

OFFICER DELEGATION SCHEME RECORD OF DECISION

TO BE UPLOADED TO THE INTERNET BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Date: <input type="text"/> 01/07/2025		CYP25-26
Responsible Officer: <input type="text"/>		
Jen Rust – Head of Service Early Help		
Type of Decision (please refer to MO Guidance):		
Key	<input type="text"/>	Non-Key <input type="text"/> X
Freedom of Information Status: <i>(can the report go in the public domain)</i>		
Not exempt		
Title/Subject matter: <input type="text"/> Investing in new roles to strengthen the EH offer, and utilising the supporting families reserves funds.		
Budget/Strategy/Policy/Compliance:		
(i) Is the decision within an Approved Budget?	Yes	
(ii) Is the decision in conflict with the council's policies, strategies, or relevant service plans?	No	
(iii) Does the decision amend existing or raise new policy issues?	No	
(iv) Is the decision significant and/or does it meet the £100,000 threshold for recording?	No	
Equality Impact Assessment [Does this decision change policy, procedure or working practice or negatively impact on a group of people? If yes – complete EIA and summarise issues identified and recommendations – forward EIA to Corporate HR]	No	

Summary: OBJ

In line with the Government reforms, and a strengthened Early Help offer within Bury we are seeing more families being directed into targeted Early Help services at the point of referral, and a reduction in need for statutory social work services. We are committed to providing support to children/young people and their families at the earliest opportunity and work with them at the lowest point of intervention.

Whilst there has been increased investment into front line children's services, the Early Help teams have remained the same, with the same number of practitioners within the structure and no additional capacity or resource.

Our permanent structure currently has 5 managers and 25 practitioners across the four locality teams and MASH. We have had to increase staffing at the front door within the MASH to meet increased need, however, caseloads within the teams have increased with practitioners managing more complex work than they had done previously. As the data below shows we are taking an increased number of families from MASH and are now taking more per month than children's social care teams.

Outcomes per month

	Jan 25	Feb 25	March 25	April 25	May 25	TOTAL
Progress to CSC	206 (23.7%)	152	167	152	220 (18.5%)	897
Progress to EHM	126 (14.5%)	180	189	215	299 (25.1%)	1,009
NFA	537 (61.8%)	553	552	537	673 (56.5%)	2,852

Caseloads of practitioners has increased - with some practitioners now responsible for up to 27 children. We also have 3 apprentices within the team with a reduced caseload. Without additional resource we are likely to see numbers of children per worker increase further which will have a detrimental impact on the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of service delivery and interventions.

We recognise that the approach to supporting more families at an earlier point, and at the least intrusive level is the right direction for Bury, however, we need to make sure that our staffing and structures are right to ensure that children and families receive a good quality service. However, due to the fact that Early Help and Children's Social Care will be subject to some form of restructure in the next 12 - 24 months in line with the reforms we do not feel a full restructure of Early Help services at this juncture would be beneficial, therefore we are looking at interim options and solutions.

Interim Proposals

1. Increase capacity within the locality teams by recruiting additional EH Practitioners

We have recruited to the 4th Team Manager post within the locality structure – this is a fix term position pending further restructure in line with the social care reforms. The plan is to move the parenting practitioners under this manager, as at present they are managed directly by the service manager. The request is to recruit to an additional 4 EH practitioners to support with capacity and increasing demand.

We want to develop at least one of these roles into our pregnancy and infant specialist practitioners who would be able to undertake targeted EH assessments and offer intensive practical support to vulnerable mothers and fathers. The aim is to provide a clear pre-birth pathway ensuring that we are providing families with the right support at the right time to prevent or reduce the likelihood of problems escalating to a point whereby a statutory social work assessment is required. Where this model works well, the offer a targeted pregnancy support is offered to all care experienced young people should they want this, and any young people who have a social worker and become pregnant. Our data indicates that we are not working with enough families at a pre-birth and infant stage and therefore we have an opportunity to really develop our pre-birth offer.

With additional capacity we will be able to offer more intensive support to families preventing problems from getting worse.

2. Extend the 12-month 0.5 Youth Justice Prevention MASH practitioner

We have been funding the YJP MASH officer out of the community safety partnership fund, however, the practitioner has now moved to a new role, and therefore we need to recruit into this vacant post. The grant funding was due to end in September and following a review of our EH team in MASH we recognise that this is a much-needed post and one in which has benefitted MASH including supporting the review of Police CAPS to ensure that where a prevention need is identified we can respond appropriately. We have had confirmation that the CSP funds have been extended for a further 12-months and therefore this will fund this post for a further period of time.

3. Convert the 0.6 Keeping Families together post into a full-time position.

The Keeping Families Together team has now been operational for 12 weeks – it has become evident even at this early stage that the part time role does not meet the need of the children and families and are therefore seeking to use a small proportion of the supporting families money to convert this post to a FT position. Through discussions with the Director, we are considering our longer-term plans and developing the edge of care service in the future, however, at this time we feel that this is an interim arrangement which will enable us to work more effectively with more families in a flexible way and reduce the likelihood of children needing to be looked after.

Investment into Children's Social Care

1. Provide a further 12 months funding for a second service manager position within Family Safeguarding.

An additional 12 months funded was agreed to recruit a 2nd service manager for Family Safeguarding, and this is a request to utilise funds from the Supporting Families Budget to support a further 12 months. Over the next year we will be working to strengthen practice and our response to inspection findings relating to children in need of help and protection. In addition, we will be preparing for our transition in line with the social care reforms and recognise that additional resource will be required to ensure that the transition goes smoothly as we move towards multi-disciplinary teams and S17 work

being held by family practitioners. This service manager will support reforms and work closely with Early Help services to develop and support our plans for the future.

Funding & Resource

All these roles will be recruited to on a fix term basis for **12 months** which will allow additional resource in the interim pending further changes in line with the social care reform / restructure.

These posts will be recruited to using the Supporting Families Programme Reserve money and will have no impact on the budgets for 2025 - 2026 and these proposals have had finance oversight and agreement of funding.

Post	FTE	Grade	Basic	NI	Super	Total worker annum per per	Total (All) 12mths
EH Practitioner	4	9	£33,366	£4,255	£6,506	£44,127	£176,509
YJP MASH practitioner	0.5	9	£16,683	£2,127	£3,253	£22,063.50	£22,063.50 (Funding from CSP)
KFT additional 0.4 to make the 0.6 to 1 FTE	0.4	9	£33,366	£4,255	£6,506	£44,127	£17,650
Service Manager Family Safeguarding	1	SM1	£57,057	£7,808	£11,126	£75,992	£75,992

Total Cost £292,214.50 (12 months)

Wards affected: ☐ All

Consultations: ☐ Unison

Scrutiny & Review Committee Interest: ☐ None

Options considered: [OBJ]

We have had a renewed focus on thresholds and directing families to the right part of our service from the point of referral. This has, as evidenced increased demand for Early Help services over the past 5 months. Whilst we have established panels to reduce the number of families open to the service after 6 months, this has to be flexible dependent upon family need and the number of long-term plans has significantly reduced over the past 8 months. Even with this reduction we are not able to create any additional capacity within the service and as such are in a position where additional resource is necessary.





Decision

As highlighted, without additional resource within the EH teams we are likely to see increased caseloads and a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of our support to children and families. We have money from Supporting Families in reserve, and therefore it is felt that this is a proportionate use of the resource to ensure continued effective service delivery.

In regard to the KFT team the 0.6 post does not lend itself to meeting the demands of the children and families, and therefore as an interim measure pending further review, we are seeking to convert this into a FT position.

We established a YJP 0.5 post in the MASH with CSP money to support the identification of young people who would benefit from early support and prevention work. The postholder has moved into a new role and as such without a replacement this portion of our MASH will not be able to function.

The additional funding for a Service Manager in Family Safeguarding will enable additional capacity for the team, and a focus on practice development and improvement.

Decision made by:	Signature:	Date:
Jeanette Richards, Executive Director.		07/07/2025
S151 Officer Neil Kissock, Director of Finance		24/07/2025
Tim Normanton, Assistant Director HR		10/07/2025
Lynne Ridsdale, Chief Executive Bury Council Place Based Lead for Health and Care NHS GM Bury		28/07/2025
Members Consulted [see note 1 below]		

Cabinet Member		
Lead Member		
Opposition Spokesperson		

Notes

1. Where, in accordance with the requirements of the Officer Delegation Scheme, a Chief Officer consults with the appropriate Cabinet Member they must sign the form so as to confirm that they have been consulted and that they agree with the proposed action. The signature of the Opposition Spokesperson should be obtained if required, to confirm that he/she has been consulted. Please refer to the MO Guidance.
2. **This form must not be used for urgent decisions.**
3. Where there is any doubt, Corporate Directors should err on the side of caution and seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer.