challenge her fears”*
- *“The eldest child has engaged in specific one to one work with worker around friendships and relationships”*
- *“Words and pictures work undertaking has enabled mum to explain to her son why his dad is not around as he was finding it difficult to understand why he didn’t have a dad”*
- *“Was able to tell me what he was struggling with”*
- *“Worker explored what the child was scared of. It was noted that the child’s fear revolved around sitting in the bath rather than the water in it”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified the following activities and approaches as key to change taking place in families - child/young person’s voice (in 29% of cases) and voice of parents (28%).

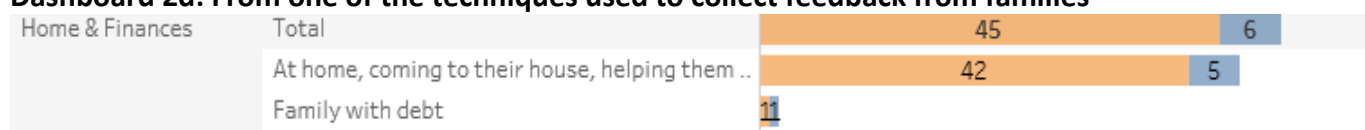
Visits to the Family Home

Children, young people and adults valued their workers visiting them at home, which not only helped them with organisation, boundaries, behaviours and sleep, morning and bedtime routines, “particularly on school nights” at home but also observing what was really happening in their families. For some it also made them feel relaxed.

For those adults where anxiety and isolation was high and they were uncomfortable in group situations, having their worker come to their home initially to do one-to-one work such as parenting then often supporting them later when their mental health had improved to attend groups was particularly helpful.

Children in particular valued workers helping them to tidy their bedrooms and children, young people and adults valued reward charts, reminders and other tools such as 123 Magic and “bubbles and feathers” which one child said helped calm him down.

Dashboard 2d: From one of the techniques used to collect feedback from families



Below are quotes from families of illustrating how visits to the family home were important to them

"...that she was playing with the children and whilst we've got toys, she brought round activities and books for the children to do and was watching them and as well as talking to me. She'd get on the floor and play with them and that helped me...made me feel relaxed, that I'd known her for ages. She'd stop talking to me and the children would come first or if they were like, mummy, mummy, it wouldn't bother her that I'd get up and get them drinks. It was nice, like family or a friend, especially being new to the area it helped me settle in"

"Just being at home and talking made me feel comfortable. She did a lot of the talking which made me feel more relaxed so I just joined in and the more we saw each other the more confidence she gave me. I'm not sure she realised that but she did...it made me feel a lot easier around her"

Emma, age 33

Stacey is visited by a worker at home.

"It was mostly around helping us with debts. My worker tried to get me onto a course, get me to volunteer at the Children's Centre but I couldn't do either as I was very anxious"

Stacey, age 24

"When I moved here I had nobody. I was very lonely all day at home with two children...you don't see your partner until they get home from work and they are tired and sometimes it feels like you're all on your own...anyone who came to the house I really looked forward to it. I know it's a bit sad but I looked forward to having someone to talk to...it makes the day go by easier"

When Katrina leaves the mother and baby mental health hospital she feels support is put in place.

"My worker came out a few times"

Katrina, age 30

The worker witnesses Seb having a panic attack, locking himself in the toilet (at home) where nothing can be done. Suzanne is glad the worker has witnessed *"the physical thing that was happening"*

Suzanne, age 42

The Children's Centre refers Sofia to a case worker.

"I was struggling to go out so a worker visited me at home. It was very helpful as sometimes I wouldn't see anyone so it was nice to have someone to talk to. My worker would message me and try and encourage me to go back to groups. Sometimes all I needed was someone to talk to if I was having a really down day. I wasn't allowed to take medication for depression whilst I was pregnant and it was all overwhelming at the time"

Sofia, age 28

"My worker would come to my house, just turn up without me knowing she was coming because I'd forget. She always wanted to help, like if I had problems with the children sleeping but I didn't need her for problems like that. My kids are routine, they haven't got a choice"

Kristy, age 30

Other quotes from adults where they valued visits to their home included:

"She came round to make sure we are ok"

"I liked that she visited often at pre-arranged times"

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued visits to their home included:

"I like that our worker does home visits"

"I like that our worker helps out around the house"

"Our worker is helping us re-arrange our garden and sort the toys out"

"Our worker helps with housework"

"She comes to speak to us about tidying up. House is cleaner, my room is cleaner. I want to paint rooms when finished tidying up. She helps us get organised"

"Our worker helps me with the garden. Helps sort toys in the garden"

"I like cooking pizza together with my worker. When you make pizza, like eating it, its' fun! She comes to my house and helps mum"

"Our worker helps us tidy the house. She helped mummy decorate my bedroom pink. She is always happy when she comes round and has helped my dogs as one had fleas and one had a cut on his leg"

"We do colouring at home and our worker talks to us. She helps walk the dog"

"Supported us in our home as a family"

"Our worker helped clean the house. We now keep our rooms tidy"

"My worker helped me tidy my room"

"She is kind and helped clean the house"

"Helped by cleaning the house with us"

“Stuff is cleaner and there is less smoke in the house”

Workers also identified the importance of visits at home in cases of **most significant change**

- *“A space (at home) to be cleaned and cleared for the young person to meet with his tutor”*
- *“Home conditions improved dramatically and there were no longer dirty, cluttered and hazardous”*
- *“Practical help in sorting the family home”*
- *“We changed bedroom arrangements so that she could not disturb other families so much”*
- *“By being able to revisit their Solihull learning one to one in their home with the children present at times, allowed mirroring to happen where they could watch me handle/implement practice then copy, this was their light bulb moment when they realised that they could change”*
- *“At first I approached the amount of time that the two year old child was spending in a play pen and highchair watching television”*
- *“A safety plan was implemented at home”*
- *“For me to make the regular visit each morning”*
- *“I call at 7.30am. I am at the house for 8am. Support is given to address any needs which have not been met, for example child has had breakfast, washed and cleaned her teeth. Mum is encouraged to do this for her child and we all walk to school”*
- *“To put in place positive changes in the house”*
- *“Being able to offer support and advice to both parents through home visits”*
- *“Keep on top of the daily tasks involved in running a house”*
- *“Continuous unannounced home visits”*
- *“Access to the family home”*

Visits to School

Children, young people and adults valued their worker visiting them and their children at their school, attending meetings and doing activities with their children at school. See dashboard 2c above.

Below are quotes from families of illustrating how visits to school were important to them:

“It helped that he came to the house and the school...he was more active and went into school a couple of times to speak to the kids individually. I was happy with that because I think kids open up more when their parent’s not there. Even though I’m not scary, I don’t shout at them, they’re still kids and I’m still their mum and if I’m not there they let out worries they wouldn’t necessarily let out at home”

Natalie, age 31

Afia's worker visits the girl's school to help them write letters to their dad using words and pictures. Afia's worker also contacts school in relation to transport which Afia finds "a huge, huge support"

Afia, age 40

When Michelle goes with the worker to talk to the head teacher about her raising concerns that Isaac's lunchbox isn't healthy, her worker points out that *"I make healthy home cooked meals every night which she has seen for herself"*. At the last meeting at school with her worker the worker raises school safeguarding concerns following an incident.

Michelle, age 53

Isobel meets with her worker regularly at the school, *"she gives me a list to sort out, make sure they have their book bags, PE kits, glasses"*

Isobel finds it helpful that her worker goes to see the children in school regularly and chats with them, *"helping them to be more honest about their feelings...where things are at the moment"*

Isobel, age 38

Stacey also found it helpful when her new worker introduced meetings at the school every three months

Stacey, age 24

Mandy's worker calls various meetings with the school

Mandy, age 47

Other quotes from adults where they valued visits to school included:

"I liked how my worker spoke to the children to explain things. Spoke to the children to calm them and visited them at school"

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued visits to school included:

"I like that my worker goes to school once a week"

"I like that my worker does school visits"

"My worker comes to the school to talk to me. I like it, we get out of work"

"I like that my worker visits me in school for an art project collage with pictures"

"I like my worker visiting school and talking to her"

"I like it that we talk and draw at school"

"I like that my worker goes to school to see me"

Workers also identified the importance of visits to school in cases of **most significant change**

- *“By visiting the young person at school I was able to build a relationship with him and speak to him in a confidential setting which encouraged him to open up more. This also allowed me to work closely with the school and get positive communication going between school and parents”*
- *“I supported a bespoke transition meeting for the family with the child’s new teachers in the child’s new school to support the parent to feel relaxed and for him to be open with the teachers about what circumstances he finds difficult”*
- *“I regularly liaised with the school firstly to ensure they understood the history of domestic abuse and secondly to advocate for more support for this child in school”*
- *“I visited the children in school to follow up on the work I had completed with mum, this helped when their voice was fed back to mum as she was then aware of what was working well”*
- *“I met with the young person in one to one sessions at school where we discussed her anger issues and calming techniques”*
- *“Worker carried out some voice work at school and the outcome was that not seeing dad was making the child sad”*

Getting Children and Young People Involved in Activities

Children, young people and adults, and particularly more isolated families valued their worker identifying and getting children involved in and taking them to activities such as swimming, football, the gym, horse-riding, wall climbing, table tennis, cadets activities in their local community centre, Early Help groups (such as ‘Feeling Safe’, ‘Grounded’, groups for babies and toddlers, those targeting development such as “Babble Back”, groups for carers/young carers and girls) as well as groups in general. See dashboard 2c above.

Children, young people and adults also valued their worker doing things with them such as going for walks and to the park. Activities also helped to get children out of the house and make new friends. Families also valued their worker doing activities with them in the home such as cooking together as well as voice ‘pop up’ events.

Often families had felt welcomed and supported via Children’s Centre’s universal offer when their children were very young prior to any subsequent Early Help interventions.

Below are quotes from families which illustrate how getting children and young people involved in activities was important to them:

Afia finds the play session at the Children's Centre *“helpful”*

Afia finds the 11 week *“Triple P course”* at the Children's Centre helpful *“sorting problems for children with special needs”*

Afia, age 40

"I loved doing the groups at the Children's Centre. I really enjoyed baby massage and ones where there were different textures, feathers"

"Those craft groups helped. There was one at the Children's Centre, where it was like a team thing, Horizons I think it was called, me and Millie loved doing that, we worked as a team doing stuff together"

Stacey, age 24

Isobel uses the Children's Centre, "it was good as the kids could then go onto the school from the nursery and it was just down the road from where we lived"

Isobel, age 38

Sofia's midwife refers Sofia to the Children's Centre to attend ante-natal groups.

"I'd go in and have a chit chat. I was quite open and wanted to get things out in the open and it was good nobody was judging me. It felt quite understanding, not just me these things happened to, there were other people in the same situation". Later Sofia reflected that it was "good to talk about it and deal with most of it before I had my baby, so it wasn't as bad when the baby came"

"I was happy...at first I thought I would struggle but everything was fine...my Children's Centre worker thought I was fine going to groups so I tried to get Sebastian out". Sofia goes to baby groups with Sebastian at the Children's Centre. "Whilst I don't always come to groups as I don't always feel my best I try to get out for Sebastian and pop in for a chit chat"

"I like the (groups) where I know who's going to be there and the smaller ones are less stressful. The one I liked the most was the one that went from ante-natal to baby groups because the children were the same age, going through the same things together. It was nice, it was just us, we wouldn't see anyone so it was nice to talk. I looked forward to it. Some of the ladies had postnatal depression...everyone had different things so it was just so nice to have someone who could relate to you and understand and we'd go and have a chit chat, just the support that was needed"

Whilst the group Sofia liked the most is no longer running Sofia has made friends from these groups that she still keeps in touch with.

"It was nice there was only a few days or weeks between the kids and it was nice to see them growing up. They all played together, have their own little friends...we liked that. The group doesn't run anymore because people have got busy with kids and stuff, so people weren't turning up but it was brilliant"

Sofia, age 28

Claire starts going to the Children's Centre and gets on particularly well with one of the workers from a District Council.

"I could talk to her about things...she did soft play and set up jumping tots, I got involved with volunteering there and made friendships with other mums"

There is talk of funding being stopped for Children's Centre's and Claire is asked to go to a meeting *"because I was articulate...I told them how much the Children's Centre had helped me, the support that was around me there"*

Claire, age 43

Emma is visited at home a few times by her worker.

"She told me the Children's Centre were there to help if I needed it...that she was always at the Centre and if I was ever up there or wanted to go and see her I could...she left me her phone number and told me if I had any worries to ring her straight away. I didn't take her up on any worries but I did find it helpful to have her number if I needed anything other than the doctors and it helped knowing the Children's Centre was close by"

"My worker came round and talked to me about things in the community. I'd had booklets through the door but they were full of adverts so I didn't read them so it was good as I didn't know where to start as I was new to the area. I went down to the town centre to do the activities with the kids"

Emma goes to the Children's Centre near her house for weigh ins and check-ups. Emma likes that it is only her and one or two other children as she can speak to her health visitor with any concerns. Emma notices posters on the walls for activities in the town when she is there and goes to things like the Teddy Bears picnic.

Emma visits another Children's Centre in the town a couple of times to have check-ups and weigh ins.

"It's not as close but that one is nice as well and everyone is friendly when you walk in"

Emma, age 33

Other quotes from adults where they valued getting children involved with activities included:

"My worker has supported me with getting out of the house with the kids and to better myself"

"Since coming to the pathway group we have been less isolated and our son has been able to make friends and play with other children his age. It has helped us get out of the house each week and make him more confident...the activities are really good and we love seeing friends we have made at the group and I want to keep coming because I know it's good for him and he enjoys it"

“I’m glad you have introduced us to groups, it’s lovely getting out with the babies”

“I know more people and I invited some to my daughter’s party. I can trust my worker”

“Mum says her knows her daughter loves coming (to groups) and is gaining in confidence around other babies, passing objects to others... Mum said she is picking up on her son’s cues and repeating songs he enjoys at home”

“The parent reported that the groups have helped her to get out of the house as she felt spending too much time by herself gave her too much time to think, get anxious and worry about things”

“Mum reported that she felt her child’s development has benefits such as social interaction from being around other babies and they are more settled and a better eater than an older sibling because of this”

“She reported that she has met lots of other parents and has made one particular close friendship with a parent who she sees regularly outside of the centre and who support each other”

“The parent reported that the advice and support from the professionals and volunteers within groups has been a great help and helped her confidence”

“It has helped me to learn new things such as massage which we do at home and about baby led weaning and child development”

“I have been struggling to stay positive but I know going to groups at the Children’s Centre helps my child’s development. They love the singing at the end of the group and they point out and claps when we walk past the Children’s Centre”

Quotes from children and young people illustrating how they valued groups, courses and activities included:

“Yesterday our worker took us to where she works and we played games. Not computer games but table tennis, football, board football. Next time we go she is going to help my brother play other games instead of Call of Duty”

“I like that my worker took me out because I don’t get to go out much because I help my mum. I go to young carers”

“The best thing our worker has done is get dad out of the house as he doesn’t like to go out. Get him to take me to the park, getting me outside more. Making dad and the family – even though dad didn’t want to go he still goes”

“I have liked my worker taking me places”

“Helped me get out for walks to feel better”

“Mind club helped – deals with feelings and emotions”

“Artwork at the youth centre helps me learn to do things. Always be kind to others. I like to visit the youth centre, enjoy groups. I like to do activities, it’s fun”

“I like having a day out because it’s stressful being together”

“Our worker comes and does activities, helps stop me fidgeting and brings things home for me to do”

“I like that she takes me to Wild Kids and the park. We don’t have a lot of money as we need it for food”

“It helps my brother going to groups at the Children’s Centres. All sorts of groups like mini movers”

“She’s the best worker we’ve had. She takes me places and organised activities for me. She takes my brother out for one to one time”

“Our worker lets us go to the community centre and play with the toys, play football. We get ice cream and go to the zoo”

“Bond youth group helps me to socialise”

“I liked it when we went to a club and made smoothies...I like doing stuff like the Twycross voice event and other events with activities”

“I like it when my worker takes me out to the park and plays with me”

“I like that our worker lets us go to clubs”

“Our worker brings stuff for you to do. Swimming lessons, family days, great training”

“Our son has become more talkative. Our worker got us a place on Babble Back which helped and she supported me to attend groups”

“She takes my daughter to the park and plays games. It helps her come out of her shell and smiles which is nice”

“Our worker helps get me into horse riding”

“Played football, got me on wall climbing”

“Our worker plans awesome activities and helps us make new friends”

“My worker has helped with listening to mum and to punch my pillow or play on the monkey bars, swings or slide”

“Takes us out of the house”

Workers also identified the importance of groups and activities for children and young people in cases of **most significant change** and observations

Early Help groups:

- *“She was referred to attend the Feeling Safe group due to her past experience of domestic violence between her mum and now ex-partner”*
- *“The young person completed a managing anger course which he found helpful”*
- *“Doing activities with the family, especially the young person with the climbing wall and way of the horse”*
- *“Parents buying into the Theraplay informed sessions”*
- *“Mum accesses the children’s centre where her child has opportunities to play and develop”*
- *“Young person agreed to attending the anger management course which is helping him to understand and cope with anger”*
- *“Young person is no longer spending all of her time at home in her bedroom, no longer so isolated. She attended an Early Help summer event this week where she participated in various activities; smiling, communicated and laughing”*
- *“Worker made a referral to youth club for young person to build his self-esteem and socially interact with other young people to make friends outside of school”*
- *“The difference this group has made to this child is huge”*
- *“By coming to the pathway group the child has developed emotional and social skills and I feel this may have been a different outcome if he didn’t get this experience”*
- *“Mum feels that the boys will benefit from socialising with other children, having space to play safely and to be stimulated in a way that often isn’t possible in the flat they are currently living in”*
- *“The child wouldn’t have attended any groups at all and would still be sat at home. The parent wouldn’t have left the house”*
- *“Mum feels the child was stuck at home, isolated as they moved and were new to the area – going to groups they met more families”*
- *“Mum feels that her daughter is happier and developing well since she started attending the pathway”*
- *“Dad identified a number of positive activities that his son likes and dad is showing he is committed to involving him in lots of positive activities and tries to find things he likes to do. Dad also attended Early Help voice and swimming event. Son is now attending the special needs group ‘Inspire’ weekly which will widen his social network”*
- *“The boys attended youth clubs every week and also attended summer activities where dad dropped and collected them from youth club. Dad also joined summer activities with both boys”*
- *“Attending youth group session”*
- *“Attended a young carer’s group ongoing”*

- *“The young person attended support sessions on a weekly basis from his youth worker”*
- *“Available spaces for children to attend”*

Other activities:

- *“Support given to register children with local library and summer reading challenge completed”*
- *“Mum has been able to pay for swimming lessons and take her children on outings that they could not have afforded previously”*
- *“Through working with the young person she has gained the confidence to go out of the house with me going for walks in the countryside”*
- *“The mums mum has commented on my work saying I have made a big difference working with mum and that she is now doing things she wouldn’t do before like trying driving lessons and venturing out with family”*
- *“Young person has commenced police cadets with support from Early Help”*
- *“Encouragement to participate in physical activity once a week”*
- *“The child is now involved in activities out of the home environment”*
- *“Mum agreed to take the children out of the family home”*
- *“...this meant mum has been able to spend more time with the children doing positive activities which has encouraged further positive behaviour from the children. Mum has been able to recognise this as an improvement within the family home and reports the home as being ‘calmer’”*
- *“Finding something for the young man to do away from the home that would engage him physically and mentally”*
- *“The young person also attends a ladies rugby club now in school”*
- *“I put him on the fire cadets”*
- *“The young person has commenced police cadets with support from Early Help”*
- *“Attending local community group”*
- *“Now all three children attend scouts/cubs weekly and the girls continue to access youth club as and when they feel like it”*
- *“Whilst attending Prospects she has started to make more positive relationships with people of her own age”*
- *“Children are accessing new hobbies – brownies and cubs”*
- *“Children have widened their social networks, are learning how to mix with a range of children, expanding their social skills”*
- *“They are socialising with other children”*
- *“He has re-joined a local football team and has begun to socialise more”*
- *“Children have widened their social networks”*

Getting Adults Involved in Early Help Groups, Courses and Activities (In Buildings Where They Felt Comfortable and Welcome)

Children, young people and adults (and particularly more isolated families) valued their worker getting adults involved in and for some “pushing them” into Early Help groups, courses and activities where they often got support from other Early Help workers in

addition to their main worker. See dashboard 2b above. Meeting parents in similar situations helped families as for many, until they met other families, they felt they were alone with their issues.

Having welcoming, comfortable and easy to access buildings where families knew there were workers they knew and trusted and getting out of the house was important to adults. Doing activities in the wider community was also important to families.

Below are quotes from families illustrating how adult groups, courses, activities and comfortable and welcoming buildings were important to them.

When Katrina feels “well” she “just wants to be better” and signs up for everything. She feels that going out will solve everything and “it does help”. Katrina feels her worker gives her “the push I needed to get out there...she would tell me different things to do in the community, how to get out of the house more...she made sure I got out and walked every day, she was always asking if I’d been out and I always did what she said”

Katrina feels if she hadn’t got support from her worker she would have stayed in the house more, that she would have got “worse and worse...I didn’t want to let her down...I didn’t want to miss things...it helped me”. Katrina feels she also wouldn’t have actively looked for things to do in the community because she was so ill, “it helped that she’d pick me up and take me to groups”.

“In all honesty people don’t talk to you if you’re depressed, they don’t want to hear it, but if you go to a group like post-natal depression you feel a bit more like it’s ok, they know what it’s like and with other people there with the same issues”

“We both love gardening and it was a way of motivating me to get out of the house...get into the garden...doing different gardening things in the village, different gardening events”

Katrina, age 30

Claire's worker encourages Claire to get out and go to groups. Claire finds the "Worth It" group particularly helpful. "I kept asking to have it back...it started to help me realise I have value, made me believe in myself a little bit more”

“Going to some groups made me realise things I could do...craft groups”

Claire, age 43

"My first worker got me involved with groups, lots of groups. At first my anxiety was bad with groups but now I love going to groups. I enjoyed going and doing activities and made a few friends. The best one I went to at that time was a coffee morning they do every month with bingo"

"The very best course I've done is the cooking group. It's helped me with cooking in general. I used to chuck things in the oven and make sandwiches but it's given me the confidence to cook, learn different foods and how to cook them"

Stacey, age 24

Isobel finds little things like the Early Help coffee mornings at the youth centre helpful, *"it's easy to chat...be part of it...knowing other people have had troubles and we're all in the same boat...you really don't feel like you are on your own"*

Isobel sees other families involved with social care when she comes to family days, *"it makes you feel they need a bit of help too...makes you more forthcoming in asking for help as I naively felt it was just me that had problems...I had the worst life in the world...poor me...nobody cares"*

Isobel finds it helps to have the youth centre two minutes away from where she lives, *"I don't feel awkward when I walk in...sometimes I've been passing and been having a crappy day and I've popped in and my worker makes me a cuppa...it helps"*

Isobel, age 38

Sofia's worker refers her to some wellbeing groups to help around Sofia's depression.

"Some of the kids there are from other groups so it's nice to get together and do arts and crafts as I do enjoy the wellbeing groups. I go to one now where the crèche is provided. You're always doing kiddy stuff so it's nice to have a hot cup of tea with an adult"

Sofia finds that it helps that she got to know all the workers at the two different Children's Centres she went to.

"I'd go because my worker said she was going to be there. That there would be someone there I'd know. Sometimes when I walked into groups I feel as if everyone is talking to each other but if I know one of the workers is going to be there I'll happily go along because I know I'll have someone to talk to"

"If I was going to the shops and having a bad day I'd pop in. I needed it and it really helped"

Sofia, age 28

Other quotes from families where they valued adult groups, courses and activities included:

“Lots of other Early Help staff have helped me, the courses are great, the parenting class was really helpful and has helped a lot with me and my son”

“Early Help has been an amazing help to our family, especially the courses I have been on”

“Like going out and doing things as I don’t usually go out”

“She has helped mum make a new friend. Mum has not had a lot of friends but now she has”

“Our children’s centre has been a massive lifeline to us and I can talk to the leaders easily and they give us fantastic advice”

“I love coming to this group because this is our little family. I love it. It’s relaxed and you can ask things without being looked down at or someone making their opinion. It’s not pushy but you are here to help and talk to”

“I love coming here. We tried other baby groups but we didn’t like them. It’s great here. We feel relaxed and can ask if we need any advice”

Workers also identified the importance of groups, courses, activities and buildings for adults in cases of **most significant change** and observations

Early Help groups:

- *“Isolation will be reduced because of attending Children’s Centre groups and meeting new people”*
- *“Family attended the four week practical parenting group and although group facilitators were concerned with dad’s negativity, after the second group there was a huge shift in the way the parents spoke to the young person. After the second parenting group I held a family meeting stating we were only allowed to use positive comments. I was expecting this meeting to be really difficult. It was really successful!”*
- *“Child and mother have attended a cooking course at the Children’s Centre and have built positive relationships with other parents. I have invited another Bulgarian family that live in the area to join my family in the hope they will build a positive friendship. I have enrolled the family onto a course to learn English”*
- *“Mum is attending autism groups”*
- *“Mum’s attendance at Solihull parenting”*
- *“The original referral was for group work – youth work for the young person and parent drop in for mum. It was through the parent drop in, that it was recognised that this family required more intervention”*
- *“Mum is attending the stress control group at the Children’s Centres and this has influenced the change in her mental health greatly”*
- *“Mum has met with the GREAT project and attended a Horizons programme which she is doing really well in”*

- *“Lone parent currently living in the women’s refuge with her son so new to the area is now less isolated due to attending group activity sessions at her local centre”*
- *“Mum attended ADHD toolkit parenting group”*
- *“Mum has been attending a pathway group at the children’s centre for almost a year but has also gained enough confidence to attend universal groups in her local community”*
- *“Regular contact support at the pathway group”*
- *“Mum feels less isolated as she has made friends in the cooking course she attends. Mum says she really enjoys the cooking course she was referred to and also implements healthy cooking at home”*
- *“Child is experiencing a more positive relationship with her mum, the emotional warmth is positive. Child is being parented better and is experiencing an all-round better lived experience. Parent stated how the Solihull group is giving her positive parenting skills but also improving her confidence and self-esteem”*
- *“Mum is less anxious about taking medication for her mental health and has attended two supportive groups to help her cope with anxieties and low moods. This has greatly impacted on mum which in turn impacted on her child who is happier going into school and mum reports a difference in her behaviour since her mental health has improved”*
- *“I have seen an increase in mum’s confidence. The group has made a big difference as mum was new to the area. She is no longer isolated and has made positive relationships with other mums. Mum is very supportive to others”*
- *“Lone parent currently living in a women’s refuge with her son and new to the area is now less isolated due to starting to attend a group activity session at her local centre”*
- *“Mum is attending the family focus mornings and would like to become a mentor for Early Help”*
- *“Availability of groups”*
- *“Attending support groups for mum and dad”*
- *“Identifying appropriate courses”*
- *“Parent attends the Early Help BME group where she has met people from all backgrounds and has made friends which in turn has helped her self-esteem and motivation”*
- *“Mum now attends the Solihull parenting group and the wellbeing group which are really helping her and she has taken advice on board”*
- *“Some well needed support for mum on a one to one where she can access groups to support her and her son’s life and make things more manageable, get ideas etc. as well as look at some future aspirations”*
- *“The mother has also gained in confidence and self-esteem to access Children’s Centre sessions and also to access other community services and activities”*
- *“Mother is attending ‘living with teenagers’ course and this will give her more confidence to be a ‘better’ parent”*
- *“Attending the Solihull group has given her an insight into understanding her child”*

Being able to drop into an Early Help buildings:

- *“Mum regularly drops into the Children’s Centre to ask for advice and support”*

Other activities:

- *“Mum has now joined an English speaking group with the new friend”*
- *“Has taken steps to leave the house”*
- *“The fact that she is leaving the house and engaging with other people socially is also a positive”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified the following as key activities to change:

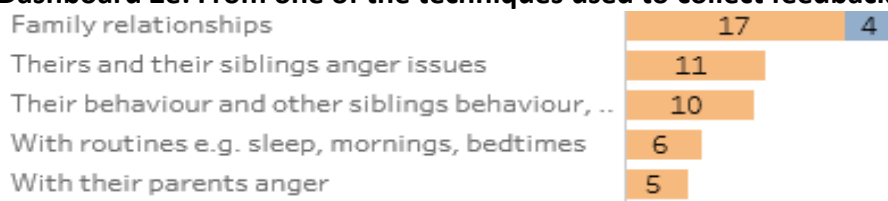
- Early Help groups (in 29% of cases)
- Specifically the Solihull parenting programme (7%) in families

Workers also identified leisure opportunities in 10% of cases as a key enabler of change.

Helping With Relationships

Children, young people and adults valued their worker helping them with communication and relationships in their families and with friends and multi-agencies.

Dashboard 2e: From one of the techniques used to collect feedback from families



Below are quotes from families of illustrating how workers helped with relationships.

Kristy is contacted by a Family Support Worker from Supporting Leicestershire Families.

“She rang. I felt alright about it because I needed that support to be honest. I couldn’t keep kicking off, needed to deal with things properly like, but sometimes it can't be helped”

Kristy finds that her worker helps by talking to her.

“She'd talk loads like me and six hours would go by. She helped me see things in a different way. The way she explained things - rather than kicking off, supported me around my mental health”

Kristy, age 30

Isobel feels her worker helps the family communicate, *"she told me, you might be talking to them but they aren't listening to you...she's helped communication within the family immensely...helped me be more confident to talk about things...we always discussed things but I spoke to them like adults and she's helped me come down to their level"*

Isobel feels with the support from her worker she interacts with the children more, spends more quality time together, *"they were at the stage where they got obsessed with computer games...I knew they shouldn't be on them so much but it was keeping them quiet but now we go out and spend time together"*

Isobel's worker starts to do some work to take forward Reuben having contact with his dad. Isobel feels she and the other boys dad are getting on a lot better.

Isobel feels the school have always been supportive but with her workers involvement communication between the school and Isobel improves, *"as a parent sometimes it's quite intimidating to go into school"*.

Isobel, age 38

Other quotes from adults where they valued support around relationships included:

"Helped with me and my daughters arguing. Thank you for the hard work you have given me and my daughter, it has helped a lot"

"We were really concerned about our son's behaviour. His aggression at school was the big one, he'd trashed the room a couple of times and then sometimes had no memory of some of the things he did, he was in that much of a rage"

"I'm much more calmer now and that's definitely made a difference on his behaviour"

"His behaviour and aggression is better and we can cope better now if it does come. We're a bit less stressed knowing it's not us failing. Getting us to go to the Solihull group made a difference. You didn't push us or make us do it. You just said try it for one week and see how you go. It was good and I really like it. It's good knowing you're not the only one. You were really understanding and didn't talk down to me like I'm stupid but you say things I can understand and not too complicated. It's everything. All the different elements because you were on board it's helped to push everything and put it all together. You listened, active listening, you gave practical help, didn't push us and listened to what we wanted and needed"

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued support around relationships included:

“My worker supported with my oldest brother around issues. It helped me to understand my brothers ADHD and autism and gave me someone to talk to”

“He has meetings with mum and dad about what’s going on at home and helps them sort it out and put strategies in place”

“There are less arguments and fights and more communication”

“She’s been helping out getting the family back together”

“It’s been a really nice experience. She’s came to say such and such. I need you to be the big lad and leave each other alone so when me and my brother have fights I leave him alone to do what he’s got to do and I’ll be on the good side and he’ll be on the bad side”

“She’s helped me communicate better with my mum and helped me a lot to speak about things getting better”

“She’s helped my mum because I used to be a bit abusive and she’s helped me walk away”

“Our worker has helped us to get along. I lost my son a year ago”

“My relationship with my mum was horrible, much calmer now. We talk a lot now, don’t really argue”

“My worker helps me with my anger issues. She helps me listen to my mum”

“Our worker has helped us bond and relax”

“My worker helped my brother because I bite him. It hurts my teeth. He bites me”

“My worker has helped with my anger quite a lot”

“Our worker has worked with my brother and made being at home better – anger. Working with our worker helps mummy have time for herself”

“Our worker has helped us spend more time with my brother and she boosts our confidence”

“She has helped me understand how to help mum more when she is struggling”

“She has helped the family become closer”

“My worker has helped with my behaviour. Good help”

“Our worker helps mummy and daddy calm down”

“My worker has helped with loads of things, relationships and home life. She has helped me settle back home and helped prepare my mum and gave me the support I needed. Things at home aren’t better yet but I think with her help it will get better. Me and my mum kept shouting and now we don’t. We had a couple of meetings. We have a stop where we think about things. She really has helped”

“My worker has given me strategies to help me calm down”

“My worker has helped with healthy relationships”

“The anger work with Early Help is helping me and mum try to stop arguing. Making mum less angry. Want to stop arguing with mum”

“I like the worker helps mum and dad, helps mum’s anger”

“My worker helps me stay away from people who are mean to me”

“We were very mean before our worker was there. We didn’t get along but we do now. We were fighting every day. Every day we’re not fighting”

“My sister has come back home. I love my sister and missed her when she wasn’t here”

“Helped me to understand my dad’s mental health”

“Helped me to communicate better with my mother”

Workers also identified the importance of helping with relationships in cases of **most significant change** and observations

Relationships between parents and children:

- *“When the children were returned to mum, we did a lot of work around their relationship to try to build a loving a trusting relationship again. Mum was constantly worried that the young person would make more disclosures and get her into trouble. She was also struggling to show him any love or to praise him for his achievements”*
- *“Relationship between mum and the young person is a lot better and they are able to have positive conversations without shouting”*
- *“I assisted the young person and family to gain and understand the young person’s needs and how they can meet his needs, to develop strategies to positively manage his emotions and the family to manage challenging behaviours”*
- *““Mummy doesn’t shout at me as much. Mummy is calmer so I’m calmer”. Mum’s relationship has improved with her daughter, they are a lot closer and they communicate better. There is a happier, cheerful, relaxed atmosphere in the house*
- *“Child has made significant progress in recognising the triggers to what makes him become angry and has begun to implement his own strategies. Both mother and child have worked together to implement quality one to one time for each other as*

well as allowing each other to have space”

- *“Mum now says that she doesn’t shout at her daughter as much. Mum is trying to be more consistent in her approach and spending time with her daughter one to one, having fun and building their relationship”*
- *“Mum began to understand her thoughts, feelings and behaviour. This has led to a change in thinking, leading to sharing this with family members and asking for support”*
- *“Daughter is now open with her dad about her relationship with her boyfriend and dad has met him. Daughter’s relationship with her mum improved”*
- *“Both parties have identified their role in causing the conflict situations and are clear on what needs to be done to reduce this happening in the future. Both report that they much prefer being in each other’s company now and are more supportive of each other”*
- *“Mum feels more confident talking to her child about what has happened and the child has begun to open up to his mum about his feelings”*
- *“The shift in mum’s attitude has led to improved communication and relationships between mum and all of the children, which has led to a reduction in the unwanted behaviours from the children”*
- *“Communication is better. I have noticed the family all talking and having fun”*
- *“The family are more settled and communicating more openly with one another”*
- *“The daughter needed to start to believe in herself and start to build a proper relationship with her dad and step mum as she felt she wasn’t wanted and was in the way”*
- *“Family meetings are increasing, understanding and communication between the family members. The child’s voice has been heard through direct work and at family meetings”*
- *“She reported yesterday that ‘I have helped mum to understand her’”*
- *“There were communication difficulties due to the past of the child but following undertaking some emotional stones work they are now communicating”*
- *“Direct work completed with child on anger looking at triggers and ways that the child can manage his feelings and emotions without lashing out”*
- *“Feelings and emotions around relationship with mum”*
- *“Children’s voice share mum is not getting as angry”*
- *“This work was shared with mum and mum started to talk about maybe letting child see dad”*
- *“Explaining to the child why he is not allowed something – not to escalate this into an argument which had become an environment of shouting and screaming”*
- *“To see and hear her mum talk about their relationship is heart-warming compared to the screaming and shouting we had previously”*
- *“Benefits her daughter as mums bond has improved”*
- *“Their relationship has seen a drastic improvement; initially their relationship was void of love, care and affection”*
- *“Mum has a much better relationship with her son”*
- *“The whole family say that it is a much nicer house to live in how and there is not so many conflicts”*
- *“His relationship with his mother is now greatly improving”*

- *“Daughter is back in the family home and both mum and she are communicating and building upon a positive relationship which did not happen previously”*
- *“Work with mum and eldest daughter initially around their relationship and the language used towards each other helped to reduce tensions and arguments within the household and improve the general mood at home”*
- *“Reduction in aggressive behaviour towards mum”*
- *“He has a better relationship with his mum and dad who have also seen a significant change in his behaviours”*
- *“Using strategies and family agreement to help her calm and not have outbursts that upset the children”*

Relationships with other family members and their families:

- *“We discussed that the child needed to know more about her past ‘story’ and have done a words and pictures with grandma. This has prompted grandma to have more empathy and understanding and child’s behaviour has improved”*
- *“The child has just turned two and has very limited language however we can assume that he is pleased that his older brother is no longer having regular aggressive and violent outbursts at home”*
- *“The parents have now made a conscious effort to communicate effectively with each other and not through their son”*
- *“Parents are working together more as a unit with their children”*
- *“Both parents had to harmonise and recognise what was necessary in order to bring about change”*
- *“The family are now settled with no feuds happening daily”*
- *“Mum and dad had to work out their relationship and put their son’s wellbeing above their own”*

Other:

- *“She feels she is able to control her own anger and is able to recognise when she needs some time away”*
- *“The work I have completed with her has been strategies to cope with her anger and healthy relationship package”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified improved family relationships e.g. parents and siblings being supportive of each other, screaming, shouting, arguing and swearing decreased (in 37% of cases)

This could also be viewed as an outcome

Workers also identified the following outcomes:

- Improved child behaviour as a key outcome (in 26% of cases) e.g. general positive behaviour change, improved behaviour in school, no longer escalating behaviour into aggression and violence, able to control anger and reduced anti-social behaviour.
- Parents being able to control their anger as an outcome (5%)

Pointing Them in the Right Direction/Giving Families Good Advice

Families valued their worker pointing them in the right direction, “talking sense”, giving them good advice, “sheets with advice”, “tips on communication” and “keeping them forward even when they are stressed”. See dashboard 2c above.

Kristy doesn't get on well with written forms and sheets.

"My worker would give me them but I didn't do them. I said, don't give me sheets. I'd say I threw them or didn't know where I'd put them. She'd remind me, say she'd get them the following week but I didn't do them"

Kristy feels that there were things her worker didn't need to help her with.

"I needed support in other ways but other things she knew I could do myself, like forms, I needed help to do stuff like that. I do struggle with them"

Kristy, age 30

Other quotes from adults where they valued support around advice generally included:

"The worker has really helped the family to get back on their feet and guided them to solve their issues and put them in the right direction to get their lives back on track"

"Very easy to talk to and offers great advice and tips for our family to follow. Well done and thank you for making a difference"

"I personally have had a great experience with Early Help. Our worker is always there to help/guide and remind me of important things since she has worked with my family, our lives have improved massively so a huge thank you"

"I like that our worker talks and helps when things go wrong"

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued support around relationships included:

“Our worker makes stressful situations simple. Helps us with a clear way of dealing with things”

“My worker is good at giving me advice. Sheets to help and only helps you”

“She’s always got time for you, good at organising and helps you see things in a different light, different outlook”

“She talks to me about my problems and gives me advice that I can follow. She helps nan, gives advice if I get stuck”

“My worker comes to school and home and tells me everything I don’t know. When you sleep, when you grow”

“Our worker gives good general advice”

“Our worker gives advice and tips to everyone”

Workers also identified the importance of tools that help support pointing families in the right direction in cases of **most significant change**

- *“(The family were) given a visual prompt of the agreed solutions”*
- *“Visual timetable for cleaning”*
- *“Through words and pictures child now has an increased understanding of the domestic abuse he witnessed between his parents and why he doesn’t see his daddy anymore”*
- *“Solution focused base questions” and “Solution focused base discussion”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified worker tools e.g. clear objectives and reviews, healthy relationship package, ladder of exposure, recovery toolkit, voice box, emotional stones, solution focus approaches, Theraplay approaches and motivational interviewing techniques in 14% of cases as key to change taking place in families.

More specifically, families referenced the support their family had been given around.

Parenting

Mandy's worker supports her with help around behaviour, routines and sleep.

"The children look forward to seeing her...when she was doing the whole sleep thing they thought it was brilliant. She did all the reward charts too which are brilliant. She comes out at night to do it"

Mandy, age 47

Whilst Isobel can't remember everything her worker has done for her and her family she knows she has *"done loads...helped hugely...the children have become much calmer...my mum says so too...it wasn't that we didn't have any routine but there's more routine...they would go bed between seven and nine but now they know bedtime is bedtime"*

Isobel feels that whilst she has always *"loved my kids...they were becoming more of a chore...we muddled through the day until bedtime"*, she also feels her worker *"guides her...helps me to be a better parent, see things through the kids eyes...realise we're not all perfect"*

Isobel knows she moans about her children but also knows, *"I built a rod for my own back...let them get away with things for so long...but it's true, kids do like routine and structure and it makes them feel more secure...the changes will be long lasting as I can see how much more smoothly life can run"*

Isobel, age 38

Stacey finds it helps with both workers that they suggested doing things together with Millie. *"They'd tell me just to read a book with her...I'm a crafty person and they'd say, just do crafts with her"*

Stacey, age 24

Joanne and Karl are referred to Early Help and initially a worker from the Children's Centre's is involved mainly around supporting Joanne and Karl with the house and cleanliness. Karl feels at the time there was an issue with cleanliness, *"the school were saying the kids smelt of urine. Jordan was weeing in the bedroom rather than going to the toilet, we had James and Ethan still in pull ups...we had quite a few animals at the time, not conventional pets, more exotic...one was a bit messy...clothes were left to be put away and it would wee on them so sometimes the children smelt of wee at school but we had four children and James was refusing to get dressed, all the kids wanted something in the morning, James was throwing a paddy on the floor and because Jordan was quiet we didn't check him half the time as normally he'd be fine...I don't disagree that it had to be reported"*.

After a month of working with the Children's Centre, the house is "sorted" and their worker tells Joanne and Karl she wants to pass them to the next service along to help with routine so that it *"wasn't as intense...that was the plan...so we went to Supporting Leicestershire"*

Families...we saw it as progression"

Joanne, age 30. Karl, age 37

"I asked her a lot about finger food because I was struggling getting Joe onto solids and she gave me tips and ideas for that"

Katrina, age 30

Other quotes from adults where they valued support around parenting included:

"Thanks to my worker I finally have the independence to be a proper mum and not fully rely on other people"

"Our worker has helped us deal with our children's challenging behaviour. Got us onto Solihull. I think my son would say he's got more confident and developed a personality and that because our worker plays with him and his toys that's helped his parents play too"

"We have been working on 123 Magic for behaviour. I don't know what I'd have done without my workers support"

"Our worker has put in a lot of behaviour techniques"

"The parent has stated that my understanding her child better and how to manage his behaviour she has more confidence. She stated the home is calmer. She is able to manage any angry outburst from her son better"

"My daughter is realising she won't get a reaction out of me for anything she shouldn't be doing or saying. There is more consistency with myself and my partner in how he manages and handles my daughter's behaviour"

"Since we've made all the changes with our son and his behaviour has got better his younger brother's been more affectionate to him. I think we talk differently to him now, like when he's doing stuff he shouldn't we think more about how much he can understand and what he might be feeling so we can deal with it with that in mind while still putting in the boundaries"

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued support around parenting included:

"I like that our worker helps with routines and behaviour, doing rotas"

"Our worker did a chart for our behaviour. If you finish it first you get a prize. Helps us be good and nice to each other"

"Time for our worker to go? Nooooooooooooo. Helps with our sleeping routine"

"The child has said 'mum is happy when I am good' proving that he knows what impact he has on his mother's feelings. He recognises that his behaviour has an effect"

“Our worker is helping my dad to stop swearing”

Workers also identified the importance of advice and support around parenting issues in cases of **most significant change** and observations

Understanding development:

- *“Mum has someone to talk to, things to do, it helped to talk to each other, helped her to understand all about development, what she should be doing and she’s had the confidence to come to groups and make new friends”*
- *“The parent said she had expected her child to become independent by himself and ‘just gain’ the skills required to be ready for school. She now realises and states that she had chosen the easiest options rather than those that would support and encourage her child to become independent. The child is having less toileting accidents, tantrums have reduced in frequency and ferocity and he’s getting more attention for the things he’s doing right and less for the things he’s doing wrong”*
- *“Mum needed to understand how her daughter going to pre-school will help with speech and language, social interaction and behaviour”*
- *“Work on positive communication and also understanding attachment as well as what is normal teenager behaviour”*
- *“Mum now has an idea of what her son needs to develop well and is less anxious about his development”*
- *“Mum stated that her daughter of five and a half years was only drinking milk from a baby bottle and she would wake at 5am for a bottle. With worker support and advice mum has removed all the bottles from the house and the child is now drinking from a cup”*
- *“Mum and dad both needed to recognise together that their daughter needed additional support and that she needed stimulation and time to explore”*
- *“Mum is gaining a better understanding of child development”*
- *“She has a better understanding of what her baby needs”*
- *“The parent is now thinking about the child’s needs now before their own and considering the benefits to his development, in particular his speech and language, but also his social development”*
- *“Mum is putting her children’s needs first. She feels like a better parent now”*
- *“Parent has a better understanding of child’s needs and has more realistic expectations”*
- *“Mum is calmer, recognising the impact her behaviour has on children”*
- *“Mum is now spending more time one to one with the children as she recognises the importance of this as well as the importance of positive praise and making the children feel good about themselves”*
- *“Due to sessions where I am modelling and structuring play opportunities with a sibling group of six”*
- *“Mum has openly praised and encouraged them during the play sessions. She has also been observed to demonstrate more physical affection towards the children than I have seen previously”*

- *“Their development is improving”*
- *“Pre-school shared the youngest child’s development has improved”*

Boundaries:

- *“Mum’s confidence has increased to implement and adhere to parenting boundaries and she is learning the importance of consistency with consequences”*
- *“By working with parents and providing practical steps to manage unwanted behaviours in the home, some changes were made which had a positive impact on the young person’s behaviour”*
- *“The lightbulb moment was whilst revisiting their learning through their folders both parents recognised how their own method of responding to their child’s behaviour was escalating the situation instead of diffusing it”*
- *“All of the children would ask dad to do things for them, even wash their hair. Dad is now getting them to do this themselves”*
- *“Both parents became more confident with their parenting role, set clear boundaries with consequences and worked together to implement them, whereas before they had been inconsistent and not working together in their parenting which confused the child and allowed mixed messages to be communicated. The child understood the boundaries and consequences and both parents were using the same language so the child understood the options with clarity, thus allowing the parents to contain the issue/situation...mother also had a social circle of two risky known adults but since working with Early Help this has changed and they are no longer in contact”*
- *“Mum has put a reward chart into place to reinforce positive behaviour and is working on time-out strategies for challenging behaviour. Mum is also working towards taking the child out more”*
- *“Mum had to physically get changed a six, nine and twelve year old every morning. They now eat breakfast on their own and get themselves dressed”*
- *“Positive parenting strategies were advised including remain calm, clear expectations, better routines around son’s ad hoc eating patterns and praise of positive behaviour and attributes”*
- *“Mum and son both said his attendance at school had improved, he was no longer staying out until midnight and there were no arguments at home. This also meant that he was at home to eat his meal with mum and not eating a reheated meal alone late at night”*
- *“Mum’s ability to implement parental boundaries with confidence and consistency increased”*
- *“Mum was provided with hand-outs around rephrasing and how to say no”*
- *“The parents are more consistent in their parenting of the children – as a result the children are responding better to requests asked of them by their parents”*
- *“There are no incidents of physical abuse by the child to the parent”*
- *“Put in praise, time out, consequence and reward”*
- *“Mum has been able to recognise that her child does not and should not see her parents behaving in this way”*
- *“Parent is able to understand and manage his behaviour more appropriately”*
- *“Mum felt that it was lovely to be able to sleep without her child between her and his*

dad in bed as he is a restless sleeper. The child also appeared to sleep better. This would have impacted on the next day and the child's mood"

- *"Parent has strategies in place to manage behaviour more effectively and is using a pasta reward system"*
- *"Mum is now able to manage the child's behaviour well"*
- *"Mum has also taken on board positive parenting strategies that are being used for both children which she did not apply before my support"*
- *"Children have seen a change in mum's parenting. Less shouting, more listening and talking, following things through"*
- *"The young person and her brother have respected the boundaries and have so far accepted the consequences for bad behaviour"*

Routines:

- *"The child's routine has improved after mum was introduced to picture routines which mum and child follow – bed time, meal time, TV time, bath time and story time. Mum and child are following the star chart for boundaries for the child to hold mums hand on the way as the child kept running off and mum and child now sit and do activities – drawing and playing puzzles. Child appears happier and wants to show me his drawings and he shows more interest in story books. Mum says she praises her child more and replaces negative comments with five positive comments"*
- *"My daughter has benefited from a smoother running home, better routines, calmer environment. This has been achieved because I have been contained by workers who have listened, encouraged and praised my parenting. I have been given strategies advice around monitoring my mental health and about meeting the children's needs and putting positive, workable routines in place so that I do not feel so overwhelmed and out of control. My son is showing more affection and calming down quicker from tantrums. At times he is following instructions more. His sleep has improved and he is no longer waking up early for a drink. He still gets very angry and gets frustrated easily and I'm trying to use my learning from the Solihull course to understand why he is behaving that way and to support him to deal with his emotions better. My other daughter is becoming more independent and responding to instructions better and on time and she is enjoying rewards and praise for this"*
- *"Work has been undertaken to ensure essential routines are maintained"*
- *"Work has been undertaken to ensure essential routines are being maintained. This included ensuring that parent, who has health needs, appropriately delegates small duties in the home to the children"*
- *"Mum attended the Solihull group and I worked with mum and dad on behaviour strategies and family routines"*
- *"Set bedtime and morning routines which gives them structure"*
- *"His sleep routine is now much better. He is sticking to bedtime of 21:30 to 22:00 with wind down strategy in place"*
- *"Child is now sleeping through the night" "This has also meant mum is getting a good night's sleep most nights"*
- *"Four year old was going to sleep at 4am and is now asleep by 8/9pm"*
- *"Previously that she felt she wouldn't be able to manage without Early Help support"*

and couldn't see a way that the morning routines could change"

- *"Mother was supported with the oldest child behaviour by helping mum to set firm routines and boundaries at home through visual picture routines"*

Other:

- *"We have been given advice on keeping the children away from adult conversations"*
- *"Practical support in going shopping, budgeting and encouraging child to eat"*
- *"The worker supported the parent by contacting agencies, role modelling how to manage phone calls and supporting the parent to engage with services on the phone"*

Workers from children's centre's also observed how babies and younger pre-verbal children had improved behaviour e.g. "tantrums", "biting", "calmer" and "learning from pushing boundaries"

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified the following key activities leading to change in families:

- Worker's providing practical support around behaviours, parenting, daily household tasks and routines in 33% of cases;
- Workers supporting parents to have a better understanding of child and young person's needs, development and abilities (27%)

Workers also identified improved parenting e.g. in control of parenting, positive family time and experiences (38%) as a key enabler of change (which could also be viewed as an outcome).

Finance and Debt

Families referenced the support their family had been given around finance and debt:

"My worker is helping me with debt...worked with CAP with me... my worker helped with my debts as much as she could do"

Stacey, age 24

Kristy finds her worker helps her around budgeting.

"She got DLA for both of the boys, got William on an EHCP plan. Our money is much better than what it used to be, loads better"

Kristy, age 30

"My worker put things in place to stop me getting into any more debt"

Jessica, age 23

Afia's worker helps Afia with the DLA application forms when Chike turns five

Afia, age 30

"My worker told me where the food banks were if I was ever struggling or if I didn't want to go alone, to get in touch with her and I could go with her or she'd bring food back for me. I didn't really need it but I knew it was always there and she knew I was a bit shy and had not long moved here so it helped having someone to talk to"

"She helped us get the children into swimming lessons. I'd always wanted the children to learn to swim but I couldn't afford to pay for them all to go so with some government funding through Surestart she rang up and got in touch with the swimming baths. We had a year of swimming before the government cut the funding and it was really good when we were doing it"

"My worker asked if there was anything I wanted or needed to get in touch and she'd find other ways round it...said she didn't want children missing out on opportunities because people can't afford things. Things like that were really helpful if we needed any help...but we didn't really"

Emma, age 33

Other quotes from adults where they valued support around finances included:

"With cleaning our spare room (colossal), getting our bills paid and communicating with each other"

"Support with finances, help budgeting and having access to food (food bank) had a large impact on my mental health"

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued support around finances included:

"Our worker has helped control bills, fill out forms"

"Our worker has helped us start to get out of debt and support payment plans. It's very important to us being stable. She visits once or twice a week and helps with other things if we need it...dad says the help is very good"

"Our worker has helped with our bills"

"Our worker helps me with my Asperger's, helped me with my Personal Independence Payment (PIP) application"

"Things are loads easier. Our worker has helped our family with debts"

Workers also identified the importance of advice around finance and debt in cases of **most significant change** and observations

Debt:

- *“I supported the parent to arrange payment plans for her debt. The parent now has a payment plan in place for their rent arrears. I also contacted a phone company and negotiated debt owing”*
- *“At first I struggled with engagement and the family wanting to pay into the CAP plan but after numerous home visits, texts, phone calls, the family completed all the paperwork and the CAP plan was set up”*
- *“When the worker first supported the parent she had her benefits stopped. The worker supported the parent to access universal credit...the worker supported the parent to arrange payment plans for their debts and rent arrears and negotiated a debt owing”*
- *“The worker was key in supporting the parent to engage in services and supporting them to manage phone calls to deal with her debts and finances. The parent struggles with anxiety and finds phone calls very difficult”*
- *“Mum shared she had financial difficulties after completing a benefit checker and work readiness form”*
- *“Advice for support on how to clear debts”*
- *“Mum is very proud of herself for sticking to her payment plan but felt she did this because I made it so clear about what the benefits would be if she did and pointed out actual times when things could happen. She feels the food bank parcels have massively helped her and the children and they’ve stopped her from getting into debt with the people she would normally borrow money from”*
- *“This improvement led to mum feeling able to tackle her substantial debts”*

Benefits:

- *“With my support the family have opened a bank account. This has enabled them to apply for child benefit”*
- *“All benefits have now been sorted and mum has received back pay for outstanding funds”*
- *“Liaison took place with the job centre and all benefits were put into place”*
- *“The worker has supported the family to access support to manage their finances by completing charity applications and contacting utility companies in order for them to access food parcels and utility credits to enable them to have electric and gas. The worker has supported the family to access support through interpreters to enable them to understand and complete a DLA form”*
- *“PIP application completed”*

Budgeting:

- *“I supported mum with budgeting which mum says now she does well to avoid getting into rent arrears. Mum says she is now managing her household budget by changing the contract with Sky to make it cheaper and she has also cancelled the landline to save more money”*
- *“Now they have more money they can do more things with the children”*
- *“Practical support in going shopping and budgeting”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified improvements to families’ financial situation e.g. benefits supporting disabled children/young people/adults, families managing their finances, families no longer in debt, families receiving more income via benefits or being in work as a key enabler of change in 13% of cases – this could also be seen as an outcome.

Employment

Families referenced the support their family had been given around employment.

Claire feels that her worker did more work with her because she was engaged and whilst she tried to get her into a position to be ready for work, Claire wasn’t ready.

“I would love to have a job but I’m not ready...not with anxiety and depression as it is”

Claire, age 43

“My worker tried to get me help from the Job Centre as I want help to become self-employed...she is talking to the Job Centre trying to get bits sorted out and if that works it will be helpful...but the Job Centre want me to have my own premises but with the cost of premises that's never going to happen”

Karl, age 37

With her workers support, Stacey is starting college next week one day a week to become a teaching assistant.

“I'm meeting my tutor today”

Stacey, age 24

Mandy feels her worker has done a fabulous job on her own self esteem.

“I stopped working to care for the children, I'd always worked before, I hope to get back to work”

Mandy, age 47

Other quotes from families where they valued support around employment included:

“Our worker helped daddy getting back to work, starting his own business”

“My worker got me into police cadets”

“My worker has helped me with getting a job”

“Helping me to go to college to get a job”

“Helping write a CV up and print it out”

“She got me help from the job centre to get me some training”

Workers also identified the importance of advice and support around employment in cases of **most significant change** and observations

Getting families generally work ready:

- *“After attending the potential back to work sessions, the mum has printed out her CV and has started to look for employment. Before Early Help involvement she wouldn’t attend sessions or groups”*
- *“Mum feels confident to be referred to employment support to support her into future work”*
- *“As she has made significant progress in attending group sessions and gaining confidence and self-esteem, this has enabled her to want to seek employment”*
- *“Mum is now hoping to return to work and is coping well”*
- *“Mum is now work ready”*
- *“It was at this point that she decided she needed to get into work rather than moping around the house and she wants to achieve something for herself”*

Work experience:

- *“I also liaised with the school for the young person to complete work experience at the local infant school as she would like to work with children as a career”*
- *“Young person is also registered to start the police cadets and is really excited as her aspiration is to be a police officer”*

Adult learning courses:

- *“Mum also referred to Adult Learning for further studies for a child care course” “She is now doing volunteering work at a salon”*

Volunteering:

- *“She went into town and independently spoke to staff at the PDSA and has been volunteering three days a week for three hours”*

GREAT project/STABLE (Solutions to a better in employment):

- *“After completing a benefit checker and work readiness form the checker showed the parent would be better off financially in employment than claiming benefits. The parent was happy with the report that was supported by the DWP and was happy for a referral to the GREAT project. The parent is now working on seeking employment and getting work ready”*
- *“Mum has since been to STABLE (Solutions to a better in employment) drop in session and has agreed to a referral being made for the next group. Mum has also allowed the DWP (TFEA) to visit her at home to discuss benefits and ‘better off calculations”*

Supporting families into employment:

- *“I supported the parent to get a job using personal contacts established in my role”*
- *“Father is working 15 hours a week, with my support I have been able to help him apply for more work”*
- *“Currently engaged in positive casual work whilst waiting to return to alternative education”*
- *“The young person has an apprenticeship at DHL”*
- *“Parent is now in full time employment”*
- *“Single parent has returned to work”*
- *“She now has a part time contract with Tesco in a job she thoroughly enjoys”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified the following outcomes - Adults and young people made progress towards work e.g. young person in adult education, planning to return to adult education, in work experience, considering returning to work, considering working, NEET engaging with services and volunteering (in 17% of cases) and adults and young people are now in work or apprenticeships (4%).

Housing and Home Environment

Families referenced the support their family had been given around their housing and home environment:

At first, Mandy's worker felt Mandy needed a three bedroom house and supported an application to the council with a covering letter. The application was also supported by letters from the brief intervention worker, doctor and school. They move and Mandy feels *“it is worth having to pay £18 per week bedroom tax to make the children happy, for them to be able to play out”*

Mandy, age 47

Stacey also feels her new worker helped her at home.

"My house used to be a pigsty, now it's not perfect but it's clean. I haven't got rubbish and clothes everywhere....every now and then she'd help me"

Stacey, age 24

Afia's worker also helps to set Afia up online with eBay where Afia is able to buy things for the house which *"make a big difference to the home"*. Afia *"makes lots of accounts herself after that, setting up a new tablet and a new phone"*

Afia, age 40

Whilst Joanne was unaware of it, Karl recalls how their worker has helped with a form for the house bidding system, *"she did write a letter to the council to explain that Joanne's anxiety was being kicked off by people round here, so she has done that to help Joanne's anxiety"*

Karl, age 37

"I did tell her my medication could be withdrawn if we were moved from here...we wouldn't be getting stupid complaints...people saying the kids rooms are in a right state but how would they know when nobody round here comes in our house"

Joanne, age 30

Other quotes from adults where they valued support around housing included:

"I was homeless and my son had just come back to me and was not even in a school. My worker sorted everything out for us and we are now living in a two bedroom house and my son has just had an amazing school report"

"It has made the difference of having money to clothe and feed my daughter. Before we met our worker I didn't have a clue on how to apply for money for the children or how to apply for a house"

"Thanks to my worker we now have suitable housing"

"My son's whole life has improved for him. In his own words he now has the best house ever" (he didn't have his own bedroom before and they have never had a family home"

"Worked together with our worker to help us tidy the house"

"We also now have suitable housing"

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued support around housing and their housing environment included:

“Our worker helps the rest of the families stress with the house issues”

“Now we have a nice house, not flat, thank you to our worker for protesting for us”

“Our worker got us a new home”

“Our worker is helping parents to get a move”

“Our worker helped after moving house”

“Our worker sorts problems, we had bad neighbours”

“Our worker has helped us to move home”

“Our worker helps dad move on with decorating and things”

Workers also identified the importance of advice and support around housing and the home in cases of **most significant change** and observations

Support around eviction/homelessness:

- *“Support was provided when the family were facing an eviction notice”*
- *“The family are no longer at risk of homelessness”*
- *“Early Help and the anti-social behaviour officer working together with the family to see that a reduction is needed otherwise their tenancy will be under risk”*

House moves:

- *“Parent was not proactive in completing a housing application and producing financial documents. Support was given to make this change. Shortly after the bidding process the parent was allocated a property which motivated the parent to begin preparation for her unborn child and provide stability and security to her son”*
- *“Supported with housing, overcrowded, now moved up to high banding”*
- *“Older son moved to live with his father as he was involved with anti-social behaviour and drugs. The mother was able to parent the younger children better as a result”*
- *“The family have now moved to a new property and adults visiting the home are now friends”*
- *“Early Help were able to suggest and support applying for council housing”*
- *“The family have been wanting to move home for a number of years as they are victims of racial hate crime. Since engagement the family are now due to move home in the next six weeks”*
- *“Mum has been placed on the priority housing list and is bidding for houses now and also looking at home swap which she didn’t have the motivation to do before”*
- *“The baby now has a home. Before she was born she had nothing ready for her”*

arrival and the help has made it possible for her to have everything she needs”

- *“This child will now be able to live in a financially stable, more appropriately sized household which will allow him to develop and grow”*
- *“The family have now moved into a new property”*
- *“She has decided to request a move out of the current flat”*
- *“I’m addressing for a managed move due to the harassment from neighbours and support at the court hearing”*

Child moves:

- *“Child is now living with dad”*
- *“Child and mum are working towards the child moving back to mum’s”*
- *“Child was removed to his aunties and grandmother”*
- *“Child has the option of staying with his dad for short periods if he or his mother feels a break is needed from each other”*
- *“Child moved from his mother’s home to live with his father”*

Home improvements:

- *“Mum has more time to play with her child as things have been done in the house. He is grateful”*
- *“Decorated and furnished the property”*
- *“Bedrooms are being decorated”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified the following enablers as key to change:

- Changes to home environment e.g. house moves in relation to domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, more appropriate housing and improved housing such as cleaner, decorated or temporary changes to where a child/young person lived whilst housing changes took place (in 17% of cases)
- Parental changes in home environment e.g. a child or young person moving in with another parent/family member or a family member or parent being removed as a result of a prison sentence or because they were a perpetrator of domestic abuse (6%). These enablers could also be seen as outcomes

Other

Families referenced other support their family had been given.

Afia's worker helps Afia to set up an online shopping account as the task of walking with the heavy shopping each week is causing immense back pain for Afia. This makes "a huge difference" to Afia.

Afia, age 40

One of Afia's children also valued the support around this as her and her sister no longer had to help carry heavy bags: "She helps mum order things online. It was hard as we all had to shop"

Other quotes from children and young people included:

"Our worker has helped mum, helped us develop a network of support, coping well as a family"

"Helped me go for my provisional (driving licence)"

More Information

For more details on multi-agency support around finance and debt, employment and housing see

REPORT 4 - MULTI-AGENCY AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS

Appointments

Children, young people and adults valued their worker taking them to appointments, in particular providing them with emotional support with appointments. See dashboard 2c above.

"He sat there and said I'll ring them (the doctors). I said I'll do it tomorrow and he knew I wouldn't, so he did get me to make an appointment and I did go to it...he offered to go with me"

"When I agreed to meet you it was nice that my worker offered to introduce us, he knew I was anxious meeting new people"

Natalie, age 31

"I think she was with me for about six months and because my anxiety and depression was still bad I sat back and let her do it. Anywhere I needed to go she was always there and took me places. Millie had to have regular check-ups for her eyes, general things. She got me to the doctors all the time"

Stacey, age 24

Claire's worker helps support her at groups and recalls specifically a session Turning Point were running nearby.

"My worker helped me engage with groups...I probably wouldn't have gone otherwise...she was a bit of a drill sergeant...but a nice one"

Claire's worker helps support her at other appointments such as the doctors, *"she helped get stuff out that I was bottling up...she'd say what I couldn't say...I'd tell the doctor things were ok and she'd say no we have to be honest...she spoke for me...was really good at supporting me"*

"My worker came with me to the job centre until I got used to the worker...the lady came from the job centre and I asked her, how do you write a CV when you have no self-esteem...you can't do it"

Claire, age 43

Afia's worker helps Afia to access volunteer drivers to help get her and her sons to hospital and other appointments. Afia finds this makes a *"big difference"* as the driver will collect them from home, wait for them and bring them back home.

Afia's worker helps support Afia at appointments with the Autism Special nurse, helping explain that Afia needs respite and breaks.

Afia's children want to have contact with their dad again and CAFCASS become involved. Afia is OK with her children having contact with their dad *"if the contact with supervision is good"*, but worries he will brainwash them if he is able to take them home. The CAFCASS report is due in April and the court date in May. Afia's worker helps her with the court process and appointments.

Afia, age 40

Isobel's worker persuades Isobel to register the family with the doctor and dentist, *"we hadn't had a doctor for a couple of years...she helped us with normal things like sorting that...it should be the basics...we all needed helping"*

Isobel finds it helpful when her worker goes to appointments with her. She feels that by having her sit next to her it reminds her to be honest, *"that I would be a bit guarded if I went on my own and I wouldn't want a friend to come, although I would call my worker a friend, you only tell friends certain things...it gives me moral support...she knows what's going on and if I forget to say something"*

Isobel, age 38

Kristy values help getting to hospital appointments with Jamie when her worker was free.

"I also did a healthy eating course. My worker used to give me a lift as I didn't have a car at the time. I attended everything as it got me out as well"

Kristy, age 30

Michelle's worker supports her by going to the meeting with the psychiatrist where Sam is diagnosed.

At a meeting with Sam's school, the school request Sam does a timetable that doesn't support what the psychiatrist has told Michelle. Michelle feels it is good that her worker says *"hang on a minute, don't you remember what the psychiatrist said...Sam needs social time so lunchtime is the most important time for him to be at school socialising...my worker knew he had chronic fatigue, knew he needed a flexible timetable and was able to negotiate"*

Michelle feels now with her workers help Sam's school have listened and adapted his day. As Joe is now 16 he is no longer eligible for the paediatrician so Michelle takes him to the GP who has never heard of his condition. With her workers support Joe is referred to an adult specialist.

Michelle sees the importance of her worker being a voice and going back to schools and saying *"I've seen what mum does and I wouldn't do any different...able to go back to them and tell them they're wrong...schools listened more...be at meetings where things are said that didn't happen, able to remind everybody it was a two way thing"*

Michelle feels as if things wouldn't have changed with Sam's school without her workers support, *"having that one person going between health and school...a go between...some people don't have that, can't articulate things, can't stand up for themselves...standing up for the children"*

Michelle's worker also helps remind Michelle to keep going to the doctors.

Michelle, age 53

Other quotes from adults where they valued support around appointments included:

"Visiting appointments with the GP and psychiatrist"

"My worker gives me confidence to amend appointments"

"I liked that my worker accompanied me to medical appointments and school meetings"

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued support around appointments included:

“My worker reminds about appointments”

“Our worker gets us to appointments on the bus”

“Our worker takes me to the dentist and doctors. My nan thinks she’s very good”

“Our worker helps with appointments”

“Our worker attends GP appointments. Takes my sister to the SIBS group”

“Our worker took us to appointments”

“My worker helps getting mummy back on track attending appointments and supporting me at appointments”

“My worker helped me get to my appointments, we walked together”

“Our worker helped us to get to our appointments”

Workers also identified the importance of support at appointments in cases of **most significant change**

- *“I arranged transport to and from a paediatric appointment and supported the parent during the process”*
- *“With my support, mum disclosed information with the police”*
- *“This is a difficult situation as the dad believes there are no developmental needs with the child and I feel that without my support mum may not have attended the appointments or found them much more difficult than she has. I also supported mum and child in the appointments when behaviour was difficult”*
- *“Early help support at appointments and with some travel costs when the family come under financial pressure after their child is diagnosed with untreatable aggressive cancer and admitted to a hospital some distance from home”*
- *“Parents supported to access appointments including autism seven week programme”*
- *“By arranging a school meeting mum also felt that her son was getting support in school”*
- *“Mum was supported in talking to the police regarding the messages on her daughter’s phone”*
- *“Rearranging appointments with the pre-school; they needed a very understanding, supportive and flexible pre-school”*
- *“I have chased referrals for orthopaedic appointments and mental health appointments at the adult mental health unit which dad has agreed that I can accompany him to”*
- *“Mum attended the group on three occasions with support”*
- *“Going with them”*

- *“She was supported to visit the GP”*
- *“Support at the court hearing”*
- *“Supporting mum and child to CAMHS appointments”*
- *“With support from me she attended the GP for support”*
- *“Supported to attend her appointment”*
- *“The worker attended the disciplinary with young person and his dad”*
- *“Attending appointments with mum and child”*
- *“This began with taking each of the girls to a separate youth club, staying with them the first time and then encouraging them to attend alone”*
- *“Providing transport”*
- *“Make sure doctor’s appointments are being kept”*
- *“Taxi was provided”*
- *“For the change to occur, mother needed to feel well enough mentally and this meant going to see a GP and seeking advice around some counselling and medication that would hopefully help with her anxiety and sleep issues. I supported her to do this and attended appointments with her”*
- *“The parent was supported to access appointments including the autism seven week programme”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified the workers providing emotional and practical support by doing joint visits with families e.g. GP and other health appointments, groups, schools and child care settings in 16% of cases.

Helping With the Families Education and SEND

Children, young people and adults valued their workers helping get their siblings and children into a school or a different school, including play school, “good” schools and special schools. They also valued the worker helping them to challenge schools or get the school to listen and understand their issues more.

Dashboard 2f: From one of the techniques used to collect feedback from families

Education	Total	15	1
	Get their child/YP into a school	9	1
	School to listen, understand	3	
	Stop school prosecution, reduce school attend..	2	
	Sibling get help at nursery	1	
	With college	1	

Kristy's worker *“helps get a Menphys worker involved with us”*

Kristy, age 30

"My worker also went away and spoke to someone who knew something about autism and printed all this stuff off, lots of sheets and gave it to me and this little book of six pages which he said to read to Luke about his worries...he also suggested a routine board. We tried it for a while but sometimes routines changed and because it was on the paper it didn't work for that reason...some things worked, others didn't...he also suggested a pillow as Luke it quite violent when he gets angry...he suggested we went out and Luke picked his own pillow and if he was anxious or angry to hit that rather than people...he still has that on his bed...it did work...he still hits us but he sometimes hits his pillow too"

Natalie, age 31

With their workers support, James's school refer him to a paediatrician (when SENCOs were allowed to refer). Mandy has to write a Connors report and obtain letters to say "what James is like". She also does this with her workers support.

With her workers support Mandy gets May referred to the paediatrician through the doctors. May meets the criteria for a CAMHs referral. Her worker also *"applies to get SENDIASS involved, Menphys SOS and DLA for James...family funding for sensory items...a trampoline...timers.....she puts a lot of things in place, all of which help"*

"She comes to James's appointments, even a three hour sensory one...ADHD behaviour workshops...our worker wants to learn and finds it interesting"

Mandy, age 47

Michelle is helped by her worker to get CAMHs back involved with Sam and her worker also puts pressure on to get an educational psychologist to also be involved which helps.

Sam's school want Sam to go to a hospital school, telling Michelle they don't think their school is the right place for him but Michelle feels it is. As a result of her worker's involvement at the previous psychiatrist meeting, the worker reminds the school how well Sam is doing and what his needs are.

Michelle, age 53

Isobel's worker supports Isobel to get the children to school on time by getting them into a breakfast club as they were being late, *"sometimes she'll turn up to see if I'm ready in the morning and I'm like, oh for god's sake you'd think she'd know by now I am getting up in the morning but I know it's part of her job, she's bothered and I can now cope with it"*

Today, Isobel had had a meeting at school where she *"was pulled up on things that should be done, like remembering PE kits and book bags...when the kids come out of school they are all speaking to me at once...but I also know the kids should also take their own responsibility"*. During the school meeting Isobel got quite tearful even though the meeting went *"fine"*

Isobel, age 38

Karl sees some positives with having their worker. *"I know she played a part in helping get us a locum Educational Psychologist from involvement with care navigators at County Hall along with James's new school who were on it daily, reporting that nothing had been done...that helped get an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) through. She's done some things to help William along with the EHCP, I've seen letters she's sent so I know she has"*

Karl feels that there may be some more support their worker can help with if James doesn't want to do the travelling, *"maybe we could try to get him in the local special school, even though they said they were full...maybe we could appeal"*

Karl, age 37

Suzanne's worker does activities with Karl and Seb...Suzanne is given guidelines from her worker to help with Seb's 'behaviour' and they have family meetings. Suzanne finds these helpful to an "extent"

Suzanne, age 42

Other quotes from adults where they valued support around SEND included:

"Our worker helped with our daughter's statement". I'm not sure what I'd of done without the help of Early Help, they have been brilliant"

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued support around education and SEND included:

“Our worker helped with school. Comes to meetings. School don’t listen to mum but they do now she is involved. She can tell our story”

“Our worker has talked to school so that they understand more. She talks about school”

“I like that she has helped my sister with moving school, got my sister into a special school. She helps with some of the work”

“Our worker is helping with the court attendance for school attendance – fine reduced”

“Our worker organises our meetings at school. She talks about stuff I’m worried about. She comes to school, we have a little meeting”

“Our worker got me into a good school”

“I like that my worker helped with all the problems at school. She talks with mum at school about my problems”

“My worker makes me go to school”

“Our worker gives us early morning calls and helped with a playschool place”

“My worker helps me at school”

“Understanding school routines has been helpful and helped me get to school on time”

“Our worker has helped me with college”

“Our worker sorts out problems. If there was a problem at school she’d help sort it out. If I didn’t want to go on my own somewhere we could talk to teachers and they’d help”

“Our worker helped with moving school”

“She makes me go to my school provision”

“My worker made it easier for me to apply for college”

“Our worker is helping me with college”

“Our worker helps us not be lonely at school”

“She has help improve my school work”

Workers also identified the importance of supporting education and SEND in cases of **most significant change** and observations

Home schooling:

- *“Mum and child are able to communicate better and came to a joint decision for mum to support child with home schooling. Child has a better understanding of what is expected by him and mum is feeling more confident and happier due to not having to go into school”*
- *“She is receiving one to one tutoring which is going well”*
- *“Home tuition is now being provided”*
- *“The eldest daughter suffers from anxiety and after a significant amount of time out of education has re-engaged with home schooling”*

Moving schools/getting placements (including nurseries):

- *“Since Early Help involvement the child has moved schools”*
- *“Support was given to the family in regard to liaison with the older child’s school and the impact this would have on him if he had to experience a school move”*
- *“Worker supported a bespoke transition meeting for the family with their child’s new teachers in the child’s new school to support the parent to feel relaxed and for him to be open with the teachers about what circumstances he finds difficult”*
- *“The young person is an A star student without a school and it took a lot of effort and perseverance (six months) getting him a placement”*
- *“We applied for a place at a nursery for children with individual needs”*
- *“A school place has now been applied for, for the oldest child”*
- *“We applied for a place at Menphys nursery”*
- *“I liaised with school allocations and a place was given to the older child”*

Improving communication with families and schools:

- *“Dad hadn’t got effective communication strategies with school, made him feel ‘out of the loop’ and not informed with her education. Now communication in school effective, dad is informed, clear on his rights as a person with disabilities and now attends school meetings independently”*
- *“Mum now understands the importance of liaising with her children’s schools and will now engage in meetings etc.”*
- *“Parents have a positive relationship with school and can now approach them unsupported to deal with issues”*
- *“Mum has shown that she is managing the daily routine of getting the children up and to school without becoming emotional and upset and ‘venting’ to educational professionals. She has demonstrated consistently since the beginning of September that despite the challenges that she faces, particularly with getting her son to school that she is able to regulate her own behaviour and that of the other children and make sure that they are attending school on time with the appropriate equipment, reporting concerns to schools using appropriate language and remaining calm independently of Early Help. I spent some time with the provisions explaining the support that mum had been offered and what support she might need when she came into school and in what way this would be best offered e.g. spend the time talking to her away from other parents and listening to her ‘vent’ if necessary. These provisions have implemented strategies to support her and I feel that this has also impacted on the improvement”*

Other SEND support:

- *“Early Help is supporting with autism strategies which are working well. Mum is now coping well to manage the child’s needs and has a good understanding around her child’s needs”*
- *“Child now has an EHC Plan and has been given a place at an SEN unit”*
- *“The young person gained an educational health care plan”*
- *“Engagement from school, completing forms and getting child to school including knowledge of criteria and options in relation to hospital school”*
- *“I have also supported mum to be referred to the specialist teaching service”*
- *“Having arranged meetings to discuss education, school have now made a referral for an Educational Psychology assessment”*
- *“Further support has been put in place for young person’s college transition...the family was willing for me to advocate on their behalf in relation to ensuring the transition to college would run smoothly”*
- *“They needed to know their child was falling behind and they needed to become concerned about this and to understand why professionals were also concerned”*
- *“Helping mum with paperwork regarding the SEN team and education for her daughter”*
- *“Early Help provided information and concerns around why the assault happened and included additional needs and disabilities the young person has but the college weren’t aware of. This information resulted in him being allowed to remain in*

college with the right support to be put in place”

One worker also identified in a case of most significant change that she had completed relevant training around working with children who are on the autistic spectrum which contributed to the change.

General improvements:

- *“When collecting the child’s voice she has consistently said how much happier she is now and how much she enjoys school”*
- *“Mum is taking the children to school daily, on time. They are reported to be doing well in school and not highlighting any concerns”*
- *“Mum and the school are seeing improvements in the child’s behaviour and in his learning”*
- *“Mother engaged well and has completed the Solihull parenting programme where an improvement of her son’s behaviour in school has been seen”*
- *“Young person is now back in education after one year”*
- *“Attendance has improved for two children and for one their behaviour in school has been more manageable”*
- *“She now has the courage and support to return to part time education to study functional skills”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified schools and education setting changes as a key enabler of change for families in 8% of families, particularly where child anxiety was high, needs weren’t being met or when parent’s felt let down by schools. This could also be viewed as an outcome.

Workers also identified the following outcomes - Improved educational prospects e.g. school attendance, home school or reduced timetables as opposed to no education, goals to return to school and children and young people remaining in school following an exclusion (in 27% of cases).

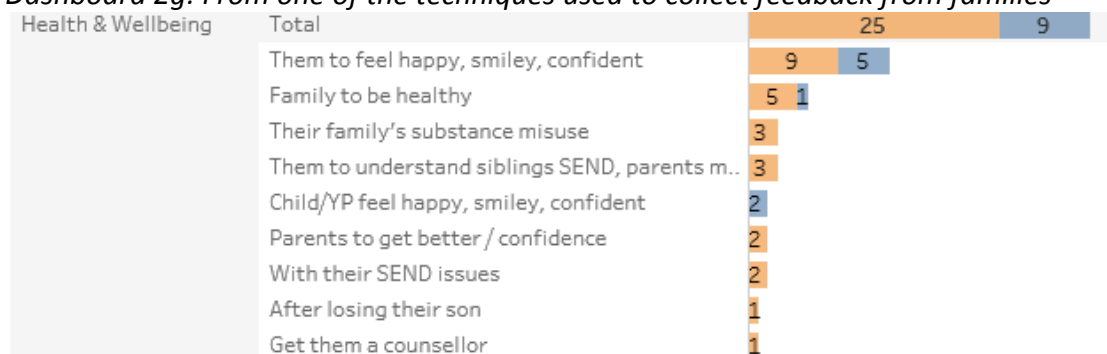
More Information

For more details on multi-agency support around Education and SEND see **REPORT 4 - MULTI-AGENCY AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS**

Helping With the Families Other Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing (Including Substance Misuse and Domestic Abuse)

Families identified how Early Help was helping support them around other health, mental health and wellbeing issues.

Dashboard 2g: From one of the techniques used to collect feedback from families



Mental Health and Wellbeing

Families valued their worker supporting them to have better mental health outcomes by helping their families to feel more confident, happier and “smilier”.

Mandy feels her worker has done a fabulous job on her own self esteem. *“He’ realises ‘he’ hasn’t got control anymore. Last week I put the phone down on ‘him’ and ‘he’ rang back and asked why and I told him ‘he’ didn’t have any right to speak to me like that”*

Mandy, age 47

“I’m feeling a bit more anxious now but maybe that’s because I was so lazy over the summer although we did go on a train to the coast over the summer and that’s great for me, you’d never have seen me do that before. Last year I couldn’t tell anyone what I’ve told you today...to a doctor or anyone...so that just shows how far I’ve come”

Stacey, age 24

Jessica’s worker knows about the neighbour situation. Jessica calls the council herself repeatedly as she feels she has more confidence now, especially *“when it comes to my kids.”* Whilst Jessica still has mood swings they are nowhere near like before and she is in control of them. Jessica feels she knows that she wants and needs, what she needs to do and the goals she has. She feels the pressure has been taken off her.

Jessica, age 23

Isobel's worker encourages her to go to the dentist.

“She knew I’d had years of drug abuse and my teeth have gone to pot...she knew I’m self-conscious of it so spurred me on to sort my teeth out...what she was saying was if I can improve how I feel about myself it will have a knock on effect with the kids and how I deal with things”

Isobel feels she is in a much better place mentally than she was before, she is in a better place to *"cope with it...and that will be the knock on of everything"*

Isobel, age 38

"My worker was really nice and helped me and William a lot - he'd got scared going in the lift because we got stuck and he used to have panic attacks, crying and shaking. She taught him methods to deal with it because she did a course. She helps, when you're deep breathing, taught us...anxiety is all in your head, in your brain"

Kristy is diagnosed with ADHD. My worker was with me when I got diagnosed. Kristy finds her worker helps by going to meetings with her, supporting around her ADHD medication and with *"the gas and electric thing"*

Kristy, age 30

Other quotes from adults where they valued support around mental health and wellbeing included:

"Since having Early Help our lives have improved and given us more confidence as a family"

"Our worker helped me get out for walks to feel better around postnatal depression. Got me to go to the doctors more and helped deal with things better"

"The Early Help team has helped the children feel confident about what they want from our family. The service has brought our family closer together and made us all feel better"

"My worker has explained the effects with my tablets and ensured I took my tablets (for depression)"

"I have had a fantastic time working with our worker. She has managed to motivate me which is not an easy task for anyone"

"My worker has helped a lot...she pushed me to get counselling for myself"

"Our worker has helped me with confidence and attending groups"

"I think my daughter would say that it makes her feel happy not to see me upset...I am feeling better and less stressed. I've stopped crying and panicking which I think has made her happier too, it's made all the kids happier – even the older ones aren't worrying about moving anymore"

"My confidence has grown so much. I am now happy and more confident to go out and about in public with my daughter. I couldn't do this before due to her disability"

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued support around mental health and wellbeing included:

“Having our worker helping means I don’t have to worry about mum so much”

“Our worker has helped talk about dad and his mental health. Helped get daddy to the doctors”

“Our worker has helped to make daddy happy which is helped make us all happy. The house is more steady now”

“Our worker helped my sister into counselling as she felt really worried at this time”

“Our worker helps my dad with his problems and my little brother with his emotional problems”

“I like that our worker helps my daddy since his daughter died. She has helped him so much already, thanks”

“Got me counselling”

“Helped mum seem less lonely”

Workers also identified the importance of supporting mental health and wellbeing in cases of **most significant change** and observations.

Anxiety and depression:

- *“The family are a lot happier and mother is no longer suicidal”*
- *“Mum says that without my support she would probably have been in the flat crying for the last six months. She feels I have helped to motivate her and calm her anxiety”*
- *“As child is unborn, mum’s anxiety has decreased. Child will be more settled whilst in utero and this will hopefully lead to a positive birth and a more settled baby once born”*
- *“Mum is now taking the correct dosage of prescription medication, reports feeling better most days, is keeping to appointments and no recent overdoses or suicide attempts”*
- *“Mum is now able to focus on her own needs more and is taking regular medication”*
- *“Depression needed to be addressed, and once she was coping better, the work with the children had a greater impact”*
- *“Seeking advice around counselling and medication that would hopefully help with mum’s anxiety and sleep issues”*
- *“The young person has worked with me on positive thoughts and achievements which we have recorded and laminated. She looks at her laminated positive thoughts when feeling low. Through work we have done together she is now able to ring others from her mobile and answer calls which she struggled to do before”*
- *“On advice of the worker, father is now seeking support from GP and self-referred to ‘let’s talk wellbeing’ service”*
- *“Child’s anxiety was impacting on his mental and physical health as well as his learning. Now that he has been able to recognise warning signs for his anxiety he has been able to use techniques to control it and now able to participate in school activities which he wouldn’t ordinarily enjoy due to it causing too much distress for him”*
- *“Today when asked about her anxiety she said, ‘what anxiety?’”*
- *“Her confidence has improved, she is less anxious about what people think of her and is beginning to make plans for her future”*
- *“Parent is currently off her anti-depressants”*
- *“Increased confidence, decreased anxiety”*
- *“She has not self-harmed or taken an overdose since my involvement”*
- *“Both parents are now taking anti-depressants”*

More specialist mental health issues:

- *“Mum is now accessing support around her mental health and seeing her GP regularly. She now has a psychiatrist”*
- *“The child is positively managing ADHD medication with the support of her mother”*
- *“Single parent of four with anxiety, agoraphobia and historic domestic abuse was supported by the worker to gain a correct diagnosis through CAMHS for her youngest child. Since diagnosis the child sleeps through the night, reduced self-harm and suicidal thoughts”*
- *“She has worked well with me to set a routine in place for cleaning to ensure her OCD does not interfere with her daily life”*
- *“Mum’s mental health is more stable and manageable”*
- *“CAMHS have seen the child’s mental health improve”*
- *“Mum’s mental health and medications are more stable”*
- *“Mum’s mental health is an ongoing issue but has significantly improved and she is able to meet the needs of the children”*
- *“CAMHS have recently closed the case with the child”*

General wellbeing:

- *“Mum is in a happier mood, feeling better in herself”*
- *“I feel that the children and mum’s emotional needs have been met by preparing them and supporting them with the big changes of dad moving away”*
- *“This has reduced some of mum’s stresses”*
- *“The work I have completed with her has been about self-esteem and body image”*
- *“Mum appears less stressed and actually told me she feels more able to cope when she can see the children’s behaviour deteriorating”*
- *“Mum’s confidence has increased to implement parenting boundaries”*
- *“Helped increase their emotional wellbeing and confidence”*
- *“She appears happier”*
- *“She is feeling positive and hopeful”*
- *“The changes are creating a better home environment for the children and they can see mum looks happier, which impacts in turn on their wellbeing”*
- *“Mum has gone from a painfully shy parent with no confidence in herself to a parent who is managing well and introducing herself to a new parent within a group and making them feel welcome”*
- *“She is presenting as a happier person”*
- *“He is a happier young man and his confidence and self-esteem have blossomed”*
- *“Actually told me she feels more able to cope”*
- *“Since this time I have seen a positive change in this mother’s mental health. She is getting out of the flat with her young child and has even been on holiday and reports they had a wonderful time. She is accepting help, with support”*
- *“Young person has worked with me on making a safety plan to keep herself safe and well looked after; looking at what self-harm is, why people self-harm and also alternatives to self-harm to try to reduce or stop the self-harming. After completing this work, young person has not self-harmed for two months which is a significant*

amount of time for her and she is feeling very proud of herself"

Health

Families valued their worker supporting them to be healthier:

Isobel's worker also works with the family around other health issues *"If I was meant to phone up for an appointment somewhere, like an opticians, she'll be on at me, 'make sure you do'...not on my case like that but just making sure I follow things through for my own good"*

Isobel, age 38

During one visit at home, Emma's worker discusses getting Nyah into some activities.

"I mentioned Nyah's speech to her as she wasn't really talking much for a three year old and she got me an assessment...sorted that all out for me. The assessment lady came to Nyah's nursery to see how Nyah was there...things were left that she'd see how she was when she started school but it was reassuring just by mentioning it how quickly it went through the process and got dealt with, that I wasn't going to be left and have struggles further down the line"

Emma, age 33

"I resisted a little bit with her initially, like with food. She said Millie was quite poorly because she wasn't having veg and stuff like that. It was a nightmare making two meals. Millie listened to my workers more than me. I was like, I see other mums giving their kids crap all the time so why can't I, they aren't poorly all the time...but I wasn't doing anything with Millie, just let her play with her toys on her own"

Stacey, age 24

Other quotes from adults where they valued support around their health included:

"Thanks to my worker I have grown in confidence and finally tackled my weight"

"My worker has helped me learn to ride from Loughborough to Shepshed"

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued support around health included:

“My worker helps me make my tummy feel better and we have lots of fun”

“Our worker got me into a paediatrician and helped diagnose what’s wrong with me”

“I like she helps mum with cooking and healthy eating”

“Our worker has helped with healthy eating. She helps us be healthier and gives us more fruit. She helped get mum better as she gets poorly”

“Our worker helped get me a paediatrician appointment”

Workers also identified the importance of supporting wider health in cases of **most significant change** and observations

Helping families to get support from health professionals:

- *“I supported and encouraged the parent to go for blood and urine tests”*
- *“The children’s medical needs are now being met and they are being taken to appointments. Advice is also sought if children have accidents or illness”*
- *“Mum has started to attend some of her health related appointments and check-ups”*
- *“With my support the family are now registered at a doctors and a dentist. The child has accessed a health visitor and is now up to date with immunisation”*
- *“She has joined a weight management group which has helped her to lose weight”*
- *“The referrals for hearing tests for her child is a big improvement to mum”*
- *“Mum is now taking the children independently to health and dental appointments”*
- *“Child’s immunisations are now up to date and gets seen regularly by health professionals as and when appropriate”*

Helping families to have healthier lifestyles:

- *“Young person is eating a balanced diet rather than purchasing pizza most nights”*
- *“Improved health of parents (improved health in general, exercising, stopped smoking, reduced alcohol consumption, reduced drug consumption, drug free)”*
- *“Child’s health improved by routine and diet”*
- *“Child was appropriately dressed for pre-school and did not smell of cigarettes which is an improvement”*
- *“Practical support in encouraging child to eat”*
- *“Child ‘grazed’ to begin with on healthy option food and, after purchasing a table and chairs, mum introduced a ‘sit down’ mealtime once in the day initially and has progressed with this to include breakfast. Child is now mostly eating healthier meals and in a better routine which has resulted in a change in his behaviour and a better mother/son relationship”*

- *“The child’s health has improved by routine and diet”*
- *“Suggestions were given of mixing his milk with water and worries of association with food as a comfort and that this could affect him long term with his weight and general health”*
- *“We sat and talked about foods she would make through the week and swapped some of the microwave dishes for the recipes she had learnt. Mum has successfully had a go at cooking the tuna pasta bake, curry and spaghetti on her own. She was surprised to find that her children liked the curry”*
- *“Increase her weight”*
- *“Child is now eating a healthy diet”*
- *“Washing on a regular basis”*
- *“Weight was now constant”*
- *“Cooking healthy family meals”*
- *“Mum smoked 50 cigarettes a day and has now quit and is accessing support independently through her GP”*
- *“Attending the gym and yoga sessions”*

Supporting families around bedwetting:

- *“The child has reduced his bed wetting by 50%”*
- *“13 year old is no longer bedwetting”*

Supporting families to take responsibility for their own families health:

- *“Taking medication as advised”*
- *“Mum is better at prioritising child’s health and wellbeing”*
- *“Mum is now managing her tablets better”*
- *“He is taking his medication on a regular basis”*
- *“He has regular medication and this has seen a reduction in his challenging behaviours”*

Domestic Abuse

Adults valued their worker supporting them around domestic abuse:

Mandy is welcoming of her workers referral to an outreach domestic abuse worker and finds her *“a lovely lady”*. Mandy’s son is also given some domestic abuse funding following this referral.

Mandy, age 47

“My worker knew there were issues between me and my partner and I think that’s why she stopped around to make sure nothing happened”

Stacey, age 24

Workers also identified the importance of support around domestic abuse in cases of **most significant change** and observations

- *“I showed mum the Freedom programme literature and this created a change in her thinking”*
- *“Support has been given to help mother understand more about the impact of domestic abuse from her ex-partner (children’s father)”*
- *“UAVA referral for ongoing support with court process regarding contact with father”*
- *“Completing work around domestic violence”*
- *“Mum is being given support for a court case for historic abuse”*
- *“Child is less fearful for the safety of herself, her sibling and her mum as they are not in the abusive environment they once were”*
- *“A DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment) assessment has been carried out which shows the child’s father has controlling behaviour. Mum appreciates the support she is getting and it has helped her see how the child’s father’s words and action have an impact on her mental health and confidence. Mum thinks that the Freedom programme will help her and she is hoping she will become more confident”*
- *“The perpetrator has now left the home and is no longer abusing the mother”*
- *“Mother told her partner to leave the home address after completing work around domestic violence”*
- *“Mum shared that she was experiencing emotional abuse by her partner that was impacting on her and her young children. Dad has now left the family home. Mum said this has meant that she is now able to take control of her life, create good routines, implement a healthy diet and not be shouted at or emotionally abused”*
- *“The mother is now more likely free from further emotional and physical harm”*
- *“Parent has recognised that abuse and its affect’s on her and the child (who was always caught up in the incidents)”*
- *“Mum has mentioned that without Early Help support she would never have got her ex-partner to stay away or take notice of his disruptive behaviour. He has got therapy for his anger and has agreed to do the Jenkins Centre Perpetrator programme”*
- *“The family are now following a safety plan due to numerous verbal arguments and are adhering to it. There have been no domestic abuse incidents reported or disclosed, the children are not hearing arguments or being brought into them”*
- *“After completing a DASH”*
- *“The parent and the children are no longer experiencing domestic abuse and the mother is safe from physical and emotional abuse. The children are now safe from emotional abuse”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers identified:

- Workers getting families registered with key services e.g. dentists and GP’s in 4% of cases
- Health services for children and young people (24%)
- Health services for parents (15%)
- Mental health services for parents (15%)
- Families managing their health e.g. being prescribed and taking medication (11%)
- Health diagnosis (8%) – A health diagnosis could also be viewed as an outcome.

Workers also identified the following outcomes for families:

- Improvements to families wellbeing e.g. under less pressure and stress, worry, improved appearance, generally happier (in 39% of cases)
- Improvements to parent’s mental health e.g. more confident, improved self-esteem and levels of anxiety, able to come off anti-depressants (31%)
- Improvements to children and young people’s mental health e.g. more confident, improved self-esteem, empowered, able to attend groups independently, no self-harm, overdoses, closed CAMHs cases and selected mute now talking (15%)
- Improvements to children and young people’s health e.g. improvements to general health, healthy weight, exercising, healthy diet, washing regularly, reducing substance misuse and receiving immunisations (9%)
- Improvements to parent’s health e.g. improved general health, stopping smoking, reduced or ceased substance misuse (4%)

Substance Misuse

Adults valued their worker supporting them around substance misuse:

“It has been an amazing journey. I have been on drugs, kids were in care, complete turnaround with the support of my Early Help workers”

Children and young people also valued support around substance misuse:

“My worker got mum into courses during the day which stopped her feeling lonely and going back to drink. Mum is meeting friends”

“My worker has helped with drugs”

Workers also identified the importance of advice and support around substance misuse in cases of **most significant change**

- *“Mum asked and wanted to attend groups to make her busy so she doesn’t have the pressure of using drugs and spending money which could be spent on her children”*
- *“Due to mum stopping drinking on a daily basis she was a lot more focused on being a parent and listening and wanting to change her behaviour and taking on board support offered on putting boundaries and strategies in place for the children”*
- *“The children have been able to be more open with their parents about dad’s drinking and are more aware and have a better understanding of the impact the drink had on their dad. This has helped the family’s relationship”*
- *“She has reduced her use of cannabis and is considering her alcohol intake and how this impacts on her life”*
- *“Mum has realised from the children’s voices that they are witnessing her drunk and she does not want this to be the case, therefore wanted to reduce the amount of alcohol she consumes”*
- *“Positive definite choice to significantly reduce her drug use”*
- *“Not drunk for over seven weeks”*
- *“Mum has been working on how much alcohol she consumes and not to allow this impacting on getting up in the mornings and her parenting ability”*
- *“Been free from drug use for over four months”*

Helping Families Obtain Items

Families valued their workers helping them obtain practical items:

"Whilst we haven't got them yet, she has helped with charity applications for a cooker and a microwave"

Karl and Joanne acknowledge the support they had around toys for the children at Christmas, *"there were quite a few board games which were nice, something extra for them all"*

Whilst Joanne felt that the toys they got for James were more appropriate for their younger son Ethan, *"Nyah loved hers...nothings been thrown away, we've kept the sledges in the cupboard so whilst it didn't snow we're prepared when it does"*

Joanne, age 30

Jessica's worker puts in a referral to Charity Link for a bed to support Jessica with her Cerebral Palsy. She also requests a halogen cooker as due to Jessica's sight is unable to see if she has left it on and it is dangerous.

Jessica's worker puts in a request to the Toy Appeal for Euan's Christmas presents.

Jessica, age 23

Stacey recalls being helped *"lots"* by her worker. *"I can't really remember but she did lots for me to be fair and she was always there when I needed her. She got me safety gates and things like that"*

Stacey, age 24

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued support around getting items included:

"Our worker helped with things with my disability like bendy pens, fidget case"

"Our worker helped my sister into the gym with membership and helped my sister and brother do the shopping"

"My behaviour got worse because my i-pod died. My worker got me an i-pad with stories and games which helps with my behaviour. I like it. The music and stories help me with my behaviour and being more calm. I get angry and it helps my whole family"

"Our worker helps us sort out our house. We are getting a new kitchen"

"Our worker helped mummy get a new washing machine and fridge freezer"

"I love my worker. She brings me nice things like sparkly shoes and food. I like it when they talk about grown up stuff and my worker always smiles at me and then asks about how I

want stuff to be like”

“Our worker bought us nice presents at Christmas”

“When she came to our school she brought really nice colouring sheets. She went shopping with me and got us sweets”

“Got me swimming lessons and a gym membership”

Workers also identified the importance of access to free and subsidised items to support families in cases of **most significant change** and observations

- *“I applied to the Buttle Trust and sourced a cooker for mum”*
- *“Practical assistance with food parcels to help when son was staying”*
- *“The beds will make such a difference as mum can arrange the girls bedroom to allow them to all sleep together and she will only have her son in her room which should allow them all to get a better night’s sleep”*
- *“The worker referred to the toy library – this enables the child to be provided with appropriate activities for his development”*
- *“Referrals to charities were accepted with essential kitchen appliances and carpets which have supported them moving in”*
- *“Gym voucher gained through local sports centre”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers identified workers accessing practical support for resources as key to change taking place in families in 6% of cases.

Reassurance, Praise, Encouragement and Seeing Change Happen

Children, young people and adults valued the reassurance, praise and encouragement their workers gave them to do things for themselves. The use of tools like Family Star Plus⁵ and reward charts helped families see their progress.

“I did the star chart three weeks ago and I started on zeros and ones. I’m now up to fives’, sixes and sevens. It’s not until you see the star chart that you think, oh my god, wow...it helps to see where I’ve come to today. There’s still bits and bobs to be done but mainly with me and dealing with my ghosts. I’m not exaggerating, without my worker I wouldn’t be here, she’s one hell of a lady, I’ve rang her some mornings in hysterics...”

“My worker supported me emotionally throughout the whole court process”

Mandy, age 47

Claire feels her worker “worked so hard...I can’t fault her for encouragement...you’ve got to be open to suggestions...if you ask for help there’s no point not listening...all the stuff she said made sense...”

Claire, age 43

⁵ Burns, S. & MacKeith, J. (2013) The Family Star Plus User Guide and The Family Star Plus: Organisation Guide, Brighton: Triangle Consulting. Also see APPENDIX 1A – FAMILY STAR for further details

"My worker always gave me praise, every time I spoke to her...she just made me see things from a different perspective"

Kristy, age 30

Isobel felt her worker *"gave me light at the end of the tunnel, that I wasn't on my own...she put me at ease. Simple things like spurring me on, telling me to phone up and get the doctor's appointments...little by little...she subconsciously made me think she was helping but I was doing things on my own...make sure you go to the doctors, get your prescription"*

On the walk back from school after both helping at the school with some Easter bonnet making, Isobel's worker tells Isobel her mood has lifted 100% and Isobel says this type of praise makes her feel better, particularly when she feels she has sorted things for herself.

Isobel, age 38

Stacey finds both her workers helped her with Millie. *"She had lots of issues with food; she was a fussy eater and would eat very little, doesn't like meat and will only have sausages. They helped me progress that, helped her eat more and got her to try different varieties of food...chicken...encouraged me a lot with that"*

Stacey feels *"I wouldn't be where I am without my worker...it helps that she tells me how strong I am, how much I've been through and how well I've done"*

Stacey, age 24

Sofia feels that the main thing her worker did for her was to encourage her to go out to groups. *"You know you're not alone, there's always people you can talk to. It's always good to have that...I wouldn't have gone out as much without encouragement...everything has got better"*

Sofia, age 28

Katrina also found it helpful that her worker looked at the children and interacted with them.

"...tell me they were perfectly fine, perfectly healthy, that I was doing a good job...often visit in the mornings and tell me I'd got them dressed, had given them breakfast, that I was doing ok...you need that encouragement...I don't think mum's get much encouragement whether they are ill or not so it's good to hear reassurance"

Katrina, age 30

"She did reassure me that my parenting was good, that I was doing what I needed to do and the kids were happy and that reassurance was helpful to me and she signed me off...(the next worker) "said my parenting was fine, everything I was doing was fine, that I was doing really well for someone who has two children with completely different disabilities"

Natalie, age 31

Other quotes from adults where they valued praise, reassurance, encouragement and seeing change happen included:

“My worker was a very positive and supportive worker, always giving me encouragement when needed. The Early Help service gave me the confidence to move forward in life...keep funding money to support the service”

“Constant feedback”

“I felt my worker reassures me straightaway when we meet”

“Very encouraging and helpful. Thank you for everything!”

“I’d like to thank my worker for all the support and help she has given my family and I, it means a lot and also being referred to become a mentor for Early Help”

“My worker is supportive. Makes me feel like I’m doing ok as a parent”

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued praise, encouragement, reassurance and seeing change happen included:

“My worker encourages me to face a lot of things”

“A sleeping chart helped. A reward at the end”

“Our worker is nice, she’s brought praise cards (big smile)”

Workers also identified the importance of reassurance, praise, encouragement and seeing change happen in cases of **most significant change**

Reassurance, praise and encouragement:

- *“Dad was encouraged to access support from the Community Mental Health team and has been able to explore his traumatic childhood and reflect on his behaviours which implemented change within him”*
- *“Encouraging mum to attend appointments”*
- *“Mum needed lots of encouragement and praise as she often questioned if she was doing anything ‘right’” “Encouraging the parent to book appointments with the Citizen’s Advice Bureau for debt”*
- *“Parents said the following week that when they went back to the group they were able to share what took place at their family meeting. This success was acknowledged and praised by group facilitators”*
- *“A parent quote: Getting us to go to that group. You didn’t push us or make us do it. It was good and I really like it”*
- *“Mother was encouraged to see her GP”*
- *“Support to inform the parents of the risks in the environment and to demonstrate an appropriate level of clean and safe environment were both encouraged and*

monitored through the child in need plan”

- *“I needed to encourage mother in recognising how her actions were impacting and give her positive encouragement to see that things would improve when she ‘stepped up’ and made good choices”*
- *“I also encouraged and supported the family to share their voice with each other and professionals to assist them to meet their needs”*
- *“Helping mum consider and plan positive interactions between her and her son, being positive and encouraging mum to keep trying and helping her find the strength to carry on and have hope for a more positive future”*

Seeing change happen:

- *“Mum has recognised the change herself and she seems to be more motivated in the last few months”*
- *“The change is ongoing but because the grandparent has seen the change in this child she is then invested in trying with a younger child who is exhibiting the same behaviour”*
- *“For mum to see the results of the change”*
- *“Mum is now able to see that she can effectively parent her daughter”*
- *“Mum can see and acknowledge that change has been made”*
- *“Mum said that she has been shocked by how quickly the behaviours have changed and the positive impact this has had on the family”*
- *“It also shows an improvement in confidence when you point out to her how she has changed over the past few months and how she has managed to turn things round for the better again”*
- *“Parent is able to comment on positive changes she has experienced”*
- *“She needed to be consistent and to see things were changing”*
- *“He saw how the reduction of the dummy was making an impact which then gave her the confidence to get rid of it completely”*
- *“Mum is starting to see the bond between herself and her daughter grow”*
- *“This has been directly discussed with parents so they can see the impact the change is having on them as a family”*
- *“Mum can see the benefits and the changes she has already made and she is eager to continue on this path”*
- *“Mum’s daughter has arranged to return to her own work experience placement in a nursery as she has seen the benefits on her mum”*
- *“Her mum and partner have seen consistent improvement to feel confident that she is able to stay with them over Christmas”*
- *“The ability to see that they can make the changes but had to act upon them in order to be able to see any change”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified:

- Workers providing emotional support by giving encouragement, praise and reassurance as key to change taking place for families in 30% of cases
- Families seeing positive change (23%)
- Family, wider friends and community support (19%)

More Information

For more details of family, friends and community support, see **REPORT 4 – MULTI-AGENCY AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS**

Flexibility

Throughout this report we have seen examples of where workers were flexible with approaches to meet families' needs. Below are some further examples, often relating to out of hours support.

Katrina feels her worker was always very flexible. *"I had her work number...she said I could ring if I couldn't come to anything although I always did"*

Katrina, age 30

"She did all the reward charts too which are brilliant. She comes out at night to do it...I can ring that woman day and night her phone is always on"

Other examples of where Mandy feels her worker goes "above and beyond" are taking May to the Feeling Safe group on the play bus, "where she sat and worked in her car for an hour and a half whilst she waited for May...by rights I should be taking May but it gave me and James time together, we took him out...she gives us time alone with May too"

Mandy, age 47

"She also said I could drop call if I only had a bit of credit and she'd ring me back which was helpful as I didn't always have money for the phone. It helped me as I didn't feel like I was always on my own, that there was someone there"

Emma, age 33

Karl has only contacted their worker once directly. This was in relation to the housing move forms. He contacted her to say they weren't going to be in so they met at the council office to pick them up.

Karl, age 30

Other quotes from adults where they valued the flexible support included:

“I really like how my worker can be contacted whenever I need her”

“Always there for me and support at anytime”

“My worker is very friendly and helpful and I’m able to ring her when I need to”

“I have liked the open minded approach to helping families; different strategies have been put into practice. It’s not just about talking it through. I am positive about our future”

“I liked that it was always possible to contact my worker via phone”

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued the flexible support included:

“She is always there if there is something wrong and always sorts something out”

“I like that I can text – you know you can if you want”

“Anytime I want to talk about anything I can talk to my worker”

Workers also identified the importance of flexibility in cases of **most significant change**

- *“To be flexible with appointments that worked around mums working hours etc.”*
- *“Targeting days to work with the parent when her health was good”*
- *“Having dad involved in the family sessions by doing 5:30 visits”*
- *“Knew that I would go in the evening”*
- *“Willing to work out of hours and in a flexible way with her”*
- *“The work can be flexible around her availability and the children”*
- *“Accepting and allowing for cultural norms within the family and building them into any plans and expectations I had for the family”*
- *“Assessing when the family could do things for themselves within minimal support”*
- *“Imaginative in my approach to address issues that were creating barriers to achieving the outcomes”*
- *“Different approaches at different times to gain the best outcomes”*
- *“Being flexible in our outcomes was important with this family due to the main concerns being mum’s mental health”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified that workers need to be flexible, supporting during unsociable hours, home visits etc. as a key activity/approach leading to change for families in 7% of cases. This flexibility also enabled behaviours to be observed for example at morning and bedtime routines.

Persistence and Challenge

Families valued their workers persistence and challenge, to other agencies and also within their own families.

Claire feels her worker was very "straight with Poppy at times...if there's one thing she's definitely done its help me sort out her school attendance. She told her some home truths that I could end up in prison and Poppy listened especially at a meeting at the school with the attendance officer present"

"Our worker also warned Poppy that if her behaviour continued social services might get involved and take her off me...to protect me...because it's not on"

"It was difficult because she was doing well at school and was only really aggressive at home...we kept doing things that weren't working...kept thinking one of these ideas is going to work, something has to work but it was helpful to have someone to talk to, didn't feel as on my own as I had felt"

Claire, age 43

Isobel feels she is initially "guarded" with her worker but also feels her worker is "very honest from the outset...tells me she can help me with certain things but there are certain things only I could help myself with"

Isobel feels her worker doesn't try to "sugar coat things...a few times she has told me if this goes to social care I can't come up with anything as I'm trying to help and tells me all the help I've been given...she praised me but if she wasn't happy with me would tell me too"

Isobel feels she still has "crappy days...but they are fewer and less in between...although I have my worker to support me, she can't do everything for me but I do still have days where I bury my head in the sand and she has to track me down...days where I don't want to talk about anything but she doesn't leave me be and whilst she might leave me for a day or so I know the next day I see her she won't be happy"

Isobel, age 38

Stacey is told that her worker is poorly, that she'd had time off and "I was given a new worker...looking back I think it was because I wasn't making any progress...wasn't going anywhere...she wasn't like a worker, my worker, if you know what I mean"

After a while, Stacey feels that her new worker "has done loads for me. She takes me to groups and courses...pushed me to get out and that's what I needed...gave me the kick up the backside that my other worker didn't"

"My worker digs at me for Millie having a routine and we're gradually getting there"

Stacey, age 24

Other quotes from adults where they valued persistence and challenge included:

“Always follows through what is said”

“They are straight to the point and find a way to help no matter and they always listen to what you have to say”

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued persistence and challenge included:

“My worker is helpful. He tells you how it is. He wouldn’t lie to you, that’s important”

“He comes to see me at home and talks about empathy and respect, been really useful and he’s given a lot of guidance and information to mum”

“I didn’t like the changes at first, thought he was interfering. He was patient and I got to know him. He found out what my brother likes and talked to him about it. At first I thought he was Satan, now I don’t”

“I like that she comes to see me at school to see if I am behaving”

“She invites us places like the zoo and talks about school and gives me ideas. She asks how I’m doing. She says things like get to bed early on school nights”

“Our worker is always open and honest, won’t sugar coat it”

Workers also identified the importance of persistence and challenge in cases of **most significant change**

Challenge and persistence with families:

- *“Had to persevere with them both as sometimes they would drift back into their old ways and would need reminding about what needed to change”*
- *“Motivating the family to be persistent and try/implement strategies”*
- *“To remain very calm with the family and challenge them about their behaviours”*
- *“Challenging was another factor that was very important to move this family forward due to dad having all the control and mum not acknowledging the impact the relationship had on her and the children”*
- *“This family has definitely benefitted from me sharing observations, particularly around how behaviour was being managed to stimulate discussion around more positive strategies to use”*
- *“The change did take some time to achieve, not just six weeks, as perseverance with the family was critical”*
- *“By remaining persistent”*
- *“Persevering with them”*
- *“Ongoing persistence and support from worker as mum disengaged quite considerably when things weren’t going well”*

- *“Perseverance and patience and reminding mum of the changes she has already put in place to get to the point where she could consider work”*
- *“I was able to challenge her views on some areas to help her to see alternative ways of doing things”*
- *“Being persistent”*
- *“Honesty with challenging her behaviours”*
- *“To reinforce to the family the importance of schooling and health care”*
- *“Information on what might happen if things do not change”*
- *“Never giving up when sometimes change wasn’t happening”*
- *“A good example that shows not giving up”*
- *“The worker had to think of different techniques in order to motivate the person to make changes”*
- *“Persevering with the child”*
- *“Persistence from the youth worker as initially the family were hesitant to engage”*
- *“Staff patience and persistence”*
- *“Committed and persistent approach”*
- *“Being proactive and persistent”*
- *“Challenging her thoughts to help her leave the home and become less isolated”*
- *“I have constantly challenged these beliefs”*
- *“Pushing to extend comfort zones”*
- *“I have had to challenge mum a lot and has been difficult but seems to be working”*

Challenge and persistence with multi-agencies:

- *“When the school got on-board and accepted the diagnosis of autism, it allowed Early Help and the family to challenge some of the decisions made by school, for example the active school prosecution proceedings”*
- *“Challenge understanding of ‘family story’”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified workers persistence which includes trying out different approaches (in 13% of cases) and workers challenging families in 4% of cases

Helping Families Keep Safe and Averting Social Care Involvement

Families valued their workers supporting them to keep safe (other than around domestic abuse and mental health above) and averting social care involvement:

Mandy finds it helpful that when her husband had called social care that they realised she had an Early Help worker (meaning social services didn't come out and her worker spoke directly to her about the issue)

Mandy, age 47

“I can't remember how social services got involved...it might have been my Children's Centre worker because of his violence before, which she'd seen”

Stacey, age 24

Karl feels having their worker around with regards 'neighbourhood issues' stops social care involvement, *"any complaints that would normally go to social services go to her first which is helpful...an example of this is the last time she came they'd had a complaint that we'd had friends round...it's useful in that respect having her there...it's not that I want to keep her...it's just at the moment...keep her for people complaining to social services...she knows us to an extent and can say yes and no and can come round and do, whereas if she's not involved we're in the system again and it goes round and round"*

Joanne agrees, *"sometimes they are pathetic complaints like our children aren't normal...because our kids don't play out the front (unless one of us is out there), because they don't go smashing things...they don't carry knives...they aren't normal...don't fit in round here which is why they've been deemed not normal"*

Karl adds, *"If all the complaints went to the right people there would be a lot of people going on and what's this and what's that and that would be more stressful. At least it's one point and our worker knows that most of the complaints coming in are just pointless and she'll come and say, 'I've got to follow this up with you"*

Karl, age 37

Sofia wants her ex-partner to take her to court around contact with Sebastian. *"I know for a fact he'll have to see me at the Children's Centre because it's a contact centre and that will put my mind at rest. I know the staff that work there. I know he'd be safe but I also know he won't do that"*

Sofia, age 28

Natalie is passed straight to Early Help which she finds less stressful than having to speak to social services again

Natalie, age 31

Other quotes from adults where they valued their families being supported to keep safe included:

"Our worker has helped my children learn about safety within the internet"

"Today I have found the confidence to complete Claire's law and tell my worker the truth about my (unborn) baby's daddy. I need to make sure that I talk to my family and friends to help me keep us safe and to stop me from feeling low. Signing a safety plan has made me feel safer and confident"

Other quotes from children and young people where they valued their families being supported to keep safe or averting social care involvement included:

“I like that our worker stops us getting a social worker”

“Our worker has helped get us to the group, feeling safe and the worker at the group has helped. Helped us move house away from mum’s ex-boyfriend”

Workers also identified the importance of helping to keep families safe and averting social care and other services in cases of **most significant change** and observations

Neglect/social care:

- *“I am pleased the young person has good outcomes and is no longer being subject to physical harm and neglect. She now feels that she belongs somewhere rather than feeling that her mum and dad do not want her and she is a burden”*
- *“Mum is willing to accept help from First Response to support her in keeping the children safe”*
- *“Mum’s confidence and anxiety levels have improved immensely. Mum and dad have proved that they are capable of looking after the children and they are no longer on a child in need plan”*
- *“Social care are talking of stepping down or closing due to the progress mum has made”*
- *“Mum had changed her behaviour significantly and her daughter was back in her care”*
- *“Mum has been able to demonstrate to social care and health that she is stable and able to meet her child’s needs”*

Safety plans and general safety:

- *“It was important to organise a signs of safety meeting so that all professionals could offer support or advice through their own expertise”*
- *“Overall supervision of the children improved and parents awareness of safety increased there were no other accidents or serious incidents”*
- *“For the family to come together in a signs of safety meeting and listen to each other and other agencies around how the adult’s behaviour was having such a negative impact on the children”*
- *“Signs of safety meetings have helped mum to feel supported”*
- *“They were still making choices that put the child at risk however the safety plan meant that risk was reduced and I could refer to the incident and choices she made when assessing child safety on the Family Star⁶ with them”*
- *“Strategies to ensure the family’s safety”*
- *“Mum has abided by her agreement and safety plan which only allows her to leave*

⁶ Burns, S. & MacKeith, J. (2013) The Family Star Plus User Guide and The Family Star Plus: Organisation Guide, Brighton: Triangle Consulting

the children with family. This is a huge development”

- *“Signs of safety process”*
- *“Making a safety plan”*
- *“All appropriate services that supported the family were contacted to keep the children safe*
- *“Regular signs of safety meetings”*
- *“Child is safe from harm and emotional abuse”*

E-safety:

- *“Mum now knows the importance of keeping a check on what is happening on the internet and social media. The young person now understands the importance of privacy settings and how to keep herself safe”*

Safety at home:

- *“A safe, hygienic environment to eat, sleep, play and do homework in”*
- *“Mother is mainly maintaining conditions, making safe pace for her daughter to play and move around. The child would say they have more space to move about and play, helping them to develop and learn”*
- *“The children are safe from harm when they are with their dad. They have a clean and flea clear home to visit and spend time with their dad”*
- *“Child is now safer when in mothers care. There is an alarm system that can be used to monitor the mother’s health. Father is to contact mother regularly during the day. If mother cannot be contacted the alarm can be raised, the alarm system will turn into a speaker system so a worker can try to contact mother also. Parents now feel more confident that there is a plan in place should mother have seizure”*
- *“Her older brother was also trying to discipline her which resulted in him physically harming her and the police being involved. The situation has now settled down enough for me to close the case. His sister is no longer afraid to be home alone with him”*
- *“The hitting with the wooden spoon stopped immediately, this made the children feel safer at home”*

Road safety:

- *“The child was unsafe near roads as she would run away from mum during the walk home from school. The worker created a reward chart for her which is working and she now walks home safely”*
- *“With support by setting the rules/consequences/rewards out before leaving the family home using distraction methods during the walk to school, the child no longer runs away or runs out onto the road. Mum is able to use strategies learnt to provide positive distractions for her child”*

Anti-social behaviour/assault:

- *“Family no longer engaging in anti-social behaviour”*
- *“Since involvement began there have been no further incidents of the mother’s son assaulting him and the police having to be called”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified:

- Safety activities e.g. child protection plans, signs of safety meetings, DASH and safety plans as key to change taking place for families in 16% of cases
- Social care as a key enabler of change (in 11% of cases)

Workers also identified families were significantly safer as an outcome in 23% of cases e.g. no longer exposed to neglect, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse, crime and police call outs

More Information

For more details of other multi-agency support to families in keeping them safe, see **REPORT 4 – MULTI-AGENCY WORKING AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS**

Sanctions, Including the Removing or Reducing Sanctions

Families spoke about being supported to have sanctions removed or sanctions reduced which had helped them

More Information

Further details of sanctions supporting families see **REPORT 4 – MULTI-AGENCY WORKING AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS**

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers identified sanctions and orders as a key enabler of change for families in 10% of cases.

Other

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified the following activities and approaches as key to change:

- Workers providing practical support around paperwork, applications and processes e.g. court orders, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), education, school and pre-school enrolment, benefits, accessing FEEE2/3 and adult learning (in 16% of cases)
- Workers providing other practical support e.g. helping to clean the house, providing transport to groups and other ideas which were simple and easy to achieve (11%)
- Good timing/speed of intervention (4%)

Workers also identified the following as key enablers of change:

- Families want change, accept responsibility, support and take advice (in 65% of cases)
- Positive parent qualities e.g. motivation, attitude, confidence, proactivity, persistence, resilience and parents worry about their children (25%)
- Families managing their own health (11%)
- Consistency of message e.g. between workers and family/friends or worker and other practitioners (5%)
- An overall culture where families feel less threatened by authority, don't feel judged and feel supported (3%)

Workers also identified the following outcomes:

- An improved future outlook for families e.g. families able to talk positively about the future, aspirations, making positive life choices and having basic essentials (in 13% of cases)
- Families being less isolated e.g. participating in social activities, able to leave the house (13%)
- Improved child development e.g. speech development, learning new things, improved school readiness (5%)
- Services being averted (resulting in cost savings in the system), in particular in relation to the health service, social care and the police (4%)

How Families Feel About Closure

Of the closed families interviewed, some were fully accepting of closure as they felt they felt self-sufficient. Other's felt that some of their issues were still unresolved.

Self Sufficient

Jessica is happy that the case with her worker has now closed. She feels it is a good thing as things have got better.

Jessica, age 23

Emma loves living in the area. She feels more confident having lived there for a few years and from the help she'd had from her worker. Emma would now feel confident to go to the Children's Centre on her own if she felt she needed to.

Emma, age 33

"She's a busy lady...I don't want to waste her time when I can manage myself"

Katrina, age 30

Suzanne was "ok" with her case first being closed. *"They all felt Seb's anxiety with school has changed"* (when he moved from primary to secondary school)

Seb starts to tell Suzanne he is ill. At this time however, Suzanne feels things are calmer, that it was right to be closed to Early Help and CAMHS, that Seb was mostly going to school and things were easier at home with her mum in supported living.

Suzanne, age 42

Sofia has no problems with her case being closed. *"From seeing my worker every week, I was seeing her every other week and so forth...but like she said to me there wasn't much more she could do...everything else was fine. I didn't feel it would make much difference when I was closed"*

Sofia doesn't feel as if she needs one-to-one support at the moment.

"Everything is levelled. We need to get to more groups. We've been referred to more groups, one at the church and I'm really looking forward to it. Sometimes we don't do much at them but it's still nice"

Sofia, age 28

Whilst an open case, Karl feels that their worker isn't making a 'big' difference, *"most of the stuff with the house we've done ourselves with no input from Early Help or anyone else"*

Karl, age 37

Kristy finds she needs less support from her worker as time goes on. *"At first she did meetings but she knows I could do it myself. She didn't want me to need her. Sometimes she'd ask if I wanted her to come with me"*

Kristy's worker stays involved with Kristy for just over a year. *"When I knew she was going to stop working with me I said I was going to miss her. I got a bit emotional, but I felt good that she wasn't working with me anymore. I'd achieved that"*

"My worker was really good. There wasn't anything I didn't like. I miss her sometimes but I'm not arguing anymore, she told me if she comes again, the social will be involved and I can't...I'm not risking it. No one wants it, a worker sniffing round. You've always got someone in your house and you don't need that"

"I'm not allowed to speak with her now but I do have a school worker who I can go to, she can now help me with things like forms and that...oh and before I was closed I was referred to the GREAT project...with the GREAT project I'll get out more and meet new friends "

"Now that I haven't got my worker I've got to remember what she said to me. I've got to behave. I don't want her around again. Not being nasty to her but you have to grow up don't you"

Kristy, age 30

Issues Remain Unresolved

Some families were accepting of their case being closed to Early Help services but felt that some of their issues still remained unresolved.

Claire knew the support from her worker was coming to a natural conclusion because *"there was nothing else she could do"*

Claire, age 43

Michelle is signed off from Early Help in March and feels it's another service with a cut-off point.

"I'm back to my own now but I know I'm in the system and can go to support days and groups just not one to one support". Michelle feels that she needs help but knows that she doesn't qualify and that others needed it more

Michelle says that all government policies talk about giving children and parents a voice yet feels she and her children haven't been given a voice, *"he isn't having a bad day, he isn't being bullied, people undermine and haven't got time, resources or skills to listen to what the real problem is"*

Michelle, age 53

Following diagnosis Seb is put on medication. Suzanne is told that her worker will support her on the steps forward for Seb being on medication and his education.

Later her worker closes Suzanne's case. Suzanne doesn't agree and asks to speak to his manager. The manager is due to attend a meeting with school, First Class Solutions and the mental health worker but doesn't attend. The case is closed and Suzanne feels *"let down...that the rug has been pulled from under her"*

Later Suzanne is told she can be referred back to Early Help but is unsure what they can offer. She understands children's services are under pressure but wants the right service and the best for Seb and will fight for it.

Suzanne, age 42

Workers also identified the importance of having support after their cases had closed in cases of **most significant change**

- *"When asked about the support she has received she was very positive and grateful for the input she had had. She was also keen to continue with support from other services once my involvement had ended"*

More Information

For further details of where families valued support from other agencies after their cases closed see

REPORT 4 – MULTI-AGENCY WORKING AND OTHER ASSET BASED STRENGTHS

Not Wanting/Ready for Support to End

Some families who were still open weren't ready to be closed, didn't want their worker to leave, or said they would be sad when their case closed.

Stacey feels "I've come so far but I'm not out of it yet, I'm not ready to be closed"

Stacey, age 24

Mandy feels since the court case things have been really difficult with the children, "May is close to exclusion again, she's hit a teacher... James is struggling emotionally... with the reward charts within two weeks they should be doing it but since we stopped them their behaviour has dropped so our worker is going to do some more"

Mandy, age 47

"I wasn't ready because I was scared as soon as I got signed off I'd be reported again. I thought the school would but [my worker] was like, no they won't, but if you do we'll have a close look at it"

Natalie, age 31

At the moment, Isobel and her worker talk at least three times a week, "if it's less than that it's because I'm avoiding her...in the early days this was four to five times a week, sometimes pre-arranged and sometimes she would just turn up...I felt she was on my case 24/7...but now I know it was what I needed...in the beginning I wasn't very compliant"

Isobel, age 38

Other quotes from children and young people where they felt they weren't ready for their case to be closed included:

"Sort of feels better since we've had our worker but there's still a lot of problems in our family"

"I want our worker to stay longer. It worried me that she might go. I'm worried about mum if she stops working with us"

"I am sad because our worker doesn't work with us anymore"

Having Support There When Cases Were Closed (Stepped Down)

Adult's in particular valued knowing support was there or would be there when their cases were closed:

"I had a bit of a rough patch a while ago and rang to ask about groups and she went me all the information and said which ones would be good for me to go to"

Katrina, age 30 (closed case)

"My worker told me Early Help were there if things got really bad and it helped knowing they're just round the road if things get so unbearable...that I can go and speak to someone...someone before the police and social services"

Claire, age 43 (closed case)

Michelle is signed off from Early Help in March and feels it's another service with a cut-off point. "I'm back to my own now but I know I'm in the system and can go to support days and groups just not one to one support"

Michelle, age 53 (closed case)

Emma's worker stops visiting her "She always said if I ever needed anything it didn't matter how old my children were and if there were any worries to ring up or go to the Children's Centre and if anything came up I would, it really helped...I might say something like, I'm used to speaking with my worker and that she said I could ring her with anything, maybe you could help and hopefully they'd be really nice on the other end of the phone...I'm more confident now"

Emma, age 33 (closed case)

"My worker said if I ever needed to talk I could pop in the centre, call or message. Because I see my worker at the Children's Centre through the other groups it wasn't so bad...I knew people who worked in two Children's Centres and it's nice to go somewhere like there, with people I know, people Sebastian knows"

"I did contact my worker for help with housing after I closed and if I was going to the shops and having a bad day I'd pop in. I needed it and it really helped. It was nice then and it is still now to be honest. I'd chit chat away and I still come to two groups a week"

Sofia, age 28 (closed case)

Jessica knows Early Help are always available at the end of a phone if she needs them and "that helps"

Jessica, age 23 (closed case)

Eight months after the CAMHS referral Natalie gets an appointment for Luke.

"I didn't have anyone else to support me on the professional side and although I'd be closed for months and my worker had offered to come with me I just went on my own"

Natalie, age 31 (closed case)

Other quotes from adults who valued support being available after their case closed included:

“I still want to attend groups when my worker leaves us as they really help with my mental health”

“She is an amazing worker and we miss her. She has given our family lots of support and I know she is only a phone call away”

Other quotes from children and young people who valued support being available after their case closed included:

“Our family were already in contact with SENDIASS. This was supported by our worker even though (our) case was closed”

Workers also identified the importance of having support after their cases had closed in cases of **most significant change**

- *“When asked about the support she has received she was very positive and grateful for the input she had had. She was also keen to continue with support from other services once my involvement had ended”*
- *“I anticipate that the family will sustain and improve on changes as they will continue to access support through Children’s Centre groups and courses”*

Workers also identified the importance of continued support before closing cases in cases of **most significant change**

- *“Monitoring and continued support is necessary to ensure the change is sustained”*
- *“It has been identified that further work needs to be done with the family members to continue with the improvement in their relationship”*

The 227 **Most Significant Change** cases submitted by workers also identified continued support until change was embedded which included access to groups and support if required in 9% of cases

What could be Different

Whilst not frequently stated, there were occasions where families cited things that they felt could be different about the support from the Early Help service.

Earlier Support

Whilst the majority of journey map cases illustrate that support (in the system) could have been provided much earlier to families, some parents specifically said they could have had earlier support from Early Help services.

"Parenting classes...but as a parent you need to be consistent with discipline and I found it very hard to be consistent. Poppy didn't play by the rules and every time I implemented things she'd push against it and I'd be in the firing line even more and it would have drained me completely...when you have someone charging at you it's very difficult to keep up that consistency. Poppy knows if her mouth doesn't succeed fists will get her what she wants...since her dad's gone she's learnt how to rule the roost"

"...and while it was interesting listening to other parents, I think I scared most of the parents... they thought oh my god if we don't sort this out we'll end up like her...it should have been addressed a lot earlier...if I'd had support when Poppy first started going off the rails. I may well have got a bit further if she'd been a bit younger"

Claire wishes she'd had the opportunity to have a support worker when she was Poppy's age but she also knows her mum wouldn't have asked for the help and her dad wouldn't have accepted it.

Claire, age 43

Social care refer Afia to Early Help but she does not get help immediately.

Afia, age 40

Stacey's children's centre worker starts the process of transferring Stacey to another worker as she is in a different locality. *"I remember the last visit from her so well as the next day I had a mental breakdown..."*

Stacey said at the time her Children's Centre worker was in touch by phone and thinks *"she must have been aware...but I don't think anyone realised how bad I was at the time"*

Stacey, age 24

Other quotes from adults in relation to being provided with Early Help support sooner included:

"As my worker was brief, the handover has been quite slow and I haven't seen our intensive worker yet"

Groups, Courses and Activities

There were a range of comments received in relation to group's courses and activities.

Suzanne doesn't find (parenting classes) helpful as she feels they are for "younger, more naïve, less assertive parents"

Suzanne, age 42

Michelle meets her worker at the Solihull parenting course. Michelle feels she doesn't need that particular type of support but goes along with everything. I wanted to "give it a whirl, wanted to try things...was so relieved I was finally going to have someone to help and support and was very accepting of that"

The first time Michelle goes to the Solihull group she is "ignored nearly the whole time because the woman running it thought I was working for them, thought I was part of another Early Help team because I was joining in, praising people around the room. She didn't take my name"

Whilst Michelle attends the groups advised by her worker she feels she doesn't really "fit" as the groups are about social and emotional issues and that is not the support she feels she and her family needs.

Michelle, age 53

Claire finds the "Worth It" group particularly helpful. "I kept asking to have it back...it started to help me realise I have value, made me believe in myself a little bit more but the course seemed too short, I needed to do it again...I was willing to travel to get to another one but I didn't get any feedback to that...that was frustrating"

Claire feels if anything there should be extra groups to support mental health, "somewhere where people can get together and talk about things if they are having a bad day and a bit of someone on board who understands mental health in a professional capacity and can advise the workers going out to families. Somewhere the support workers can ask for advice with such and such situation...mental and emotional health...because if you get that right then the rest falls into place anyway"

Claire, age 43

Sofia finds she doesn't like playgroups as much and prefers smaller groups.

"They are so busy but we like routine"

I'm hoping they will do a wellbeing group at the Children's Centre. They are talking about knitting and I'd really like to learn how to knit"

Sofia, age 28

Natalie has anxiety and didn't like being pushed onto groups.

"She was a bit pushy with that and I don't like that sort of thing...I don't think I told her about my anxiety at first but she was aware of it towards the end and she'd still mention it and said it would be really good to meet other parents and share experiences"

Natalie, age 31

"My worker told me about activities at the Children's Centre but we didn't do much there because the activities were when my daughters were starting nursery. I wouldn't have minded going to the group activities but I needed them in nursery and they were on the same days so we missed out...didn't have a choice"

With Molly and Nyah at school, Emma feels she can't attend any activities with Sophia at the Children's Centre.

"The time they finished was at 3 or 3.15 and I had to get to school for 3.15 and with the school being quite far away I couldn't be in two places. If there had been a morning one about 9.30 that would have been better"

Emma, age 30

Katrina was sad to hear that the post-natal group was being cut because of funding.

"I know not many people went so I can see why it might be the thing to go but it seems a shame to me as it was the group I was most comfortable"

Katrina, age 30

Joanne feels her worker is pushy trying to get her onto parenting courses, *"She knows I've got anxiety so me even attempting to go to a group is a big step but she keeps trying and I feel like I'm getting pushed into going to one which causes me more stress"*

Joanne also feels that some things her worker has said she would help with don't come to anything. *"She said she'd get the other children into football clubs and stuff because the kids asked for it but nothing came of it and I found things myself"*

"She brought Wildcard passes round (district council discount on holiday activities), but they were two days before the holidays and I was like...it takes 2-3 weeks to get them through so I couldn't do anything with them, half term was over"

Joanne, age 30. Karl, age 37

My worker gave us free swimming vouchers but I wouldn't have taken the kids because Luke *"doesn't really like that sort of thing"*.

"I don't know how they could put that many kids with that many problems in one room and expect that to work. It was a drop in group for two hours, once a month and there were different workers there...I did try it a couple of times, gave it a go but there were a couple of rowdy kids there and Luke was sensitive to noise, it didn't work and put him off...if you're

going to run groups like that you need to look at the families and what the children's needs are...some are loud, some don't like loud...the radio was blasting...it was a bit like 'whoa' for me too"

Natalie, age 31

Other quotes from children and young people in relation to groups, courses and activities included:

"I feel my worker wants to help. We've talked about swimming but that's not happened yet. Apart from swimming not being sorted, she is good"

"Family therapy was kind of useful. Didn't get one to one"

Understanding Around Health and Mental Health Issues

Parents felt there wasn't enough understanding of mental health in the Early Help service.

Suzanne feels that the Early Help worker was brought in on the wrong brief of behavioural problems and whilst she appreciates he was brought in before the formal diagnosis and did lots of good things such as helping her access home education he wasn't aware of the background, wasn't mental health trained, that Seb needed more specialist support.

Whilst supported well by her first Early Help worker, in hindsight it wasn't the right service for Suzanne and her family. The support Suzanne needed as a parent wasn't dealing with Seb's behaviour but understanding and being able to support her son's mental health, give her problem solving ways and techniques to help calm him down during anxiety attacks and keep him in education.

Suzanne, age 42

Through her worker, Claire completes the Recovery Programme but finds it doesn't work because *"I needed to go to the Start Programme first but I wasn't ready to go to the Start Programme until I'd had counselling which I was waiting for...I was doing everything back to front"*

Claire feels that her worker did try to help her get back on her feet but with her mental health and anxiety as they were it wasn't the right time. *"With no disrespect, with mental health issues there's not enough understanding of adult and children's mental health"*

Claire, age 43

Stacey tries some new anti-biotics but doesn't like the side effects. *"I had a total melt down and my worker said it was just my anxiety but I didn't believe it"*

Stacey, age 24

Forcing Sam to school.

*"It got to the point where the worker was physically helping me to drag him out of bed".
Later, another diagnosis Sam receives states that doing this to Sam "wasn't a good thing"*

Michelle, age 53

Joanne also felt that the way her worker dealt with some things wasn't helpful.

"She was taking the children to B&M to buy wash baskets and James was having a melt-down...she said she'd come back for him but I said if you go now without him you're going to leave us with a bigger problem to deal with"

"I understood what she was talking about in relation to routines but things she wanted to change would interrupt their routine so badly and with James that was a no-no as you can imagine he needed to have a routine"

Joanne, age 30

Worker Relationships

There were occasions where specific difficulties with worker relationships were brought up by families.

Michelle feels early on that her worker was on the schools side rather than hers *"even though she said she wasn't...that she'd been to meetings with the school without me and heard their opinion I didn't like that...I did ask her and she said she wasn't on anyone's side, she was on the children's side, there to look after the children and get them the help they needed"*

Initially Michelle feels that some things are meeting her workers *"agenda"* rather than her needs such as getting Sam to sleep in his own room away from her. Michelle wishes she listened to her own intuition as Sam doesn't sleep in his own room and they spent *"a lot of time trying"*.

Michelle feels it took a long time for her worker to realise that *"I wasn't the bad guy...I was trying everything...but I was adamant and so was my GP that Sam's school attendance wasn't likely to improve until we'd had a diagnosis...he was very clear we didn't know what extra harm we were doing to Sam by forcing him in (to school) without knowing what his health issues were...so we did argue a lot even though I went along with things"*.

Michelle feels initially it felt like she had a different agenda to her worker, *"she'd say to me, Isaac isn't Joe, don't project his illness onto him...her agenda was to get them into school, my agenda was to look after my children, find out why they can't go to school and put it right"*

"I made (my worker) a bag to say thank you but it was taken off her as her manager said it wasn't appropriate...I was like, come on"

Michelle, age 53

When the Family Support Worker starts to get involved with Joanne and Karl, Joanne feels she rings a lot, *"at one point she was calling that often we blocked her number...we were away at my brothers, it was the first week of the Christmas holidays, she knew we were going away, she must have rang about 15 times"*

Joanne also feels that whilst she could understand the first social services involvement with James, she can't see the point of her worker as *"she's helped here and there but I don't feel she's making anything better, I trust her less than other people"*

"It doesn't help that she comes to the house as I worry she's going to be judgemental about the house...the first time she came round she said, 'oh I wasn't expecting it to be this tidy'.

Joanne feels that with four kids it is expected that there will be things on the floor. *"Nyah is crafty, she has things out, she has make up out...but the last time my worker came she said it was 'a good start'...the worst thing generally is clothes waiting to be put away...the washing machine and tumble drier never stop, what does she expect?...Our worker wanted us to have baths in the morning with the kids but there's no chance with four kids, we get up at 6.30 as it is and we're not always ready by 8.30. We have to physically wake James up, hold him to get dressed, coerce him to get his clothes on and do his teeth, but, in six years we've only ever been late for school once or twice and one of those was a car problem"*

Joanne and Karl feel they have seen their worker about six times since she started working with them around seven months ago. *"She usually calls, doesn't turn up unannounced"*. Joanne feels the frequency of contact from her worker is too much.

Joanne and Karl's worker tells them their bedtime and evening routines aren't very good. Joanne says *"she wanted to come on a Monday but that's when the kids do homework...then she wanted to come Thursday but they're at a club...she insists on routine and wants to interrupt it"*. Karl has some similar views to Joanne. *"One of the original reasons for involvement was around routines but we haven't changed anything...although everything else around it has improved...doing things differently in the day has made a difference...getting the clothes away quicker"*

James is discharged from the paediatrician and Joanne feels her worker *"sticks her nose in...she rang Karl and asked a million and one questions about why the doctor had discharged James when he shouldn't have. To me that's not support...if the qualified doctor thought he should be discharged that should be good enough, I felt she shouldn't be questioning the doctor"*

Karl feels that their worker isn't making a 'big' difference, *"most of the stuff with the house we've done ourselves with no input from Early Help or anyone else...sometimes it's felt like criticism rather than support, we're like, well we do that anyway but maybe it's a process she needs to work through with families."* Karl feels he is happy to take from the worker the things that help and leave the things that don't. He is less worried about her coming to the house than Joanne is.

Joanne, age 30. Karl, age 37

"At first I didn't trust him. I find it hard trusting new people anyway, nothing bad on him but he was late a couple of times to start with and I can't deal with that. I probably told him but after he found out I didn't like him being late he was spot on...he was really good"

Natalie, age 31

"My worker was too soft a woman...I told her that after. She would (tidy the house) for me but my new one pushed me to do it myself"

Stacey, age 24

Mandy is angry to find out that her husband had told her worker that he had planned to take her children and her worker hadn't told her.

"My worker is my support worker, mine and the kids, not his...I was screaming at her, not happy, really angry"

Later Mandy discovers from her worker that her husband had 'heard a rumour' Mandy was back on drugs and the worker had warned Mandy's husband not to keep the children, to be careful because there was no proof, that she had no evidence herself (and had often turned up at Mandy's unannounced), that it was just a rumour, was from a "scorned friend".

Mandy's worker explains to Mandy that she was "in between...that she worked with 'him' too, that she didn't think 'he' would do it...that she didn't want to worry me...it had a short term impact on the relationship with my worker...I know he can convince a lot of people, I tried so hard to get people to see what he was like but they couldn't"

Mandy, age 47

Other quotes from adults where they had specific issues with worker relationships included:

"Sometimes it can seem that the worker is telling my partner how to parent which makes her feel a bit self-conscious and she feels like she isn't being as good a mother as she thought"

Other quotes from children where they had specific issues with worker relationships included:

“It’s a bit scary when she comes into school because everyone knows. I told her only at home but she still comes to school”

“It’s ok as it is but sometimes feels like she tries to get involved”

“Our worker tells everybody to do stuff really quick. It would be better if she was less annoying”

“I’d like my worker to spend more time with my brother and less time with me”

“My worker can be annoying sometimes when she keeps on talking”

“I want my worker to wear cooler glasses, have red spiky hair and wear a Liverpool kit”

“I want my worker to twerk better”

“Sometimes she can be a bit too involved with personal things”

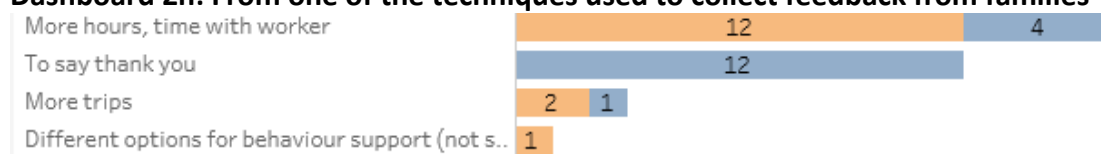
“Bring my worker back. I got a new worker because my old one left”

One child or young person found their worker ‘didn’t listen sometimes’.

More Hours, More Time with Worker and More Activities

Some children, young people and adults wanted more hours or time with their worker.

Dashboard 2h: From one of the techniques used to collect feedback from families



“My worker hasn't been to school for a few weeks as she's been crazily busy...she hasn't worked with me a lot lately because she's been so busy. It was good over the summer holidays but now we're back at school I need that kick up the bum because I've got to do everything again. My worker said she's been working 12 hour shifts but it would be helpful to know why she's not working with me so much”

Stacey, age 24

Other quotes from adults who wanted more resource from the Early Help service included:

“We would like more time with them”

“More time and flexibility”

“Although the service is helpful it can sometimes be a long time between visits”

“I’d like more family events”

“I’d like (her to spend) more time with families instead of meetings”

Other quotes from children and young people where they wanted more resources from the Early Help service included:

“For me there is nothing that could be better but for my family more time. I feel as though when our worker has finished the family will be better”

“I’d like to see my worker a bit more”

“I would like to see my worker more”

“I’d like to see our worker more as it’s dropped off. Would be helpful”

“I’d like more trips out. Release stress and we couldn’t afford Twycross”

“More trips to the Zoo, Sea Life Centre”

“She does too much. I’d want her to see every family member one at a time. Visit for more than one hour at a time, longer visits. I’ve liked having my worker coming to see me”

“I would like my worker to play games with me”

“It would be better if I had more one to one and for my sister who doesn’t get the one to one”

“We’d like a little bit more help as we’re still fighting”

“Mummy would like to see our worker more”

Workers identified issues with needing more time in one case of **most significant change**

- *“The change was not sustained which may have been due to changes of routines over the Christmas holiday period or because mum needed more frequent support to maintain the changes or a combination of both”*
- One worker felt they needed more time with families to speed up the support they needed around priorities
- *“Because I’m only part time and busy with groups and other one to ones I mostly don’t have time to see mum again until the next week and then the problem persists”*
- In the most significant change cases one worker felt the amount of paperwork was a barrier to change for families

Whole Family Working

There were examples where difficulties in whole family working were cited by families.

Stacey feels “the only thing that has annoyed me has been around contact with Millie’s dad. I expected a bit more from Early Help as social services had let me down so much. My first worker was great around that but my new worker hasn’t really helped much with that and I’m trying to get it sorted”

Millie also needs a routine with her dad, her dad needs a routine as well and my worker has kind of put it aside whereas Millie sees her dad every couple of weeks.

“I’ve asked her so many times that we need to sort something out with him...she hasn’t really given me any feedback as to why but has recently clicked on that I need it”

Stacey, age 24

Claire finds her worker tries lots of different ways to get Poppy to engage. “It wasn’t because Poppy didn’t like her but because she didn’t want to participate. Poppy was ‘far too busy’ to be going to groups. It was frustrating because I was trying to work with my worker and Poppy wasn’t”

Claire, age 43

Other quotes from adults in relation to whole family working issues included:

“Our worker has not had much involvement with the children so my daughter doesn’t have anything to say about her and doesn’t want to participate”

Workers identified issues with whole family working in one case of **most significant change**

- *“A previous worker had my case and dad was not involved in the plan. Dad has been fully engaged with myself and has started working intensely with the GREAT project and just completed a four day training programme”*

Feedback

There were occasions where families spoke about instances where they would welcome or had issues with not getting feedback.

Stacey says that Millie tells her about drawings she's done at school with her worker to make a story. *"My worker doesn't really speak about it. She'll say Millie's fine today, she's great, but she doesn't really tell me what she does with her which would be nice to know"*

Stacey feels it would help if she was able to see the progress she's made on the star chart. *"Some days I don't feel I've made progress...I don't speak about it enough and nobody speaks about it enough to tell me how far I've come apart from my worker but she's supposed to do that because she's my worker. I'd like feedback about plans and it would help to see how far I've come visually"*

Stacey, age 24

"Nyah wanted to do horse riding but I wasn't prepared to pay £25 an hour...with the discount card we'd have got it for £10, but our worker didn't explain why it was late...that might have helped...the kids would have done the activities"

Joanne, age 30

Other quotes from children and young people around issues relating to feedback included:

"People near my home swear and it makes me scared to go out. I've told my worker but I don't know what she's doing about it"

Support in Relation to Specific Needs

Historic Domestic Abuse

There were families who had historic domestic abuse in relation to themselves and witnessed by their children who did not mention being offered any support in this area.

Isobel, age 38 (herself and children)

Jessica, age 23 (child)

Stacey age 24 (child)

Suzanne, age 42 (children)

Claire, age 43 (child)

Equality around Domestic Abuse

"There needs to be more equality with courses etc. i.e. a male freedom programme as I find the service very sexist"

Adult feedback

Substance Misuse

Two parents who had historic issues with substance misuse did not receive any specific support to come off drugs at the time (their substance misuse had not been drawn to any service's attention).

Isobel, age 38
Mandy, age 42

Miscellaneous

Below are other insights from families.

"My brief intervention worker didn't stay that long when she came, maybe about 20 minutes...she sat and spoke to me, asked me how I was, how the kids were...I didn't really know what she was all about, not that I can remember, but she was lovely...really nice and talked to me and Luke...I think she was supposed to come every week but it was more like every fortnight...she went into school once...but I don't really think I got much from it"

Natalie, age 31

"Possibly to group other families together to get the insight into Early Help"

"All I want is for people to see the bigger picture and not to accuse people of things and do more things together"

Adults feedback

"Some of the things my worker asks of me are ok and some are hard"

"My worker was off for a while and I didn't have anyone to contact and no numbers. I felt like I was chucked in at the deep end. I had to contact for a worker"

Children and young people's feedback

Qualitative findings are by nature descriptive, illustrative and not statistically representative⁷. However the range of experiences and views is important to this evaluation and using a range of research methods recurring themes have emerged throughout. Whilst we can't quantify the findings or suggest they represent the distribution of attitudes among all relevant stakeholders or families involved, through the participatory nature of this research we have sought to validate findings with key stakeholders throughout.

⁷ There were multiple methods undertaken to collect feedback from families and the dashboards in this report represent only one of the approaches – a child and young person's event at Twycross Zoo. Numbers in the dashboards should therefore not be read as absolute.

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