

Case Study: Preventing step-up to statutory services through Early Help

The Early Help service provided crucial support to a family in crisis, demonstrating its effectiveness in preventing the escalation of issues to statutory services. The family, consisting of a mother and her three children, was initially referred to Early Help due to the mother's history of domestic violence, mental health challenges, and the developmental delays of her youngest child, Child C (2). At the time of referral, the mother was managing her finances and household, but her mental health remained fragile.

Initial Support Plan:

The Early Help Family Support Worker (FSW) conducted a thorough assessment and put together a tailored support plan focusing on:

- The mother's wellbeing, particularly in the context of her recovery from domestic abuse.
- Education and wellbeing support for the eldest child.
- Mental health support for the mother, aiming to link her with GP services and mental health professionals.
- Housing support to improve living conditions.

Crisis and Intervention:

During the support period, the mother reached out to the FSW in a moment of crisis, expressing suicidal thoughts and disclosing an overdose. The FSW acted quickly, coordinating with the local Hub Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) to ensure the mother received immediate medical care and that her children were safely with their father. Despite this severe crisis, a strategy meeting concluded that the case did not warrant escalation to statutory child protection (Section 47). Instead, Early Help and safeguarding teams worked together to continue providing support within the Early Help framework.

Effective Interventions and Outcomes:

Key interventions by the FSW included:

- Immediate mental health support, linking the mother with her GP for weekly prescriptions and regular reviews, helping stabilize her condition.
- A safety plan was developed and followed to ensure the mother's wellbeing and the children's safety.
- A family network meeting was held, resulting in new childcare arrangements that alleviated the pressure on the mother.
- The FSW facilitated access to appropriate educational support for Child C, helping the family manage his developmental delays.

The FSW worked closely with the family to establish healthier routines and improve family relationships.

Positive Impact:

The ongoing support from the Early Help service allowed the family to remain stable without the need for statutory intervention. The mother's feedback highlighted the profound impact of the service:

"Thank you for everything you have done for me. You have been a massive support for me, and if it wasn't for you, I wouldn't even be here. I'm so grateful to you."

