

6. CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

6.17 Early Help and Troubled Families

Buckinghamshire Definition of Early Help

The definition agreed by the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) in March 2014, describes Early Help as:

Delivered at levels 1 - 3 of the 4 level model (Thresholds document), when agencies come together to coordinate support using common tools and processes. This support is offered to families who without early intervention might find that their needs then escalate, necessitating higher levels of involvement, including statutory intervention.

Early Help includes the way services work together to support families ensuring that needs are quickly identified at an earlier stage and the appropriate provision is made in order to deliver better outcomes. Our approach to Early Help in Buckinghamshire is family centred, consent-based and focused on working collaboratively with families to build their resilience. A critical ingredient to successful working is the need for families to make a commitment to change.

The Early Help Strategy is based on the Families First approach (the national Troubled Families agenda) which encourages and supports the concept of a lead family worker who can help the family work with all of the problems they face.

6.17.1 Importance

There are moral, social and financial reasons for providing Early Help. Later interventions are less likely to be successful and outcomes for children poorer, and there are increased costs to society such as family breakdown, domestic abuse, substance misuse, truancy, low achievement at school, youth offending and a cycle that is repeated across generations. Early Help is essential to turning the curve towards improvement across a range of outcomes and moving resource to where the biggest impacts can be made.

The rationale for Early Help has been well documented by the Early Intervention Foundation and in reports commissioned by the government (Allen 2011, Munro 2011, Marmot) and forms an essential element of the Working Together 2015 document.

6.17.2 Numbers and prevalence

It is difficult to accurately quantify the number and prevalence of children and young people requiring early help as there is no one consistent data set that is used nationally or locally. Trends and demand for key early help services are covered in other sections of this document and five key early help services are explored in the next section.

Early Help Panels were established in June 2015, first in Aylesbury and then in Chiltern and South Bucks (September 2015) and High Wycombe (November 2015). The remit of the Panels is to assign a lead agency to families where there are multiple and complex issues at level 3 of the Threshold document. The evaluation report of January 2016 showed that after six months of operation (December 2015) 203 families had been discussed at panel. 111 of these 203 families (54.68%) were Level 3 on the BSCB threshold document, whilst 20.69% were Level 2. However, the proportion of Level 3 families is expected to rise significantly in subsequent months. For example, in December 2015, 32 of the 41 families (78.05%) were classified as Level 3, and this increase has continued into 2016. The key presenting issue amongst the 111 Level 3 families were children displaying some signs of emotional and behavioural disorder. This was particularly prevalent amongst teenage boys, between 11 and 13. The Family Resilience Service (FRS) was lead agency in 60.34% of all cases allocated (Level 3.) This figure is expected to remain relatively constant as the Early Help Panel is the only referral pathway for FRS. This is a clear indication of the ongoing demand for targeted and intensive family support services in Buckinghamshire.

The full annual evaluation report on the operation of the Early Help panels is in preparation and is due in September 2016. However, early results indicate that in the year June 2015 to June 2016 a total of 459 families, including 1,113 children, were considered at the Early Help Panels. Ethnicity and location were in line with the population data and its geographical spread across the county. A further 179 families were referred to the Panel but were not discussed as they were filtered out as not meeting criteria.

Strong partnership working has been a major factor in the success of the Early Help Panels, and at the same time the Early Help Panels continue to drive improvements in partnership working. Panels are now being chaired by senior representatives from Buckinghamshire County Council, CAMHS and Thames Valley Police.

There were 30 different referral source agencies to the Early Help Panels, with schools being the largest single group at 49%. Health (all health agencies) referred 24% and the voluntary sector 5%. Lead family workers were provided by 28 different agencies, with the Family Resilience Service continuing to take the bulk of the referrals at 60%. Only one family was assigned to a school to provide the lead family worker.

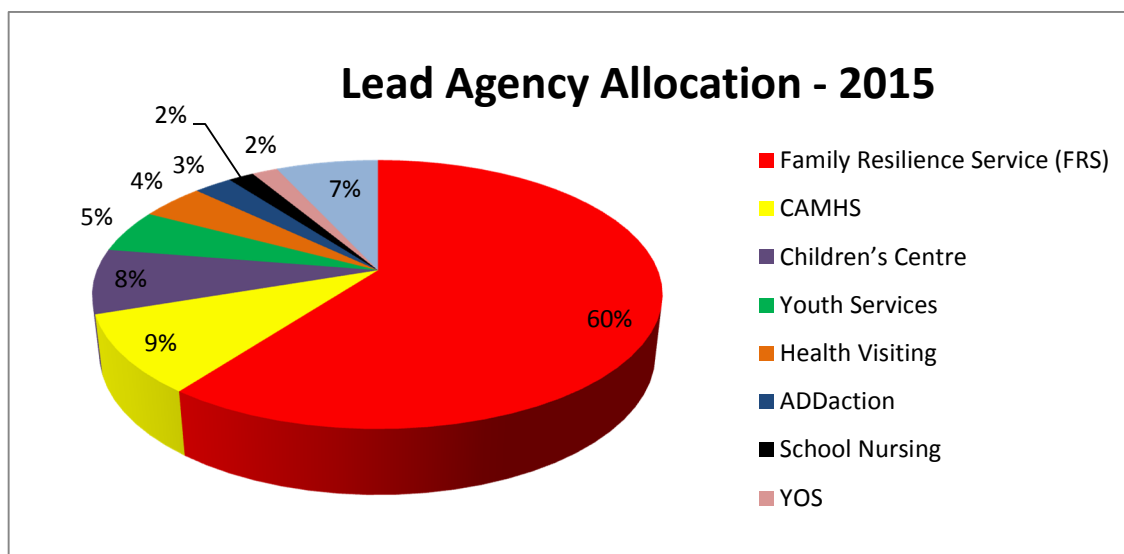
The average number of problems per family was 5.11, with behavioural issues being the most frequently cited, with mental health the next in frequency, especially when they affect the caring parent. Boys aged 11- 13 remain a significant group, especially when linked to ASD and ADHD.

Where work has concluded, positive outcomes were achieved for 67% of families, with a further 33% being escalated successfully and appropriately to statutory social care services.

Table 1

Rank	Problem	Number of families	% of Total Families (111)	% of Total Family Problems (564)
1	2: Displaying some signs of emotional and behavioural disorder	87	78.38%	15.43%
2	22: Persistent poor / inconsistent parenting / care arrangements	61	54.46%	10.82%
3	10: Persistent absence from school	46	41.07%	8.16%
4	20: Mental health issues	40	35.71%	7.09%
5	25: Domestic Abuse	30	26.79%	5.32%

Figure 1 Lead Agency Allocation 2015



6.17.2.1 Families First (national Troubled Families agenda)

The National Picture

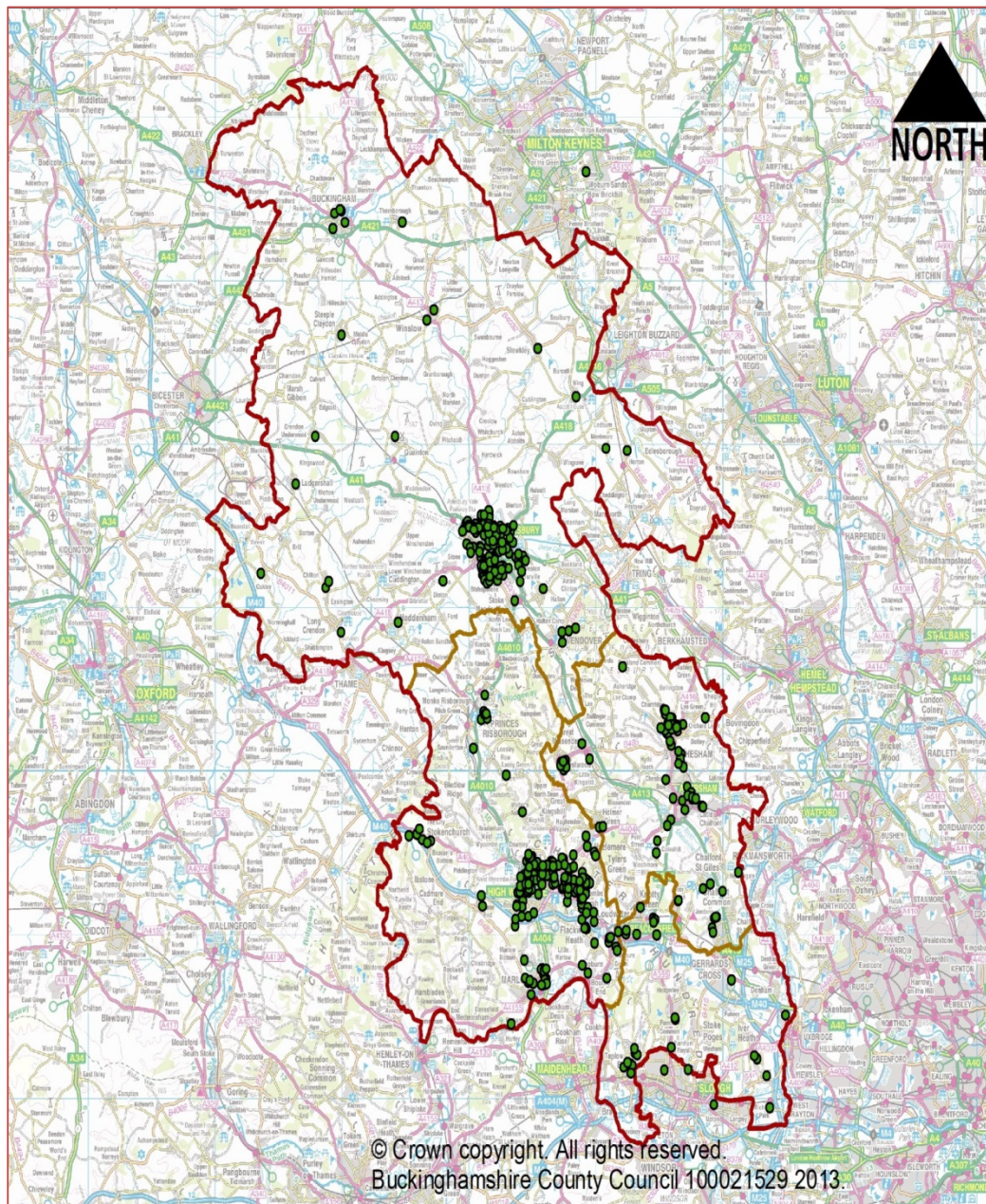
A national evaluation carried out by Ecorys, an independent evaluation partner showed that on entry to the programme, families had the following characteristics:

- 40% had 3 or more children, compared to 16% nationally.
- 49% were lone parent households, compared to 16% nationally.
- 82% of families had a problem related to education such as persistent unauthorised absence, exclusion from school or being out of mainstream education.
- 71% of families had a health problem.
- 54% of families were involved in crime or anti - social behaviour.
- 42% of families had had police called out to their address in the previous six months.
- 29% of troubled families were experiencing domestic violence or abuse on entry to the programme. National estimates put the level of domestic violence among individuals at around 7% in a year.
- Over a third of families (35%) had a child who was either a Child in Need, subject to child protection arrangements or where a child had been taken into care.
- One in five (21%) had been at risk of eviction in the previous six months.
- In nearly three quarters of families (74%) there was no one in work, compared to 17% of households nationally.
- In 83% of families, an adult was receiving an out of work benefit compared to around 11% of the population nationally.
- 70% were living in social housing compared to 18% of the population nationally.

The Local Picture

Locally, the picture of need reflects the national evaluation above. The three initial indicators from Phase One were unemployment, crime and anti-social behaviour, and poor school attendance. However, families have typically faced a much more complex set of problems, as the national data above has indicated.

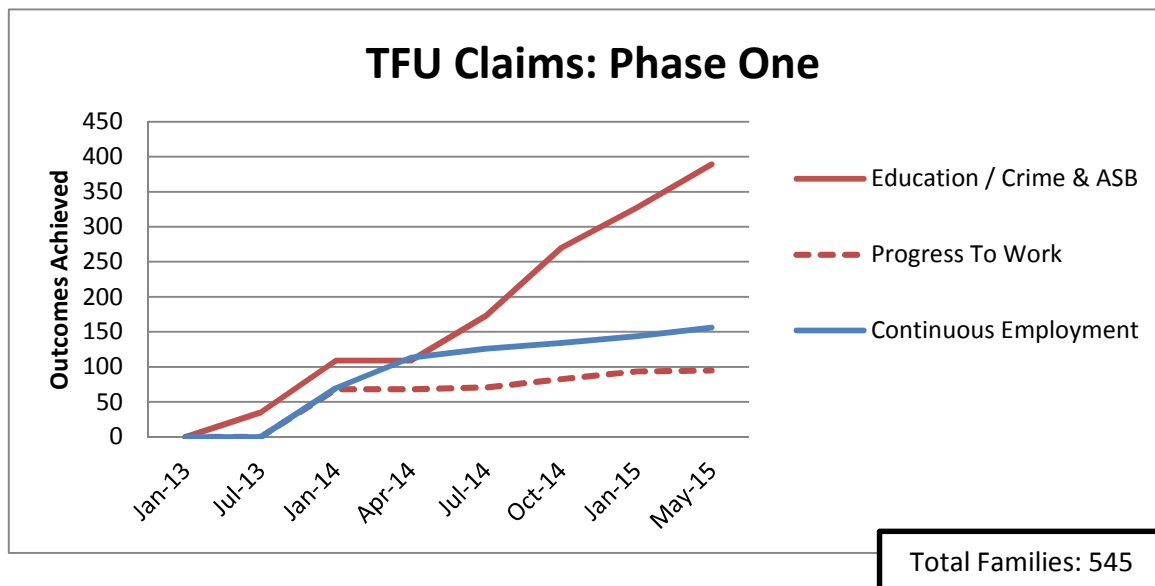
Figure 2 Family distribution



Of the 545 households engaged as part of Phase One, 185 families were located in High Wycombe, and 178 in Aylesbury. This is a significant proportion of the families. In fact, 93.19% of all the households identified in the Aylesbury Vale district area were within Aylesbury itself. This trend is comparable in the Wycombe district council area with 81.86% originating in High Wycombe.

28 families were engaged by the Families First approach despite living outside Buckinghamshire Council boundaries. 18 of these 28 households were located in Slough. This accounts for 64.29% of all the out of area households. It was essential that these families were highlighted, as they did not, and would not have appeared on Slough's list of qualifying families, as they were accessing Buckinghamshire services, whilst living just outside our geographical boundaries.

Figure 3 Phase One 2012-15 claims



In total, there were 545 families turned around during Phase One of the Families First programme in Buckinghamshire. 389 (71.38% of total) of these achieved all relevant measures based on the Education / Crime & ASB parameters, highlighted in our outcomes plane later in the report. Of these 389 families, 95 also achieved 'progress to work' and this explains why the graph represents both these criteria in red. Meanwhile, 156 (28.62% of total) households had at least one adult move from out-of-work benefits into continuous employment.

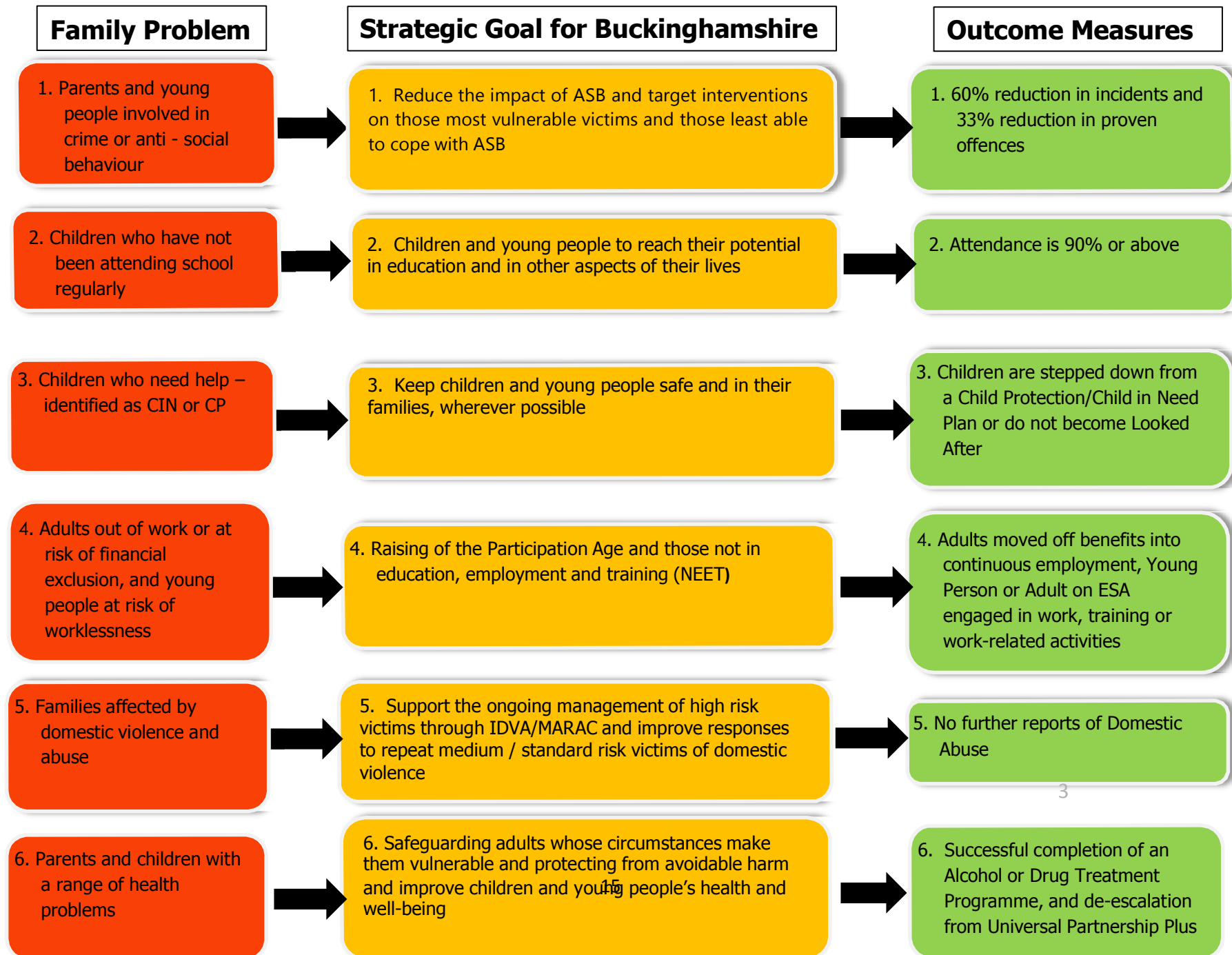
There have been observations of increasing numbers of families experiencing financial hardship. The stereotype of families who subsist on government handouts is not the norm. Most are hardworking – and the current financial climate has brought additional complications to the fore, for example the number of families who are working, living without luxuries, but still struggling to make ends meet.

Phase 2 (2015-2020)

Phase 2 (2015-20) widened the scope of the programme and significantly increased the reach, with a target of an additional 1,860 families. Figure 4 is the first page of the Phase 2 Outcomes Plan and shows both the change in scope and the target criteria.

The government's intention is that by 2020 the approach and lessons learned from the programme will lead to significant changes in how all agencies work together to improve outcomes for children and their families and reduce the burden on the public purse.

Figure 4 Phase 2 Outcomes Plan



6.17.3 Trends

Deprivation is used as a proxy indicator of need as families living in deprived areas are more likely to experience multiple risk factors relative to those that do not. According to the IMD 2015 deprivation has increased in 26 out of 108 wards (24.1%) in Buckinghamshire. This shows a trend of increasing deprivation, with almost a quarter of the county showing a change for the worse. Because of the links between deprivation and need coupled with increases in population, in deprived wards, this suggests there will be an increases trend in children and young people requiring early help. Furthermore, the overall population increase of 0-19 year olds in the wards where deprivation has increased is almost 5% (1427 0-19 year olds), compared to 1.9% for the county overall, and in four wards, the population has increased by a much higher proportion, notably in two already deprived areas and two which have increased in deprivation by 1 or more deciles:

Table 2 Deprivation

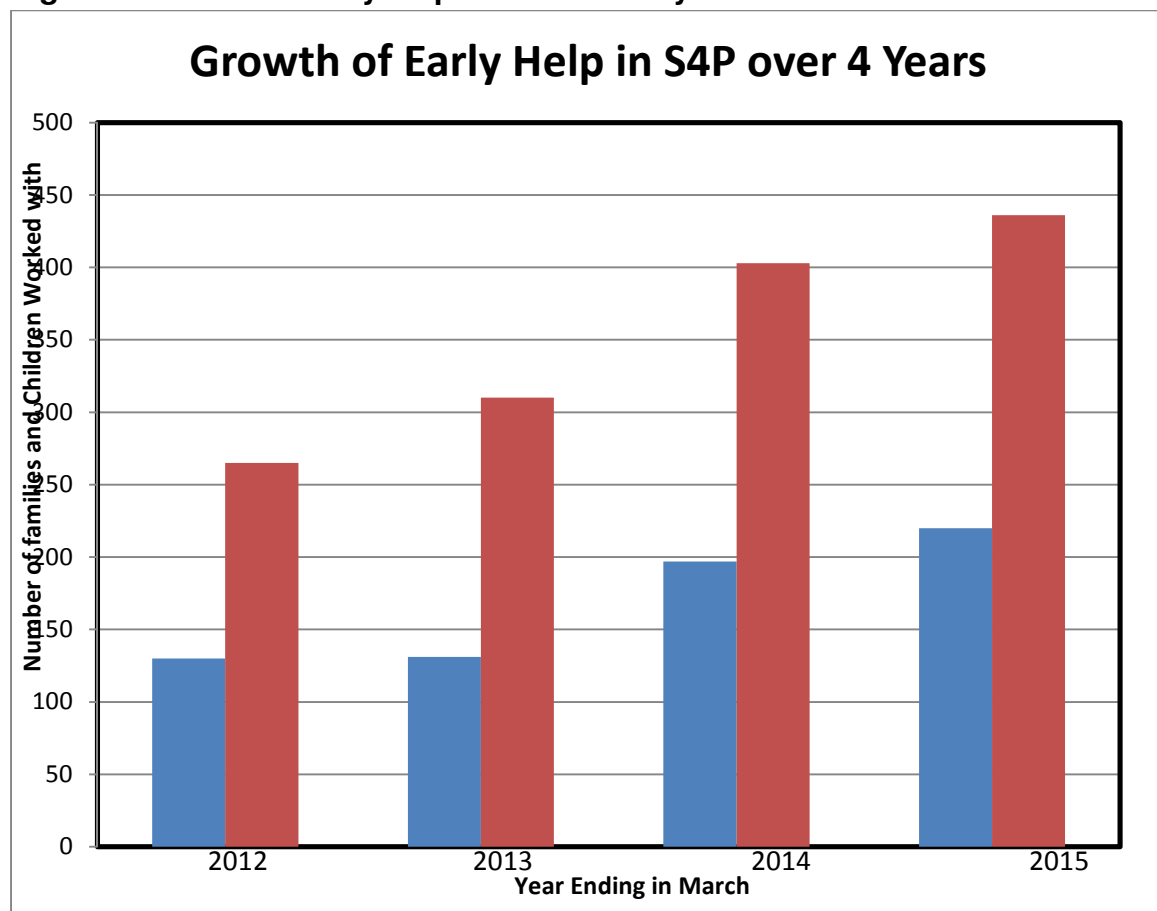
Ward	Average of IMD 2010	Average of IMD 2015	nett change in IMD	0-19 Census 2011	0-19 MYE 2013	Change
Gatehouse	4.5	4	-0.5	1737	2085	20.0%
Quarrendon	5	4.5	-0.5	1644	1926	17.2%
Mandeville and Elm Farm	8.5	8.33	-0.2	2122	2205	3.9%
Walton Court and Hawkslade	6	5.75	-0.3	1657	1662	0.3%
Southcourt	4	3.25	-0.8	2180	2196	0.7%
Coldharbour	8.5	8.17	-0.3	2443	2600	6.4%
Buckingham North	8.5	8.25	-0.3	1569	1445	-7.9%
Luffield Abbey	8	7	-1	1147	1393	21.4%
Tingewick	7.5	7	-0.5	793	831	4.8%
Burnham Beeches	8	7	-1	266	289	8.6%
Dorney and Burnham South	9	8	-1	329	321	-2.4%
Ridgeway	5.5	5	-0.5	746	779	4.4%
Denham North	8	7.5	-0.5	497	472	-5.0%
Hedgerley and Fulmer	9	7	-2	326	339	4.0%
Brill	8.5	7	-1.5	585	597	2.1%
Haddenham	9.33	8.83	-0.5	1694	1762	4.0%
Long Crendon	9.25	9	-0.3	1240	1285	3.6%
Marlow North and West	9.17	9	-0.2	2006	2077	3.5%
Cholesbury, The Lee and Bellingdon	9	8	-1	557	492	-11.7%
Lacey Green, Speen and the Hampdens	10	9.5	-0.5	775	749	-3.4%
Marsh Gibbon	8.5	8	-0.5	983	1016	3.4%
Steeple Claydon	8.5	8	-0.5	645	614	-4.8%
Winslow	8.75	8.5	-0.3	1244	1284	3.2%
Grendon Underwood	7.5	6.5	-1	740	722	-2.4%
Weedon	9	7.5	-1.5	1049	1233	17.5%
Wingrave	8.5	7.5	-1	609	636	4.4%

Looking at referral data for five key early help services gives some indication on the pattern of demand for early help. This data does not quantify the unique number of children and young people requiring these services as the same children will be accessing several services which is the primary characteristic of early help i.e. multiple issues.

6.17.3.1 Support for Parents (home visiting service for families with a range of issues)

Demand for this service has increased year on year for the past four years. Although the service is primarily to support families at level 2 there are an increasing number being referred at level 3. In the first quarter this year just over 1/3 were level 3 and in the second quarter 2/3 were level 3.

Figure 5 Growth of early help in S4P over 4 years



	No of Children
	No of Families

6.17.3.2 Children's Centres (provision of targeted group work and outreach family support)

The population of under 5s in Buckinghamshire has increased by 2.7% from the census 2011 to most current mid-year estimates, but as with the 0-19 population, when taking the IMD into account, the changes in levels of deprivation and the increases in population are more significant.

In the wards where the level of deprivation has increased, the population of under 5's has increased by 6.5% compared to 2.7% overall for the county, and in the wards with the highest levels of deprivation, the increases are far greater:

Gatehouse and Quarrendon wards have increased in population by 19.5% and 40.4% respectively, and Weedon has increased by 10.6%. These increases are primarily as a result of the housing development of Berryfields and Buckingham Park, but they are also areas of, in the case of Gatehouse and Quarrendon, high deprivation, and for Weedon, a net change in deprivation of minus 1.5 deciles, with the ward going from a 9 to a 7.5.

The registration and access for the areas which have shown the largest increases in population have also shown increases that demonstrate the demand for support in those areas: Gatehouse has increased its registrations by 42.9%, which represents 19.6% as a proportion of the population, whereas Quarrendon has increased registrations by 72.1%, a 22.6% increase as a proportion of the population. Overall, the level of registrations has increased by 29.6% from Census 2011 to current mid-year estimates.

The overall level of access (attending at least once in a year) across the county has increased by 30.9% over the past three years. Gatehouse has shown a 54.2% increase in access, with Quarrendon showing an increase of 100.7%, a difference possibly attributable to the opening of the Berryfields centre for Quarrendon. The change in access as a proportion of population shows a similar story, in that Gatehouse has increased by 29%, with Quarrendon increasing by 42.9%.

6.17.3.3 Family Support Cases

Following the introduction of Collate, the new Children's Centre database system, the number of family support cases has increased by 125% from June 2015 (368 cases) to March 2016 (828 cases), demonstrating a significant increased demand for families in need of or receiving early help.

6.17.3.4 Level 2/3 Family Support

The increase in the number of family support cases at level 2 increased by 129% from June 2015 (198) to March 2016 (454), with level 3 cases increasing by 168% over the same period. Cumulatively, level 2 and 3 cases increased from a total of 254 in June 2015 to 604 in March 2016, a 138% increase.

6.17.3.5 Family Resilience Service (Targeted family support service for the most vulnerable children and families outside of children’s social care)

The Family Resilience Service was set up in April 2013. The first table below outlines the numbers of children who received the service and their outcomes from 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015- 2016. The second table provides information on referring agencies for 2013-14 and 2014-15. This data is now captured by the Early Help panels and can be seen elsewhere.

Table 3 Number of children in receipt of FRS and their outcomes

Descriptor	2013-14 actual	2014-15 actual	2015-16
New cases (children)	1,564	1,434	1,321
Closed cases	988	976	1,468
Total number of cases worked	1,564	2,021	1,978
% successful outcomes	84%	85.2%	81%
Intervention length	48% cases 0 – 3 months	66% cases 0 – 3 months	59% cases 0 – 3 months
Parenting groups	32	31	34

Table 4 Referral source

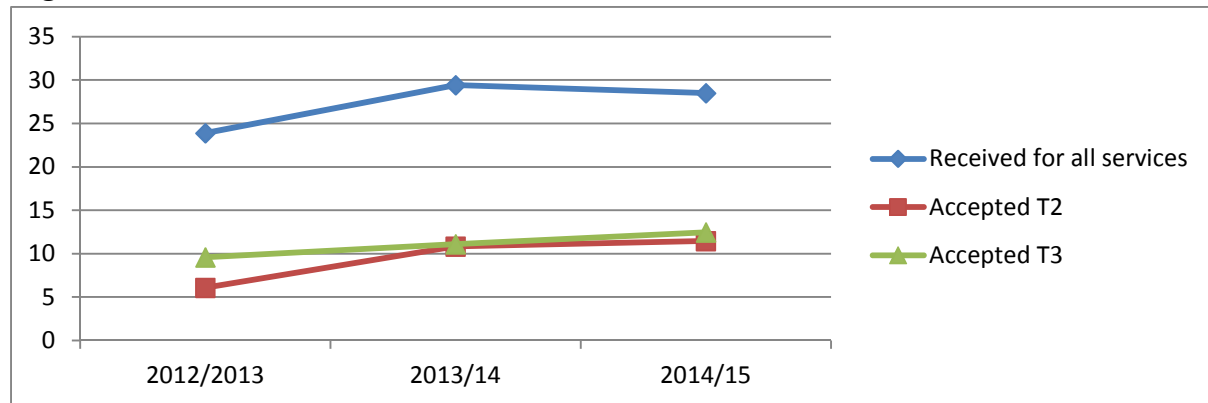
Referrer	2013-14	2014-15
Education	42%	35%
Health	21%	22%
Step Down from social care	21%	23%
Other agencies	9%	11%
Other (including individual and family)	7%	9%

The introduction of the Early Help Panels from June 2015 has impacted on the Family Resilience Service, and this is outlined in the section entitled Demand.

6.17.3.6 Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service

Although the spike in referrals to CAMHS, seen in 2014, have plateaued in 2015 the demand for support at tiers 2 and 3 have seen slight and steady increases.

Figure 6 Demand for CAMHS



6.17.4 Demand

Trends in referrals to early help services have increased or remained consistent year on year. This suggests that demand for early help services is likely to either increase or remain relatively static. However, with the expected increases in population in the more deprived wards this suggests that demand will increase as deprivation is a proxy indicator of need. As early help is embedded across the workforce and early identification of additional need improves then this could result in increases in the demand for early help services creating pressure in the system.

It is tempting to predict that as more children and young people receive appropriate early help this should result in a downward trend in the demand for statutory services from children's social care. However, emerging evidence from other local authority areas and the national Troubled Families programme indicates that there is a significant time delay in such a reduction – potentially up to 10 years. What is clearer is that the reductions in demand benefit the whole partnership rather than simply the local authority Children's services. It is also worth noting that the reduction is more often seen as costs avoided rather than costs saved.

6.17.5 Horizon scanning

Early Help panels provide an opportunity for improving the intelligence available on children, young people and their families who require early help. This should feed in to strategic commissioning options for early help services in order to meet levels of need and to ensure services commissioned meet the key presenting issues. Through the new Children's Centre contracts there will be an increased focus on targeted

family support. A strategic review of family support services has started to inform future commissioning.

Joy Shakespeare
Head of Early Help
June 2016