



North East Lincolnshire Council Prevention and Early Help Strategy 2019 - 2021



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1. Introduction - Why do we need Prevention and Early Help in North East Lincolnshire?

Vision - North East Lincolnshire - working together for all children and families to be safe and happy with hope and ambition for their future

All children deserve the best start in life but many children face the kind of disadvantage that affects their development and has a negative impact on their future health, wellbeing, happiness and potential. In North East Lincolnshire we believe that experiencing challenge or disadvantage at any stage during childhood should not dictate a child's future. It is widely known that effective early help can transform lives – helping parents/carers into work, stabilising children at school and removing the barriers to living healthy and productive lives.

The most effective early help considers the whole family and puts in place as much support as necessary, for as long as it is needed.

Whilst we understand that the majority of families thrive and do well, without the need for support, from time to time, there are some families who require some additional help. We know that there are a number of vulnerable children, young people and families in North East Lincolnshire who are more likely to experience difficulties in their lives and may need support to help overcome them.

These children, young people and families are likely to be those:

- Suffering neglect
- With alcohol, drug or substance misuse issues or those living with a parent or carer who has alcohol, drug or substance misuse issues
- Who are affected by domestic abuse
- Who have poor mental health or whose parents or carers have poor mental health
- Engaged in anti-social behaviour, in receipt of a police reprimand or on the edge of criminal activity and/or with a parent or carer in prison
- In families experiencing severe or persistent poverty or whose families are homeless or long term unemployed
- At risk of entering or re-entering children's social care
- Who are teenage parents or pregnant teenagers
- Missing education
- Missing from home
- Who are young carers
- With disabilities or special educational needs (SEND)
- Who are asylum seekers and refugees
- With past trauma and low resilience
- In families where parenting capacity is limited



The Cost of Late Intervention

The Early Intervention Foundation estimates that the cost of late intervention to the state in England and Wales is almost **£17 billion** per year (based on 2016 data). This is equivalent to £287 per person.

By continually developing our understanding of community need, there may be opportunities to intervene before problems occur. This strategy sets out North East Lincolnshire's continued ambition for the development of a place based system wide approach for Prevention and Early Help aimed at improving outcomes for all children, young people and families and ensuring that the right support is given at the right time.

We recognise that to achieve this ambition that all stakeholders may have different roles to play. We need to make best use of resources by supporting families earlier when issues arise. As outlined in the national Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2018, we have a responsibility to promote interagency cooperation to improve the welfare of all children.

There are opportunities to support people and intervene where necessary across the life course. In North East Lincolnshire we believe in promoting opportunities for self-reliance, independence and resilience. We need to work in collaboration with each other in order to enable communities to thrive.

2. What is Prevention and Early Help?

Prevention and early help is defined as responding as soon as possible to the needs of children, young people and families who are 'vulnerable' to poor life outcomes. It aims to put services in place and offer support before things get worse, to help the family move on from their difficulties and lead happier and healthier lives. Prevention and early help therefore aims to promote better long term life outcomes for families and in doing so, also prevent them needing more intensive and higher cost provision in the future, such as children's social care or the criminal justice system.

It is important to be clear about what and how we will need to approach prevention and early help. With this in mind, the definitions favoured by partners, families and stakeholders in North East Lincolnshire are as follows:

- Prevention: preventing, or minimising the risk, of problems arising – See Figure 1: This would be represented by the universal and self-help element of the child concern model.
- Early help: targeting individuals or groups at high risk or showing early signs of a particular problem to try to stop it occurring. See Figure 1: This covers the targeted and co-ordinated early help element of the child concern model.

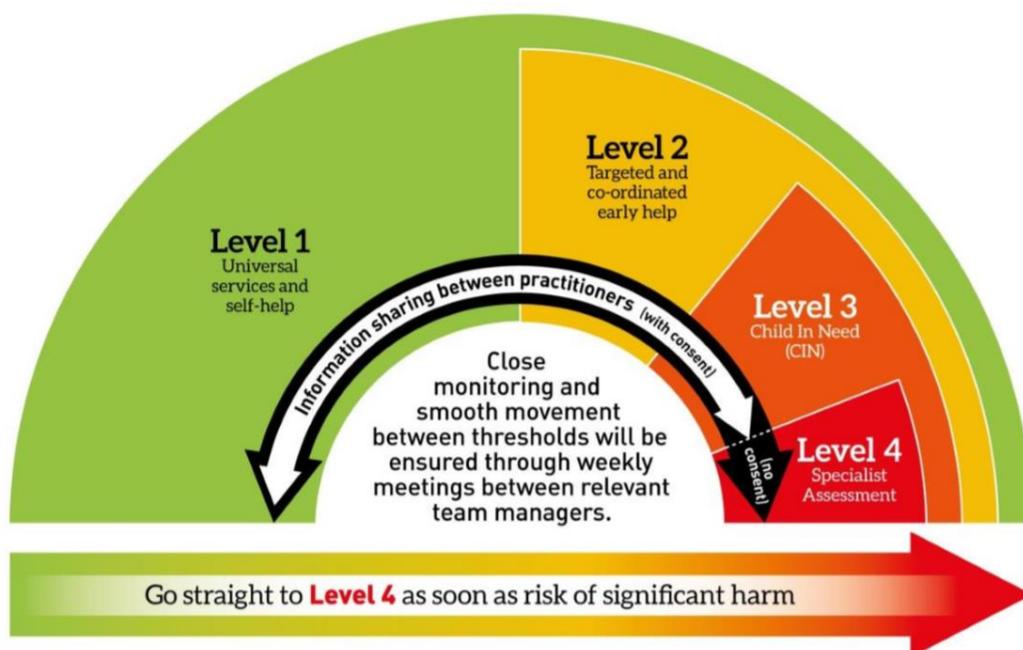


Figure 1 - North East Lincolnshire Thresholds of Need and Response



Together for All -Thresholds of Need 2019

The [Thresholds of Need 2019](#) is the document which is used to ensure appropriate support is provided at the correct level. Figure 1 above shows the levels of the child concern model which are described in more detail in the Thresholds of Need document.

Prevention and early help has been highlighted as a priority in North East Lincolnshire. We are taking a whole system, whole place approach to our collective issues. We will work with children, young people and families together to address these, in order to make the most of the resources we have and offer the best deal to our communities.

We use a range of methods to identify appropriate support for the child and their family. Anybody working with children, young people and families is responsible for **starting conversations** for children and families. When practitioners are concerned that a child is at risk of, or experiencing significant harm, they must contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01472 326292 Option 2.

Our early help approach is underpinned by the principles of Restorative Practice. Restorative Practice is a way of behaving which helps to build and maintain healthy relationships, resolve difficulties and repair harm where there has been conflict. We will support the development of capacity, resilience and independence of families by building on their strengths and enabling them to identify their own solutions and take responsibility for their future.

This is underpinned by our core purpose and principles:

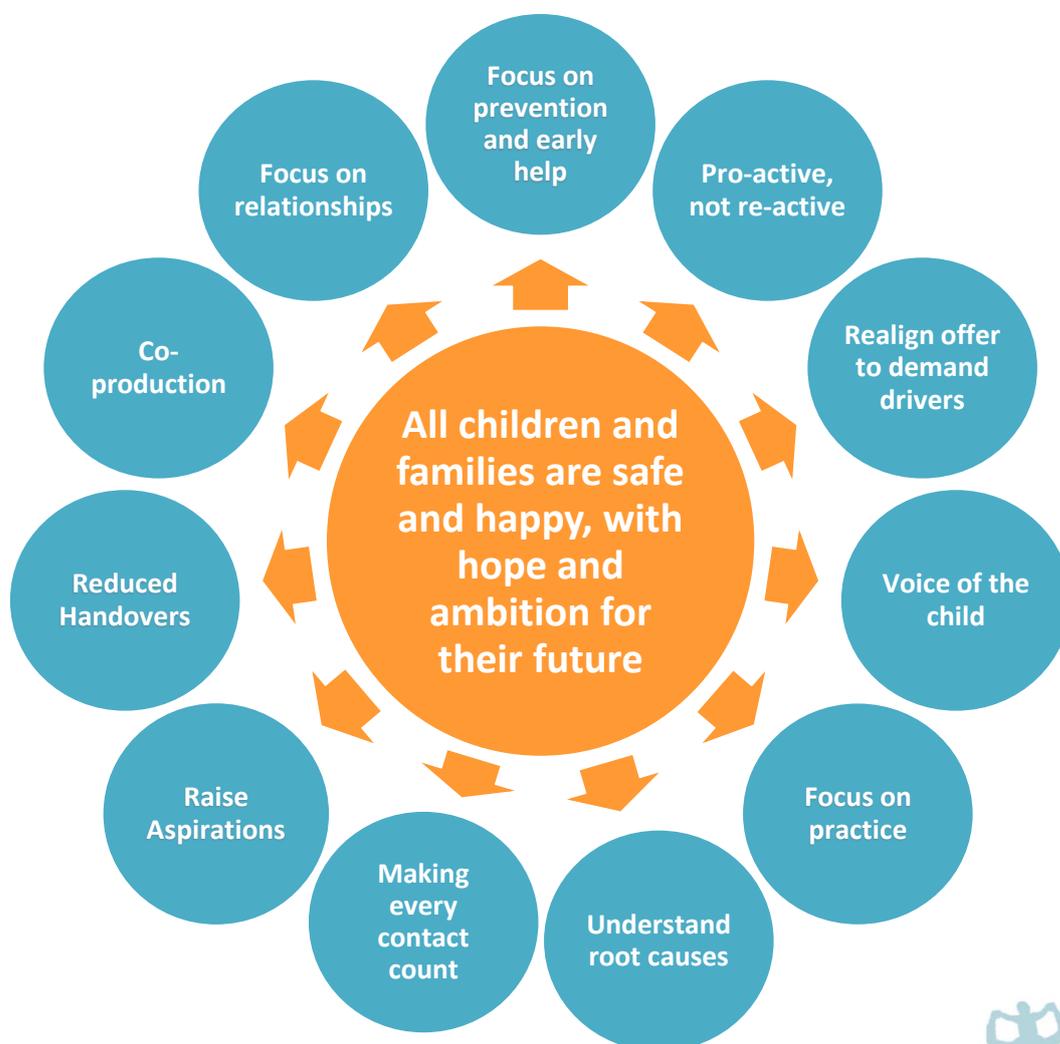


Figure 2 – Core Purpose and Principles



“We aim to keep families safely together where possible, no one can do this alone. Early help is everyone’s business, it’s something we do, not somewhere we go.”

3. What are we currently doing well?

Since the publication of the first Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy for North East Lincolnshire in 2014, building on the good practice of what works, examples of progress and current good practice include:

- Building on the excellent practice of our Children Centre model, 100% of which are judged to be 'Outstanding' or 'Good' we have implemented a model of Family Hubs, extending the offer for families at the heart of every community, offering information, advice and guidance and bringing together services from pre-birth to adulthood (0-19+yrs). This has then progressed to the delivery of integrated Prevention and Early Help services based in 4 localities across the borough. These deliver the children's centre core offer, integrated family support, health visiting, school nursing, youth services and out of court interventions for youth offending services. This offer is evidence based and evaluated annually to assess, how much has been done, how well it has been done and what difference the services have made.
- Embedded the Professional Capabilities Framework, ensuring that we have the appropriate skills across the borough in order to enable effective delivery of prevention focused work – all family hub staff have a development plan based on the 70:20:10 model of learning which recognises that 70% of learning is experiential, 20% is social and only 10% is formal.
- Design and implementation of a framework for practice – 'Creating Strong Communities' - across all provision, incorporating four key elements which include, Signs of Safety, Family Group Conferencing, Restorative Practice and Outcome Based Accountability, thus enabling a child and family focused practice, with a common language across partners. This has taken the form of an extensive programme of workforce development across agencies.
- Established an effective team of Family Group Conferencing specialists across the borough, enabling the effective family focused challenge and support
- Implementation of a new contact form and a revised Early Help Assessment and Family Plan (using a signs of safety approach and also acting as the safeguarding referral if needed) and Multi-Agency Collaborative Support and Allocation Meetings in each Locality. This implementation has included practice sessions to support stakeholders.
- Clear processes, challenge and support opportunities developed to step cases "up" and "down" threshold levels (ensuring cases are appropriately monitored and are managed at the appropriate threshold)
- Improved recording systems allowing tracking of cases across all thresholds through implementation of LiquidLogic
- Development of a daily screening process for prevention and early help requests so that families can be identified with the right help and support as quickly as possible, with the interagency cooperation required to improve outcomes
- Bespoke training developed and delivered with the Safeguarding Children Partnership and to professionals regarding harmful vulnerabilities such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and children who go missing. A high success rate in

identifying vulnerable young people early has led to almost all CSE cases now being managed at early help

- Together for childhood – is a place-based partnership approach, which focuses on the development of preventative responses to multiple adversities. This includes domestic abuse, drug and substance misuse, parental mental health and neglect, with an initial focus on the highest areas of need and demand within the system. This programme comes with a 5-10 year commitment from the NSPCC to North East Lincolnshire. There has and will continue to be some focused activity within East and West Marsh area although there is a clear intent in relation to the dissemination of learning and broader work across the borough. This programme builds on Phase 1 of the 0-19+ Programme by further integrating our offer to children and families with support from key partners by working with our communities.
- Pause works with women who have experienced, or are at risk of, repeated pregnancies that result in children needing to be removed from their care. It aims to give women the opportunity to pause and take control of their lives breaking a destructive cycle that causes both them and their children deep trauma. One in four women who has a child removed through the family courts is likely to return to have another removed. Pause began in North East Lincolnshire in June 2017 and to date has worked with 32 women, who between them have lost 108 children into care. Supporting the women to access the most effective contraception for their needs has meant that the programme has avoided 21 live births – which would have resulted in these children entering the care system. As part of their outcomes measures, Pause collect data on the Office of National Statistics (ONS) ‘Well-Being Questions’ (Measured through ‘life satisfaction’ and ‘worthwhileness’ and have a UK average of 7.9 and 7.7 respectively). For all women supported by Pause, their scores improve markedly over the 18 months of the programme from an average of 4.14 (Life-Satisfaction) and 4.47 (Worthwhileness) at the start to 5.71 to 5.78 respectively upon completion.
- Introduced an evidence based group intervention, Domestic Abuse Recovery Together (DART), to support mothers and their children who have escaped a domestic violence situation. There are now 20 practitioners trained across the multi-agency partnership to deliver this programme which provides therapeutic support for children who have experienced DA. This first programme saw 100% retention and attendees were wholly positive about their journey. Two further programmes have successfully been delivered for a cohort of younger children and teens; 7–11 years and 11–14 years. Piloted the DAY programme which supports young people around healthy relationships, with plans for wider group roll-out and since May 2019 Academies are now informed if a child who attends their Education setting will be heard at MARAC. They are invited to attend the meeting or how to share information with MARAC. Further training is planned for the Step Up programme, which addresses Teenagers who are violent within their home to family members.
- Young carers staff and functions have been integrated/co-located into the Adult Carers Centre to enable a joined up approach to support for carers within families
- Young Minds Matter school links team training workshops for professionals and parents
- Criminal and Sexual Exploitation Training Level 2 – developed and delivered to staff and partners

- Family hubs continue to incorporate the SureStart Children's Centres element of the provision, with a core purpose focused on improving outcomes for young children (0 -5) and their families, with a particular emphasis on the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in child development and school readiness. The Family Hubs deliver 9 different activities (across the borough) to promote development of children aged 0-5 years in the three Prime areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage; personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and physical development.
- In early 2019, Family hubs partnered with the NSPCC to offer a 1:1 home based intervention 'Building Blocks', aimed to tackle neglect and support parents with additional learning needs with children aged 0-7 years.
- Offered adult learning courses across family hubs, particularly for those furthest away from the labour market with 365 learners taking up this provision in one academic year alone.
- Provided volunteer opportunities to 44 adult learners totalling 3,467 volunteer hours
- Family hubs delivered 6 different parenting programmes, some co-facilitated with partners such as Cambridge Park School and NSPCC Participants are scaled at the beginning and end of the programmes and parenting scores for some of these increased by 40%, (depression scores decreased by 10%, anxiety scores decreased by 50% and stress scores decreased by 30%).
- Over one year, families first practitioners with a focus on parenting and family support provided 1:1 support in each quarter to approximately 970 children or 492 families. Including those closed, they supported 1523 families with 1:1 interventions (65% between the ages of 5-19 years). All work included an almost equal percentage across the main drivers of demand; substance misuse, mental ill health, domestic abuse and neglect. 70% of all work was strengths based parenting intervention.
- Developed a new approach supporting the youth offending service; Diversion from crime aimed at preventing criminalisation of young people under the age of 18 years, by the prevention of young people identifying as offenders, reducing the risk of re-offending and increasing Public protection by having a systematic approach to victims of crime. Early indications of this new approach within Early Help suggest that the work undertaken in collaboration with partners including police and Anti -social behaviour colleagues has contributed to the success in reducing crime and anti- social behaviour - Anti-social behaviour has reduced in East and West Marsh in 2018 by 22% and 29% respectively
- Taken a lead role on the Harmful Sexualised Behaviour agenda, increased panel membership, accessed up to date training and refreshed the Terms of Reference. All young people have been assessed and allocated in a timely fashion.

Creating Strong Communities: A framework for practice

The Creating Strong Communities (CSC) Programme (funded by the Social Care Innovation Fund) was set up in April 2015. The programme model is designed to fundamentally change the way local practitioners and partners work together within North East Lincolnshire to support and safeguard vulnerable children, young people and families. The four elements of the model have been designed as support tools to be the framework for practice within Children’s Services.

The model has four elements which are outlined overleaf in Figure 3 and include the following:

Family Group Conferencing provides mediated support for the whole family, resulting in an agreed family support plan, which sets out the best route forward for the family to take care of their child(ren).

Signs of Safety (SoS) enables practitioners across different disciplines to work collaboratively and in partnership with children, young people and families using the same language and methods.

Restorative Practice is an approach which aims to resolve conflicts at the earliest stage, by encouraging both robust challenge and support for all parties. Restorative Practice promotes critical reflection and consideration of language.

Outcome Based Accountability is a powerful thinking process which focuses a whole organisation on outcomes rather than process.

Within the design of the CSC programme model there is a strong belief that the whole programme is greater than the sum of the component parts. Outcome Based Accountability is placed at the heart of the model and provides the outcomes focus or “glue” that holds the other three elements of new support practice together.

Since April 2015 the CSC Programme has gone a long way to develop and embed the practice framework for the entire children’s workforce of North East Lincolnshire. The CSC Programme is undergoing a longitudinal evaluation over 18months to identify the long term impact of the approach. The results of this evaluation will be included in the next refresh of this strategy.



Figure 3: The Creating Strong Communities Model

4. What still needs to be done?

We need to build on the success and the evidence base that we have already. If collectively we are going to enable a more prevention focused environment for children and families across North East Lincolnshire, we still have much to do. We have made much progress, and have also identified a number of areas that we need to develop further in order to enable effective early help for children, young people and families. Our offer needs to become more integrated across the system and the model of delivery will continually develop as we learn more about the best way to meet need early. We need to improve the way we work with families that we struggle to engage with improving the effectiveness and targeting of early help.

As a collaboration of key public and voluntary sector partners we need to continue to develop a coherent system of support for children and families across North East Lincolnshire. We all play a key role in supporting and facilitating the required developments by sustainably rebalancing children's services by focusing on prevention and (in the long term) reducing demand to social care.

As a result, further development areas include:

- Capitalise on any opportunities to share practice, develop provision and use resources effectively that opportunities such as partnership working with any agency that touches the lives of children and families, such as closer working with adult services on issues such as domestic abuse, substance misuse and parental mental health. This will deliver an integrated approach to areas of high demand as defined by local partnership data with a focus on the core drivers of demand
- Improving the way we listen and respond to children, young people and their families through co-production, before, during and after intervention
- Develop system wide, easily accessible information advice and guidance about the processes for accessing early help with different agencies – early help local offer (system wide – not just council)
- Ensure that we further develop and embed the Creating Strong Communities model as our frame work for practice, ensuring families are at the heart of positive change. Undertake a longitudinal evaluation of the impact of the Creating Strong Communities programme to identify the longer term impacts of the programme



Children's Workforce Development

The Children's Workforce Professional Capabilities Framework is available here

- Updating skills of the workforce to be able to more effectively respond to the issues most affecting families. Staff across all agencies will be able to access practice development sessions on:
 - Use of the graded care profile to assess families at risk of suffering from neglect
 - Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)
 - Early childhood brain development
 - Signs of Safety
 - Identifying and responding to domestic abuse
 - Identifying and responding to substance misuse
 - Emotional Health Support (through the Futures in Mind (FIM) programme)
 - Assertiveness and persistence with those families that we struggle to engage with
 - Family network meetings
 - Identifying, and reducing inter-parental conflict
- Working with some families for longer to support sustainable change and resilience
- Promoting the Early Help system and processes - promoting Collaborative Support and Allocation Meetings (CSAM) as a means to review support at an early help level
- Investing in partnerships, not just through board meetings but through one to one relationships to build shared values and outcomes across the system
- Improving communication with staff and partners to help develop the understanding of early help and give clarity around responsibilities through the Together for All pledge, which was launched in July 2019.
- Developing our digital capabilities and offer to ensure that a broader section of the community are and can engage through technology at appropriate levels of need and families can find the help and advice that they need more easily through digital means
- Improving work with schools/academies and other education providers to ensure that we are making the most of our opportunities and resources together, to ensure children and young people and their families have the best chances to succeed within mainstream education
- Seek opportunities to align resources towards prevention and early help and ensure that any opportunities to jointly commission provision are realised
- Ensure that those who we struggle to reach are always targeted and supported in the right ways. Ensuring that the support is not hard to reach, whatever the level of need. Using our collective knowledge to identify those people most likely to need our help and get the right support to them at the earliest opportunity

- Continue to deliver the Together for Childhood programme. Including ongoing delivery of partnership working with the NSPCC and Humberside Police and evaluation based on 5 key priority areas:
 - Prevention of Domestic Abuse
 - Engaging with Fathers
 - Trauma Informed Care
 - Community Capacity Building and mobilisation
 - Research and Evaluation
- Annual commissioning review of all Early Help activity, analysing impact of evidence based programmes of intervention
- Improving the understanding of thresholds and processes to ensure that practitioners from all agencies have confidence in the system and feel safe in decision making
- Extend the delivery of Family Group Conferencing to Child in Need / Child Protection levels
- Consider how Family Hubs and Education Psychology could work more closely together
- Regular management team meetings to help understanding of services and relationship building across the system
- Implement safeguarding board plans for performance monitoring

5. How will we know that prevention and early help is making a difference?

Our aspiration for the prevention and early help strategy is that the success of our efforts will be shown in positive outcomes for all of our children and young people. Our success will be measured in the achievement of the five outcomes outlined within the [North East Lincolnshire Council Outcomes Framework and Commissioning Plan](#).

The five overarching outcomes detailed within the plan are, that all people in North East Lincolnshire:

- Enjoy and benefit from a strong economy
- Feel safe and are safe
- Enjoy good health and well being
- Benefit from sustainable communities
- Fulfil their potential through skills and learning

These outcomes are supported by a series of high level indicators, informed by a range of performance measures, which we will use to manage our progress. In future we will move away from the traditional approach of reporting activity (how much, how often) and ensure that we focus on measuring and understanding the impact of what we do (what difference does it make?).

Analysis suggests that there are a number of drivers of demand at high levels of need the following measures of success for the further development of Prevention and Early Help in North East Lincolnshire have been identified:

- Safe reductions in the number of looked after children
- Safe reductions in the number of children on child protection plans
- Safe reductions in the number of children in need
- Reduced number of referrals requiring no further action (NFA)
- Reduced number of assessments completed by social workers
- Evidence of successful interventions undertaken (reporting on impact, not process)
- Reduced numbers of children in residential placements and placed with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs)

6. Outcome focussed alliances

Our Vision is that North East Lincolnshire will have a multi-agency integrated approach where all partners collaborate, co-ordinate, jointly prioritise and maximise their collective efforts to ensure that children, young people and adults are better able to achieve success, make healthier choices, be resilient, be independent, be good parents/carers and feel that they have voice and influence.

To progress this prevention and early help work we need to ensure that we all play a part. Prevention and early help is not the responsibility of someone else, we all have a role to play.

The public sector has changed and continues to change. We cannot deliver a sustainable, prevention focused system together by delivering in traditional ways or by working in isolation. Service or organisational centric approaches to delivery must cease and will not offer the support needed. We need to move towards effective, outcomes focused alliances that will enable children, young people and families to thrive within North East Lincolnshire.

The multi-agency Children's Partnership Board provides the over-arching governance for the development of this work and will report and ensure the necessary connectivity with the relevant theme boards. Community Safety, Health and Well Being and Local Safeguarding Children Board.

There is a strong commitment from all partners to continue to collaborate to improve outcomes for children and young people and all partners have a significant contribution to make to achieve this ambition.

If we are to achieve our vision, we must continue to develop strong collaborative alliances between partners, including schools, the voluntary and community sector, police and general practitioners (GPs), to ensure inter-agency service delivery to meet the needs of those most vulnerable or at risk.