**Cluster Group Minutes (27th & 29th April):**

**New Stronger Families Service:**

**Deanna Nielson (Head of Service for Stronger Families, Prevention & permanence)**

**Antony Madden (Head of Service for First response, MASH and Out of Hours Social Work)**

**Key Information:**

* New service will now be launched in August 2021
* Between now and then the service is keen for feedback from Schools
* Prior to the launch further information will be sent out detailing the new referral process, contact numbers, showing staff how to use the online portal etc.

**Stronger Families:**

Stronger Families is about having something aspirational for families; to make them stronger, more resourceful, and knowledgeable about the services available to them. The aim is for intervention to be at the right time and from the right service. This recognises that with current interventions sometimes families can feel ‘done to’ as opposed to engaged in meaningful intervention helping them to build on their own strengths.

It might be that families will need a period of work with a Stronger Families Key Worker to achieve their goals or that another professional/organisation is better placed to support the family with the particular need for example a school nurse, pastoral support within school or a parenting course etc. Part of establishing the new Stronger Families service has been close work with partner agencies including the voluntary and community sector to establish a clear understanding of all the services available to families in a certain area and what they can offer.

**Stronger Families Hub:**

The new Stronger Families Hub is about having one specific point of access where support is accessed for any child resident in Hillingdon (rather than the current multiple route system which can be confusing). The Stronger Families Hub will be the very front of the MASH (replacing old MASH and Early Help referral routes). There will be one phone number, one email address and one referral system that replaces the current systems.

The focus will be on early intervention/prevention and about accessing the right support for the child/family at the right time including supporting families to access local services.

The new service will be 24 hours, 7 days per week, 365 days per year. This means that families and professionals can contact the service outside of usual office hours and referrals will continue to be processed in the evenings and weekends. It also means that families can speak to a trained practitioner during these times if needed and directed to the right support straight away. Triage workers will process referrals to allow senior practitioners to be available via the phone to support families and professionals when needed.

For professionals seeking to make a referral this will now be the same process when accessing support for families (previously Early Help) and submitting safeguarding referrals. This will be via the same referral form called the Stronger Families Assessment which will then be submitted through the Stronger Families Hub via an online portal. All referrals will then be triaged in the Hub to explore what service might be required for the family. This will include SEND/SENDIASS services, Stronger Families key work, Targeted Youth Services, Statutory Social Work intervention etc. Schools will still be able to call the Hub in emergencies or for consultation as they currently do.

When making a referral, professionals will have to create a username and password on the portal the first time however, following this will be able to log in and pull prior details through as well as save work on current referrals.

The new Stronger Families Assessment replaces the Early Help Assessment and Initial Referral Form (IRF) and has been updated and streamlined with the aim for it to be easier to complete and clearer about the information required from professionals. The language has changed on the form requesting professionals to give their analysis on what is happening within a family and what is needed to support.

It is important to remember that families must consent to all referrals being made to the Stronger Families Hub unless requesting statutory services where deemed seeking consent could place the child at further risk.

The Stronger Families key working service will include 3 locality based teams; North (Hayfield area), South East (Hayes, Harlington, Heathrow villages area) and South West (West Drayton area).

* Anne-Marie McCarthy - (South East Team Manager)
* Lea (Annalea) Perez - (South West Team Manger)
* Louise Hemming - (North Team Manager)

Each team will consist of 7-8 key workers (recruitment is currently underway) and each worker will work with around 12-15 families at one time. Families will be involved in creating their own Stronger Families plan (similar to a TAF plan).

There is currently a strategic Stronger Families working group consisting of all partner agencies (including schools’ representation) that meets quarterly to explore needs, how the service will look, barriers to delivery etc.

Referral routes to CAMHS and health services such as speech & Language remain the same.

Support for Children with Disabilities was asked about following the deletion of the specific outreach service. Deanna Nielson agreed to take this back to the strategic group for more follow up given the specific needs of this group and specialist support required. It was noted that some of the workers from the outreach service have been retained for the new stronger family’s service. Some schools put their names forward to be part of further discussions in this area.

**Between now & August:**

* Safeguarding referrals still to be made via current referral methods.
* The Early Help Services remains on pause currently; this includes any new referrals for key working services.  This is to allow the new Stronger Families Hub to be fully set up and for all external agencies to be briefed on the new service prior to the August launch.
* At present, if you have a child/family where you have identified additional needs you might consider holding a meeting(s) with parent(s) and any relevant professionals involved with the family currently or who might be able to offer future support. The aim of the meeting would be to gather more information about what is happening for the child/family, what strengths they might be able to draw on and where gaps, what support might help (some more guidance on this and a resource list will be circulated).
* If you feel external support is needed but are unable to identify an appropriate service please contact Hannah Ives (CP lead for schools) or the MASH team for a consultation where we will discuss your concerns and provide additional support and advice in regards to what further steps can be taken to support that family. Hannah or the MASH can lease with the key working service for additional input if required.

**2. Lizzie Randall (Adolescent development Service)**

**Transgender Awareness Presentation (See Attached)**

**3. Hannah Ives (CP lead for Schools)**

**Everyone’s Invited Presentation (See Attached Powerpoint with notes & Resources)**

My main advice would be to acknowledge the issue and acknowledge this could be a culture in your school or that there could be behaviours/responses that may feed into this culture. Use this as an opportunity to look and reflect on current practice and culture within your school, remind staff about how to respond both to lower and higher level incidents and explore any learning that may be needed.

I have produced the following resources to assist;

* **PowerPoint on issues to consider**
* **Reminder sheet** for staff on how to manage disclosures
* Refresher **safeguarding quiz and answer sheet** for staff (including peer on peer abuse)

**4. Updates from Safer Schools Police (Allyson Keith):**

**Edibles** –sweets which contain THC (active ingredient in cannabis). Some incidents of children taking/giving to other children in the borough. Please be alert and report to police if aware of any incidents. Please see attached information sheet on Edibles – please can this be shared with parents of secondary pupils and yr 5 & 6 pupils.

**Robberies:** Definition includes that the person who is stealing ‘uses force or puts or seeks to put any person in fear of being then and there subjected to force’. There has been an increase in reports recently involving students particularly in Uxbridge town centre. Please remind students to be vigilant. If students report any incidents, schools should please report these to police as soon as possible – can report via 101 or allocated Safer Schools officer.

Electric Scooters – technically illegal and can be confiscated so remind students shouldn’t be bringing them to school.

SSO team can speak to young people in secondary schools regarding safety, knife crime etc– if primary’s wish for any presentation for young people please get in touch with Allyson who can put you in touch with the youth engagement team.

**Allyson Keith** | **Police Sergeant 293WA** | **Youth Partnership** | **Hillingdon Borough**
**Tel:** 07766 497676
**Email:** Allyson.Keith@met.police.uk