



C.CO

CHILDREN'S OFFER

**Reducing
Demand** in
Children's and
Workforce
Redesign



The

problem

Reduced focus on delivering effective Early Help has resulted in more cases requiring complex solutions from multiple partners.

Local Authority Children's services have experienced an increase in children requiring statutory assessments by social workers since 2021 – but have reduced their spending on prevention services as Government funding has more than halved.

The cost of providing assessments has risen due to the shift of social workers and managers opting to work for external employment agencies who pay higher salaries.

The extent of repeat referrals has increased as children's needs continue to escalate when plans have been closed.

The role for the Voluntary, Community, Faith (VCF) sector has significantly reduced in providing Family/Early Help, meaning limited opportunity to step down cases safely.

Schools report the additional pressure to lead Early Help assessments for children without the skilled workforce to coordinate evidence-based actions.

The creation of Family Hubs offers a solution to families – but they are not universally funded in every place or rolled out. The offer is very early intervention and early years' focussed – with limited reach to more vulnerable children and parents.

The risks

Without a model of Family Help, case workers locally taking step-down cases results in more children repeatedly requiring statutory intervention.

OFSTED expects there to be a robust Early Help offer in place to support cases to step down safely – risk to a positive inspection outcome if this is not evident.

Too many repeat referrals indicate that social workers could be closing cases too early to keep caseloads down – this is a false economy for the child/family and the system.

Children's Services cannot recruit enough social workers to meet an increasing need for manageable and meaningful work at the high-risk point of the system without effective family help to reduce demand and create balanced direct work.



Proposal/solution menu of the offer

An expert, tailored review of the local children's safeguarding operating system to objectively test the effectiveness of demand management and reduction through analysis of data.

Support to create a Family Help operating model to manage demand down across the system with key performance framework to measure change.

A quality review of the application of local thresholds and partner agencies' understanding and application of the referral system between Early Help and Children's Social Care (CSC).

A recommendation report produced to implement a demand management model of provision with measurable cash efficiencies, in line with the local Medium-Term Action plan.

Production and communication of a refreshed offer to engage a new workforce of Family Help case holders to work alongside partners and social work teams alike.

A tried and tested expert lead to help you to make a compelling case to DfE for your area to become a Funded Family Help area, based on building your advanced local model.



Financial benefits

and case for invest to save

The difference between an agency social worker salary and a Family Help Worker could be as much as £26,000 per year, offering an immediate cashable saving from the operating model review.

Social workers report that they are more likely to stay with an employer if they are supported to hold low caseloads and have access to Family Help support to undertake direct work with them – reducing the cost of agency workers.

The reduction in risk to children within families results in fewer care orders taken to Family Court, fewer care placements required and ultimately a reduction in funding requests from commissioners.

An opportunity to share the new Family Help caseholders across partner agencies with the option to trade the service with MATs and NHS Providers over time when the case is made – potentially bringing in new income.



