
Annual report of the effectiveness and impact of North Lincolnshire's Early Help Offer 2022/23

September 2023



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1. Introduction

This annual report provides an overview of the strategic context of our One Family Approach, a summary of the local Early Help offer to children and families, an overview of the key outcomes achieved and feedback from children, young people and their families. It also provides case studies of early help in practice and our priorities for improvement and development during 2023/24.

2. Early help – taking a One Family Approach

The **One Family Approach - Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire 2020/24** document describes the principles and ambitions of early help within North Lincolnshire and sets out how services will work together in an integrated way to help and support children, young people and families.

The ambition in North Lincolnshire is for children to **thrive in their families, achieve in their schools and flourish in their communities** and we want children, young people and families to be able to

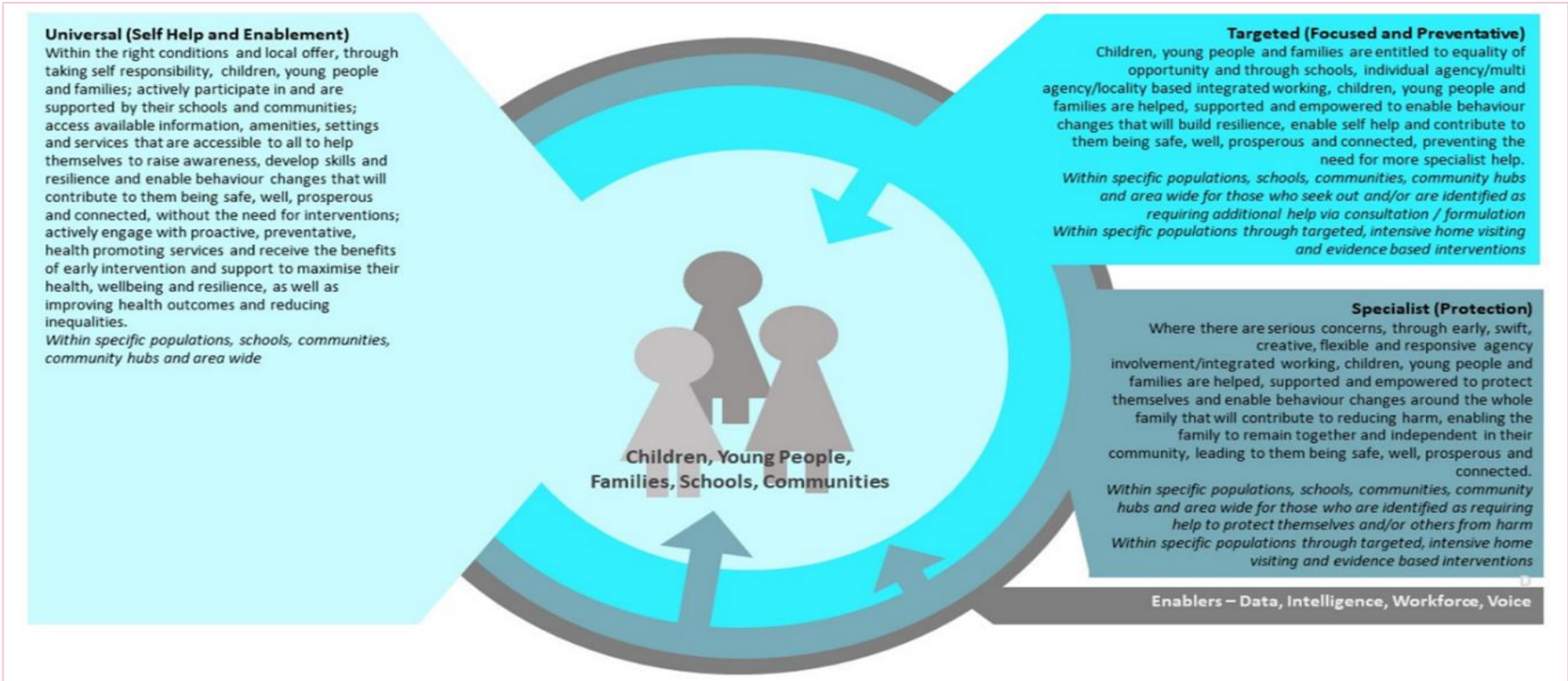
- build upon their strengths to find solutions when things are not going so well
- access available information, advice and guidance
- take part in the local community offer
- maximise their potential and enhance their life chances
- develop resilience through positive self-esteem and confidence
- have a sense of belonging and equality of opportunity
- benefit from positive and trusting relationships

The Integrated Children's Trust has developed and agreed the **North Lincolnshire Children's Commissioning Strategy 2020/24** which describes the partnership priorities in working to safeguard, promote and improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people, reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for all children and young people living in North Lincolnshire.

The North Lincolnshire Children's Multi-Agency Resilience and Safeguarding (MARS) Board brings together the safeguarding partners, and other relevant officers, to oversee Local Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. As a subgroup of the Children's MARS Board there is a strong commitment from partners on the Early Help Strategic Leads Group to continue to develop and build on good practice and achieve positive outcomes for children, young people and their families through a shared vision across the partnership.

3. North Lincolnshire's Early Help Offer

The North Lincolnshire early help offer for children, young people and families is best understood in the context of our organisational model which sets out the 3 levels of need – universal (self-help and enablement), targeted (focused and preventative) and specialist (protection).



In North Lincolnshire we have a wealth of support for children and families ranging from education settings who are vital in providing a safe place for children to learn and achieve, universal health services such as midwives, health visitors and school nurses, police teams and our voluntary, charity and social enterprise sector partners. Some functions provide both a universal and targeted offer such as our schools and family and community hubs.

Universal and open access support and provision

A range of groups and activities are provided for parents, carers and children in venues across North Lincolnshire including schools, children's centres, community hubs and other community buildings. These are delivered by a range of partners working in an integrated way – including Children and Families staff, school staff, health visitors and nursery nurses, midwives, voluntary, charity and social enterprise sector and by staff from the council's Adult Education and Family Learning teams, both individually and jointly. These include:

- Ante-natal classes and breast-feeding peer support groups
- Baby and family play, baby yoga and massage
- Fresh food projects and Community Fridge
- Family night – homework, cook and eat together
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) English and cooking by numbers courses
- School holiday community activities including Street Sport

Our local schools offer a vast array of support and provision for children and families including:

- School based drop in and coffee morning sessions, building relationships, reducing stigma, enabling parents/carers to ask for help when needed
- Parents network and reading workshops, books and breakfast in school
- Preloved uniform
- Promoting wellbeing through physical education in schools through Yoga and mindfulness
- Period poverty sanitary provisions
- FareShare community food scheme within school sites – removing poverty stigma and promoting community cohesion
- Food parcels and financial support for trips and proms to promote inclusion
- Summer school
- Breakfast and homework clubs
- Parent café
- School based positive parenting courses
- Thrive programme delivered in schools

Targeted prevention

This includes a range of groups, activities and provisions similar to those described above but targeted and tailored to those individuals, groups or geographical areas identified as being more vulnerable or having additional needs. These are delivered in a range of venues and by staff from within the council and across partner agencies including by voluntary, charity and social enterprise organisations and targeted programmes in schools to improve children's social and emotional skills as well as other issues.

- Fuelled school holiday activities
- Short breaks and community activities for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Young Carers support and activities
- Carers (parent/carers) support and wellbeing workshops
- Sibling carers group
- Family night – homework, cook and eat together
- ESOL English, cooking by numbers (numeracy), Skills for Life
- Solihull parenting programmes
- Community food and clothing banks

A number of targeted prevention functions help the multi-agency partnership to identify families who may need additional help and to plan a response. These include:

- 0-2 offer of support process for children 0-2 referred into the children's Single Point of Contact (SPOC)
- Multi-Agency Pregnancy Liaison and Consultation (MAPLAC) meetings
- Partnership Integrated Triage (PIT) Stop
- Vulnerable Children in Education Tasking Meeting
- Youth Justice Partnership Turn Around Programme

Targeted intervention

Some functions are targeted to provide co-ordinated help for vulnerable families who require extra support to manage difficulties they are having in their lives or relationships such as parental conflict or risk outside the home. Delivered by a range of services, help at this level aims to improve family functioning and relationships, increasing parenting capacity and resilience, and enabling children to remain living in their own families.

The offer includes:

- 0-19 Health and Wellbeing Service (intensive support)
- Child Exploitation Intervention Team
- Youth Justice Partnership prevention
- Targeted Family Support (including the intensive crisis intervention offer)
- The Blue Door – Who's in Charge and Re:Form programmes
- Police Early Intervention Co-ordinator

4. Growing up in North Lincolnshire....

....children and young people are more likely to:

...have their childhood health checks undertaken in a timely manner

During the year up to end of March 2023:

- 90% of babies were seen by their health visitor between the ages of 6 and 8 weeks compared with 83% across England
- 96% of babies were seen by their health visitor for a 12 month review compared with 72% across England
- 88% of children received a development check at the age of 2 – 2.5 years compared with 74% across England
- 82% of 2-2.5 year olds met or exceeded healthy standards in all 5 areas of their development
- 95% of children had their speech and language assessed using the Early Language Identification Measure

...receive support early on if they need help and be less likely to need a statutory social work service

Due to the strength of intervention within assessments and the coordinated approach with partners and families, fewer children and families require statutory intervention than comparators

The number of children entering the youth justice system as 'First Time Entrants' continues to be low and a high proportion of cases are prevention and out of court disposals demonstrating the success and effectiveness of the preventative approach

The daily Partnership Integrated Triage (PIT) Stop meeting ensures the earliest intervention is provided by the most appropriate person, ensuring the fewest best interventions

...remain living within their own family and community

Children in need remain comparatively low, we have low rates of child protection plans, and children who are in need of help and protection, are supported to live safely within their family network

Almost all children in care live in foster care families or residential provision within North Lincolnshire, or close to home, enabling them to remain connected to their local support networks and community

5. Overview of key outcomes achieved through early help and prevention work

Emotional Wellbeing Offer

- Ensured a strong emotional wellbeing offer to children and young people, co-ordinating communications with partners about the local offer in-order-to maximise reach and engagement
- All schools and academies were funded to access Thrive training, supporting whole school approaches to meeting children's needs with right-time intervention and Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) training for support assistants
- Dedicated With Me In Mind mental health support teams in every secondary school with outreach for years 5 and 6 in every primary school, incorporating the three levelled offer of systemic, group and individual support for the children and young people

Early help developments

- Following consultation with families and professionals we co-designed a new early help assessment and plan format, taking a family-led approach based upon an evidence based psychotherapy model. The plans embed the new Supporting Families outcomes framework, and are now recorded on an online system with automatic review reminders to help with timeliness and a new closure form to support the collection of outcomes and progress data
- New early help guidance was launched along with the new Early Help Assessment format and online system and the dedicated Children's Multi Agency Resilience and Safeguarding (MARS) Early Help webpage was refreshed to reflect the range of new forms and tools to support practitioners
- Within the context of the development of the online early help system 743 early help assessments were recorded in 2022/23, representing an increase on the previous year and the highest for the last 7 years. The largest contributing agencies remain as pre-schools, schools and further education providers, with 86% of all assessments completed by them and the 0-19 Health and Wellbeing service also completing a substantial amount. The number of children receiving targeted early help from Family Support was 679, a similar number to the previous year.

Integrated offer to children and families: Start for Life Family Hubs

- As part of strengthening our integrated local offer to children and their families we are developing our Family Hubs. This builds on the significantly strengthened and joined up approaches across statutory and voluntary partners to improving babies' and young children's outcomes through the North Lincolnshire Best Start Plan
- As part of the Start for Life Family Hubs programme, North Lincolnshire has received grant funding over three years to contribute to the vision, which aligns with our ambition and our One Family Approach. Overseen by the Integrated Children's Trust, governance arrangements are in place with a steering group established to oversee strategic development and ensure this links through to delivery including through the Best Start working groups

5. Overview of key outcomes achieved through early help and prevention work

Workforce development

- The Children's MARS Education and Training Programme courses have continued to be offered both virtually and face to face. Child protection training has continued to be offered as a priority course throughout the year and is very well attended and in high demand. This training course has been a key mechanism to embed the One Family Approach and to raise awareness of key strategic documents with new staff across the partnership, such as the North Lincolnshire Risk Outside the Home Approach. During 2022/23 there were 682 people across the partnership trained over 35 courses.
- In addition to formal training opportunities, e-workbooks are utilised as refreshers and for new staff inductions. During the year almost 500 e-workbooks were completed across the topics of safeguarding children, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, female genital mutilation and early help awareness.
- A new early help training package for professionals was delivered across the partnership, with 273 people attending across six sessions, with additional targeted sessions for individual providers and settings.
- We are committed to engagement with and feedback from the early help workforce and in response to a survey of training needs we received over 90 responses resulting in a second phase of training planned for 2023. Key topics included working with resistance, chairing early help meetings and managing endings.
- During the year, there were 298 Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) attendees at the termly DSL schools, colleges and other educational provision briefings, receiving updates on local and national education safeguarding guidance, early help, private fostering, radicalisation and supporting the education of children on child in need and child protection plans.
- There were 184 early years settings and childminders attendees at dedicated early years DSL forums receiving updates on early help, domestic abuse and information sharing and identifying injuries in babies and young children.
- We have strengthened capacity for children and families on the edge of care, with staff in place to offer immediate and intensive help to enable families experiencing crisis to continue to safely care for their children.
- We have worked on strengthening the support for early help lead professionals through early help locality network meetings, bespoke development sessions and the development of new early help guidance and multiagency training. In total, 141 people attended Early Help Practitioner Forums which included updates from RDaSH Adult Mental Health, Ongo Housing, SENDIASS and information on mental health support for families

5. Overview of key outcomes achieved through early help and prevention work

Partnership working

- The Multi-Agency Pre-Birth Liaison and Consultation (MAPLAC) process has been established as a partnership forum between Family Support, the 0-19 Health and Wellbeing service and midwifery services. It provides oversight of cases of pregnancy with identified additional vulnerabilities where the family would be likely to benefit from targeted early help.
- We have developed a range of targeted parent training opportunities both virtually and face to face alongside colleagues from the Health and Wellbeing service and Adult Education and Community Learning. This has included ante-natal preparation, Solihull parenting, play and development and communication and language.
- Schools are a primary partner in our early help offer and council leaders continued to invest in school improvement to ensure all children have access to high quality inclusive education following the removal of the DfE Local Authority Monitoring and Brokering Grant and as a result 9 out of 10 schools are rated good or outstanding.
- Drug Information Briefing Sessions (DIBS) are a joint venture between Humberside Police and the Drug Education Liaison Treatment Agency (DELTA) to promote early intervention and diversion. These relate to children who are stopped and searched and found in possession of substances and rather than being referred to youth justice they are afforded the opportunity to undertake some sessions with DELTA in a bid to prevent further offending and support harm minimisation work to occur at the earliest opportunity.
- The latest drug strategy 'Harm to Hope' promotes the importance of early intervention for young people and families at the greatest risk of developing difficulties with substance use either directly or indirectly. Part of this process is to ensure all children and young people are provided with high quality education on health and relationships to help to prevent the use of substances.
- The Youth Justice Partnership Peer Review undertaken in February 2023 highlighted very strong partnerships at both operational and strategic level as a key strength along with a strong commitment towards an effective early intervention model. The peer review team highlighted a particularly strong strategic relationship with Humberside Police and a child focused approach resulting in a strengthened prevention and diversionary offer to children at risk of entering the youth justice system.
- The Humberside Police Early Intervention Coordinator has been developing a new role that supports partner agencies with the work they do to help vulnerable young people. This work complements the existing functions, working closely with the Youth Justice Partnership and others to prevent and reduce re-offending, promoting resilience and improving long term outcomes and working directly with young people and their families.

5. Overview of key outcomes achieved through early help and prevention work

A focus on Risk Outside the Home

- There has been a sharpened focus on prevention and early intervention to prevent children being exploited. This has included community engagement and training to all DSLs and neighbourhood watch leaders, and the rollout of tools as part of the new Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) Approach.
- Led through the ROTH Strategic Group, ongoing development discussions have demonstrated significant progress against the identified actions in the delivery plan. Examples of impacts and outcomes include:
 - Staff across the partnership workforce, including schools and governors, have an improved understanding of the breadth of ROTH vulnerabilities, and have access to available resources
 - There is a greater understanding of vulnerabilities, risk and of children's experiences
 - There has been positive feedback from children and young people and staff in schools and other educational provisions regarding safety awareness sessions, demonstrating a level of understanding and insight
 - Children and young people have access to and are engaging in a carefully sequenced RSHE curriculum enabling them to have access to information and resources to help them build resilience and keep themselves, and others, safe and well
 - Evidence of the National Referral Mechanism in practice and planning frameworks that facilitates keeping children safer
 - Developing joint working between Children and Families and Adults and Health to strengthen transition pathways and transitions for care leavers being strengthened
- A new Child Exploitation Lead Officers Group was established to consider the cohort of children who are vulnerable to or who are being exploited, and to consider themes, trends and issues that may require an additional tactical or operational response. This aims to be upstream in terms of prevention and reduce vulnerabilities early therefore minimising risk.

National policy drivers

- North Lincolnshire was selected as one of ten local design areas to contribute to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. In October 2021, the review team visited North Lincolnshire and met with over 100 leaders, managers and practitioners across the workforce, as well as children, young people and family representatives. The visit was an opportunity to help shape and influence the findings and recommendations of this key national review.
- There was positive feedback from contributors regarding their engagement in the visit and from the Review team regarding the North Lincolnshire system. In addition, we have also contributed to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care 'call for ideas' in which we submitted two ideas focussed around 'deploying a local whole system approach' and 'developing meaningful controls for social work agencies'.
- The North Lincolnshire 'You Say Who' approach was selected for inclusion in the composite report from the local design area visits, as well as featuring in the main report from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

Experts by experience

- We have developed dedicated, paid roles for people with lived experiences across the Children and Families offer. Three Supporting Families in Partnership Assistants (SFIPAs) were appointed in September 2022, to support and challenge us to ensure our integrated children and families offer is co-produced, leading to better outcomes. The SFIPAs have co-produced a new job title to more accurately reflect and communicate the scope of their roles, and as such, they are now known as Family Voice Representatives.
- Family Voice Representatives have engaged in a series of early help training events to share their stories, with a significant amount of positive feedback being received. A special school representative has approached them to develop early help information training for parents and carers.

6. What children and families told us about their experiences

Parenting training programmes feedback and impact – Solihull

It made me think more about the words I use with the children and how what I say can help to make their behaviour better

I can recognise my own feelings and how to stay calm so that helps me to help the children as well

It helped me learn what to do to stay calm and in control, I think about how the children are feeling before I react, we are getting on much better now

I'm feeling more confident as a parent using the reflective parenting questions

Improvements in all areas, especially handling difficult behaviour (staff member commenting on a parent's progress)

Ante-natal parenting support delivered in partnerships

We loved it, I feel more connected with my baby, which I needed (Targeted support using baby yoga)

I understand more now about being a responsive parent, how the baby's brain is developed and the importance of interacting with the bump

I feel more reassured about breast feeding

7. Case studies

Various case studies are outlined below to foreground early help and its impact and outcomes:

Workforce development

Case study 1 - early help training

One primary school told us how they had benefitted from the enhanced skills and knowledge on the training by thinking through the whole school approach to early help. This enabled them to better determine which cases they could support through their core school offer and which continued to need a formal early help plan. In turn they agreed with families to close some formal plans where needs were being met through the schools universal offer which positively impacted on staff workloads, meaning that they could dedicate time efficiently to helping more families early through their universal offer.

Other feedback from the Early Help - Practice and Process training included:

- *The Early Help training has given me a better understanding of the early help process and how I can support my colleagues when they are conducting their early help, along with how it needs to be much more family friendly language*
- *I will find it easier to support parents through early help as it will be more relevant to them and they will have much more of a say as the plan will be in their own words and they can state exactly what the main issues are*
- *It will make completing Early Help Assessments more relevant and fit for purpose. Today's advice has inspired me to look closely at existing Early Help Plans and using the criteria discussed today make an informed decision on keeping them open or close with parent support to follow up.*

Support and intervention with families

Case study 2 – early help

Presenting issues: Low school attendance by the children as a symptom of underlying family difficulties. Family history of mental ill health, with the parent presenting with unmet mental health needs, the older child was vulnerable to exploitation. Involvement of the police after the older child was involved in an incident in the community relating to cannabis.

Early help offered: A good rapport between a Police Community Support Officer and the family was built, brokering mental health support and advocating for the parent leading to them receiving an adult diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Bi-polar, with a treatment plan and support put in place. Family network enabled, including an uncle who was involved in the planning and support. Strategies agreed for the family to recognise and take action for if things started to decline. Enhanced transition planning took place to prepare the child to move to secondary school and create a seamless transition including for the family who will no longer be in touch with the primary school.

Impact: Improved parental wellbeing impacted positively upon parenting and family life experiences.

7. Case studies

Case study 3 - early help

Presenting issues: Conflict in the home between parents was having a negative impact on the mother's emotional wellbeing, leading to feelings of low mood

Early help offered: Primary school facilitated a solution focused meeting with both parents to discuss their concerns and any issues that were leading to arguments, offering 'a listening ear', encouragement for the mother to see her GP for low mood, signposting to The Blue Door for advice and support on domestic abuse, direct work and nurture support with the child, gaining the child's views throughout the process.

Impact: Mother reports an improvement in the relationship with fewer arguments, and an increase in confidence in reporting issues in the future.

The child is feeling happier at home as arguments between parents had stopped. This is captured through a review of 'the three houses' piece of work in school.

Case study 4 - early help

Presenting issues: Step down from children's social care after reported domestic abuse incidents.

Early help offered: Allocated a key member of staff from school (lead professional) as a point of contact for the parent, building trust and a source of support, open communication and access to staff daily at the school gate to share information informally. Support and advice from The Blue Door, nurture support in school for the children and an agreed safety plan, which was specific, clear and realistic to achieve. Regular review meetings held.

Impact: The parent expressed feeling empowered to speak out or seek help if there were any future incidents of conflict or domestic abuse.

7. Case studies

Working together to improve outcomes

Case study 5 - partnership working

The Education Inclusion service worked together with a secondary school around deteriorating attendance figures. The school highlighted parental engagement as a key barrier in improving attendance. The initiative known as Truancy Call involved an intervention over week with the school, Education Inclusion service, Police Neighbourhood team and ONGO housing where daily home visits were undertaken to more than 60 families in an attempt to engage with parents as well as young people. The aim was to identify barriers to attendance taking a more holistic approach considering the family as a whole and offering support.

Through working together, the school were able to develop and enhance their attendance management processes, develop earlier intervention strategies to ensure families were supported at the earliest opportunity whilst using the ATTEND Framework and early help.

Overall attendance at the school has steadily improved through using this new approach, based on improving relationships between schools and families.

Case study 6 - Stay Safe Conference

The 2022 Stay Safe Conference was held as an opportunity to celebrate the work of the peer mentors and buddies in schools and to enable them to showcase their work. The children and young people also heard from local presenters to develop further understanding of topical issues such as child criminal exploitation with input from Not in Our Community. There were 19 primary and secondary schools represented and 188 peer mentors and buddies were in attendance. Feedback from children and young people attending the event included:

- *Very interactive, fun and child friendly explanations, which helped us to understand*
- *Videos shared the information well to the different age groups*
- *There were breaks so everyone could talk about how they felt about it and I was able to speak freely about my opinion*
- *It described the different situations and how to solve and help them*
- *Helped me understand more; and how serious it is (child criminal exploitation)*
- *Informed me a lot and I have learnt so much*
- *Think that we could share this with others because of how well it was explained*
- *Learnt that even the people closest to you can manipulate you and you need to look for the signs*
- *Knew quite a bit due to school education, but this has increased my knowledge*
- *I can trust adults to help*

7. Case studies

Case study 7- partnership working and use of interactive tools

Targeted support using video interaction guidance (VIG). This effective tool in promoting parent and child bonding has been embedded into the 0-19 Health and Well-being service and continues to evaluate well.

VIG was used with parents, separately, enabling strong bonds between each parent and their children. The family had a history of conflict and domestic abuse from the mother to the father. There were maternal mental health issues, and the children were living with the father separately to their mother for a year.

This tool enabled resilience and positive maternal and paternal mental health and provided early intervention for the establishment of healthy child to parent relationships.

The microanalysis of the footage taken with the children/mother and the children/father enabled the worker to support both parents to develop a clearer perspective of their attunement and interactions with their children. In time this will benefit the children by them having more nourishing interactions with their parents and embed positive foundations for a healthy start in life. Children can then develop and maintain positive relationships in the future as the skills received from interactions with their primary caregivers are embedded.

Due to their ages, the children were not asked to complete an evaluation, however on observation and discussion with parents, it was evident from the initial assessment to the evaluation session, that the parents and children were more confident in their interactions with each other and were able to communicate with each other more easily.

The father presented with many levels of the attunement principles and said that he appreciated the shared reviews as this allowed him to see that he was interacting positively with his children. The mother said, *'I am now enjoying my time with my children and thank you'*.

Feedback from the children's social worker was:

I found the feedback from the video interaction really useful, especially because I am completing a parenting assessment, and this was a focused look at how mum plays and parents the children. It was useful to see things. To have another professional's perspective on this was really helpful. The tool seems like a brilliant way of getting parents to see themselves as their children see them and I think this is quite unique. Your summary was detailed, clear and I liked how you summarised the different stages that the parents have reached at the end.

8. Our priorities for 2023/24

1. Continue on our journey to develop integrated neighbourhood family help including:

- Develop family hubs across North Lincolnshire, as part of an integrated neighbourhood family help delivery model
- As a partnership continue to develop the children and family offer, including provision for youth, responding to the unique assets, strengths and needs in each neighbourhood
- As part of the Start for Life Family Hubs programme, develop an online virtual 'front door' to the children and families offer enabling equality of access to universal help and support

2. Strengthen the early help consultation and advice offer in the context of integrated neighbourhood family help and family hubs, with schools as the primary partner

3. Continue to strengthen the offer of earliest help for families who are pregnant or have babies and young children, as part of our local Best Start for Life priority

4. Improve consistency and quality of early help practice across the multi-agency workforce through a training and development offer and by strengthening quality assurance processes across early help

5. Strengthen relationships with the voluntary, charity and social enterprise sector including faith groups so that the offer is even more joined up