

Manchester's Early Help Strategy

2015–2018



Early Help
Manchester.

Foreword

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to introduce Manchester's Early Help Strategy for 2015–18.

Effective Early Help is essential to improve the life chances of Manchester's children, young people and their families.

I was elected to Manchester City Council in 1999, and at nearly every meeting I have since attended concerning children and young people, the words 'early intervention' have been used. Many attempts have been made to intervene earlier in the lives of children and young people; some have been successful, others less so, but Early Help is the first attempt to have a systematic, multi-agency, consistent approach to early intervention.

Children, young people and their families will receive the right intervention as early as possible to tackle problems and prevent issues escalating. Services will be delivered using a whole-family approach. Our interventions will be based on 'what works'.

The update of the 'levels of need' provides a helpful guide for professionals, but should not be a barrier to the important professional conversations that are necessary when there is concern for the wellbeing of a child.

Early Help is everybody's business, and its effective delivery will build capacity in communities that will prevent crime, support education and enterprise, and keep children, young people and their families healthy and safe.

Our vision is to ensure that all our children and young people are safe, healthy, aspiring and achieving, and that families have the resilience to cope with the demands of life in the 21st century. Early Help is fundamental to achieving this vision.

I look forward to working with you to make sure it happens.



**Councillor
Sheila Newman**
Executive Member for
Children's Services



Early Help

“Early Help is intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families or with a population most at risk of developing problems. Effective intervention may occur at any point in a child or young person’s life”

Our journey

Early intervention and prevention for families with children has been a key strategic priority for the city over many years. This strategy builds on the success of our Responsible and Positive Parenting and Think Family strategies and on our work as a pilot place for Total Place, City Region and Community Budgets initiatives.

Our strategic fit

The strategy aligns with the North West Children’s Improvement Programme Integrated Early Help Strategy, Manchester’s Ofsted Improvement Plan, the updated Manchester Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy 2015–20, the Children and Young People’s Statement of Intent, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Family Poverty Strategy and the Greater Manchester Public Service Reform Programme.

Our vision

Our vision is to promote the wellbeing and resilience of families, and we want to ensure that children and young people are safe, healthy, aspiring and achieving.

We will do this in a timely way by offering high-quality and effective services.

Our ambition and aim

We want to improve life outcomes and promote independence for families.

Our ambition is to offer Early Help as soon as possible to families who need support.

We will do this by:

- supporting children, young people and their families to connect to their communities so as to build networks of friendship and support to increase emotional resilience and mental health and wellbeing
- identifying the children, young people and their families who need extra help and support at the earliest opportunity
- working together as a strong partnership to deliver an effective local offer of support
- delivering a whole-family approach to make a difference and achieve good outcomes.

Our principles

Early Help strategies are based on and require full commitment to multi-agency working with consistency of approach, application of levels of needs and agreed response frameworks. They need multi-agency and community ownership, which means that they should invest in strategies that develop the emotional intelligence and capacity of local communities, and devolve real responsibility, leadership and authority to 'users' and encourage self-organisation. There is recognition that professionals and children, young people and their families have vital contributions to make in order to improve the quality of life of children, young people and their families in the city.

The Greater Manchester approach to public service reform is predicated on three key principles: taking a whole-family approach, choosing interventions on the strength of the evidence base, and delivering integrated, co-ordinated and sequenced services at the right time and in the right order. For Manchester, 'whole family' does not just mean parent and child interactions but also the quality of the relationship of those raising the children. Our approach is therefore relational.

Our work is underpinned by the following principles and values:

- Early Help is 'everybody's business' and we intervene earlier at the first signs of potential issues.
- Early Help is about building emotional intelligence, capacity and networks in communities that will prevent crime, support enterprise and education, keep children, young people and their families healthy and make things happen locally.
- Our services will safeguard and promote the health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families.
- We will deliver a visible, integrated local offer that is accessible.
- We will deliver high-quality, evidence-based and timely interventions.
- Our partnership working is built upon working together and delivering a whole-family approach.
- Our workforce will be confident and be supported to engage and intervene with children, young people and their families to offer Early Help.
- We will use peer support networks, not just professionals, as the best means of transferring knowledge and capabilities about Early Help.
- We will take an intergenerational approach to working with communities, with younger and older people working together to improve the lives of individuals, families and communities.
- We will mobilise community assets and resources, including using older people as mentors.
- Our offer will promote the independence and self-reliance of children, young people and their families by providing supportive relationships and connections within local communities that can help people or families continue to survive and thrive.



Guiding principles of the Early Help Strategy

This strategy is owned and will be implemented by Manchester Children's Board. It is a key element of our overall vision to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. It has been developed following a series of consultation processes and is an update of the Early Help Strategy launched in December 2013.

This three-year strategy will be implemented from 2015 to 2018. An annual review will be undertaken by the Children's Board, and quarterly performance monitoring will ensure progress and improvements are being made.

Purpose

The strategy will set out how all partners will work together to reform, strategically plan, jointly commission and deliver a range of provision to support children, young people and their families at the earliest opportunity.

This means providing services at the right time to meet families' needs and to keep them in control of resolving their issues and problems.

The aims of the strategy are to:

- define what we mean by Early Help in Manchester and articulate the principles that inform the development and delivery of services
- set out Manchester's ambition for the development of Early Help services
- identify the needs of Manchester children, young people and their families as articulated in our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- describe an integrated service delivery model
- describe how strong communities are key to preventing issues from arising or escalating
- identify key priorities for action and improvement
- outline how we will know we are making a difference: our success criteria underpinned by an effective performance management system.

It seeks to ensure that:

- a range of Early Help is available across the city
- it is asset-based, builds community capacity and resilience, provides mutual support systems that can identify and tackle problems before they become acute, encourages behaviour that will prevent them happening in the first place, and advises people who find themselves in difficulties
- there is a shift of resources from specialist services to Early Help provision, and that we maximise the potential of all existing available resources to facilitate this
- we develop a workforce that is able to provide Early Help and can recognise and respond to poor mental health and wellbeing in families, and we encourage and develop a range of providers from across the public, private and voluntary sectors.



Our definition of Early Help

Early Help means supporting children, families and communities to build networks within communities, resulting in individuals, families and the wider community building a 'resilience' that leads to a sense of wellbeing and greater quality of life.

Early Help means identifying needs within families early, and providing preventative support and intervention before problems become complex and entrenched.

Early Help means both early in life, offering support to very young children, and early after the emergence of a particular need. It includes both universal interventions and targeted interventions to prevent needs from escalating.

Early Help allows for support to be put in place at the right time to meet families' needs prior to issues reaching crisis point. It draws upon families' own skills and promotes self-reliance.

Early Help approaches mean using approaches that promote and strengthen community, children and family assets, building on the strengths of individuals and communities to develop new ways of thinking about and responding to difficulties.

We aim to reduce the demands upon specialist and higher-tier services.

For the purpose of this strategy the Children's Board has agreed that the following definition of Early Help will be used by all agencies delivering services across the city.

"Early Help is intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families or with a population most at risk of developing problems. Effective intervention may occur at any point in a child or young person's life."

This is the definition used by the North West Children's Improvement Integrated Early Help Strategy, which was approved by the Association of Directors of Children's Services in 2014.

Drivers for change – National context

Many local authorities are operating within a climate of unprecedented challenge for the public and voluntary sector, as demand for specialist services rapidly increases against a backdrop of dramatically reducing resources. For some families (estimated at 30 per cent of the population), difficulties arise which, if addressed early enough, can be prevented from escalating into costly statutory service intervention. If effective, Early Help empowers families to regain control of their circumstances and help transform the lives of vulnerable children without state support and have a secondary, though equally important, positive effect on cost-effectiveness.

Work undertaken by the Early Intervention Foundation, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, the Dartington Social Research Unit, MP Frank Field's review on the Foundation Years, MP Graham Allen's review of Early Intervention, and the work of the WAVE Trust among many others provide enough evidence that Early Help can reduce demand on more reactive and expensive services.

Enabling children, young people and their families to reach their full potential has been a common theme in a number of reviews commissioned by successive governments (Munro, Marnet, Tickell, Allen, Field). They all independently reached the same conclusion that it is important to provide help early in order to improve outcomes. Nationally, interest is growing in an evidence base for early intervention and in particular a need to demonstrate effectiveness to produce cost savings in more specialist and acute services. It is important to recognise that early intervention is not a one-off fix but a highly targeted process and approach – a way of working with specific outcomes.

Drivers for change – Local context

Greater Manchester is an Early Intervention Foundation Pioneering Place

Greater Manchester has two strategic priorities: economic growth, and ensuring all residents can benefit from that growth. Greater Manchester has been working with the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) and with the wider network of early intervention places to lead the way in enhancing early intervention by improving the quantity and quality of services.

Public sector reform programme

We are defining new ways of working through our public sector reform programme.

It means supporting more people to become independent and self-reliant, and reducing dependency on public services. It also involves working more closely with our partners so that services meet all the needs of people, and are not delivered in silos. That means bringing together combined partnership resources to support shared priorities. Reform also means a greater emphasis on evaluating outcomes and generating good evidence, to track the impact that investments have on residents and on levels of demand for public services.

The priorities for public service reform in Manchester are supporting people with a combination of complex needs towards employment and independence, and integrating health and social care underpinned by investments in early years to support future independence.

Expansion of the Troubled Families Programme and complex dependency

We will apply the learning from the Troubled Families Programme and expand the programme with a broader reach and a sharp focus on employment. We will develop the number of key workers with partners and will use knowledge and resources to enhance Early Help with partners.

The Greater Manchester Devolution Agreement

As part of our ongoing relationship with the Government, Greater Manchester has existing commitments to support the delivery of full implementation of the Working Well pilot with a cohort of 5,000, and a continued drive for maximum performance for the implementation of Troubled Families Two (targeting 27,200 over a five-year period).

The recent devolution agreement for Greater Manchester provides an additional set of priorities signed up to by all localities:

- Scaling up current approaches to reform, supporting an additional 50,000 individuals and families with complex needs to move closer to work.
- Jointly commission, with DWP, the next phase of the Work Programme.
- Develop and implement a pilot project to support older workers with long-term health conditions.
- Work with HMT on engaging schools to support early intervention.
- Develop a system-wide business plan for health and social care across Greater Manchester, incorporating targets for reducing attendance at Accident and Emergency.

Ofsted improvement plan

In June and July 2014, Ofsted carried out a single inspection of Manchester City Council's arrangements for children in need of help and protection, looked-after children and care leavers. Ofsted recommended that the local authority and its partners needed to ensure that Early Help is targeted and co-ordinated effectively, so that families receive support when need is first identified and the number of referrals to children's social care is reduced as a result. The existing Manchester Early Help Strategy has therefore been reviewed and updated to improve the Early Help offer. The offer must include: working differently with schools and universal services, establishing local Early Help Hubs that support local school clusters, and a broader range of interventions at the Early Help stage, particularly those provided by voluntary and community organisations.

Domestic violence and abuse is being re-modelled in the city

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy 2015–20 has clear drivers for change which are strongly aligned to Early Help. These drivers are:

- an improved infrastructure to understand both risks and needs
- improved victim and perpetrator confidence to seek help earlier
- simple, clear, integrated routes into and within support for those affected by domestic violence and abuse
- new ways of working
- better use of public money to challenge domestic violence and abuse
- an evaluation culture so we can better understand what is working and why it is working
- to be an inclusive approach for those whom domestic violence and abuse affects.



Manchester: needs analysis

Manchester is a large vibrant and modern city with a diverse and multicultural population, which presents challenges and specific needs for the partnership.

Manchester is home to 503,100 people, 128,200 of whom (25.5 per cent) are aged 0–19 years as reported in the 2011 Census. Manchester's population growth was the highest for any major city, with a 19 per cent increase. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (2010) ranked Manchester as the fourth most deprived local authority in England.

The Manchester Joint Strategic Needs Assessment describes some of the issues experienced by these families to include the following: homelessness, problem drug use in adults, problem drug use in children and young people, alcohol misuse, avoidable injuries, safeguarding, domestic violence and abuse, teenage pregnancy, parenting, offenders and exploitation.

Key findings of the 2015 Child Health Profile for Manchester indicate that:

- Children and young people under the age of 20 make up 25.2 per cent of the population of Manchester, with 57.1 per cent of school children from a minority ethnic group.
- The health and wellbeing of children in Manchester is generally worse than the England average. The infant mortality rate is similar to and the child mortality rate is worse than the England average.
- The level of child poverty is worse than the England average, with 33.9 per cent of children aged under 16 living in poverty. The rate of family homelessness is similar to the England average.
- Children in Manchester have worse than average levels of obesity: 11.7 per cent of children aged four to five and 24.8 per cent of children aged 10 to 11 are classified as obese.
- In 2013/14 children were admitted for mental health conditions at a similar rate to that in England as a whole. The rate of inpatient admissions during the same period because of self-harm was lower than the England average.
- There were 1,375 children in care at 31 March 2014, which equates to a higher rate than the England average. A higher percentage of children in care are up to date with their immunisations, and GCSE achievement is similar to the England average for this group of children.

Health and Wellbeing

Getting the youngest people in our communities off to the best start involves addressing the emerging needs of children, but also supporting young people and their families early enough to bring about positive health and educational outcomes and to promote independence.

Manchester Health and Wellbeing Board is currently updating its Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Early intervention with children, young people and their families is a key priority, ensuring that the youngest people in our communities are off to a best start.

The headline outcomes to be achieved:

- children at the age of five are ready to engage effectively with their school
- those aged 0–18 years are able to access Early Help and support when issues are identified.

The Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2012–15 sets out Manchester’s approach to addressing child poverty. The strategy has a long-term focus and is divided up into three themes:

- Parental Employment and Skills – maximising family incomes
- Education, Health and Family
- Place.

New Government guidance on the national strategy for child poverty has been published, and the 2010 Poverty Act requires local authorities to produce a child poverty strategy. The recent guidance will inform needs-analysis work in 2015, leading to an updated Manchester Family Poverty Strategy in 2016.

Our priorities

The Children's Board is composed of representatives from the local authority, police, health, voluntary and community sectors and schools, who provide services to children, young people and their families and who share a joint commitment to partnership working and improving the life chances of children and young people.

The board shares a common vision to address institutional, budgetary, cultural and linguistic barriers to working together across traditional agencies with a common strategy to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The Children's Board will focus on three specific priorities during 2015/16

Priority 1: Early Help	Ensure that Early Help is targeted and co-ordinated effectively, that help and support for families is timely and effective, and that the number of referrals to children's social care is reduced.
Priority 2: The best start	Get the youngest people in our communities off to the best start.
Priority 3: Addressing health inequalities	Ensure the next generation has a stake in and benefits from the city's success by addressing health inequalities in children and young people, including emotional and mental health and wellbeing.



Our assessment and planning processes

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 makes it clear that safeguarding children and promoting their welfare is the responsibility of all professionals working with children and young people, and that professionals should understand the criteria for taking action across a continuum of need, including Early Help.

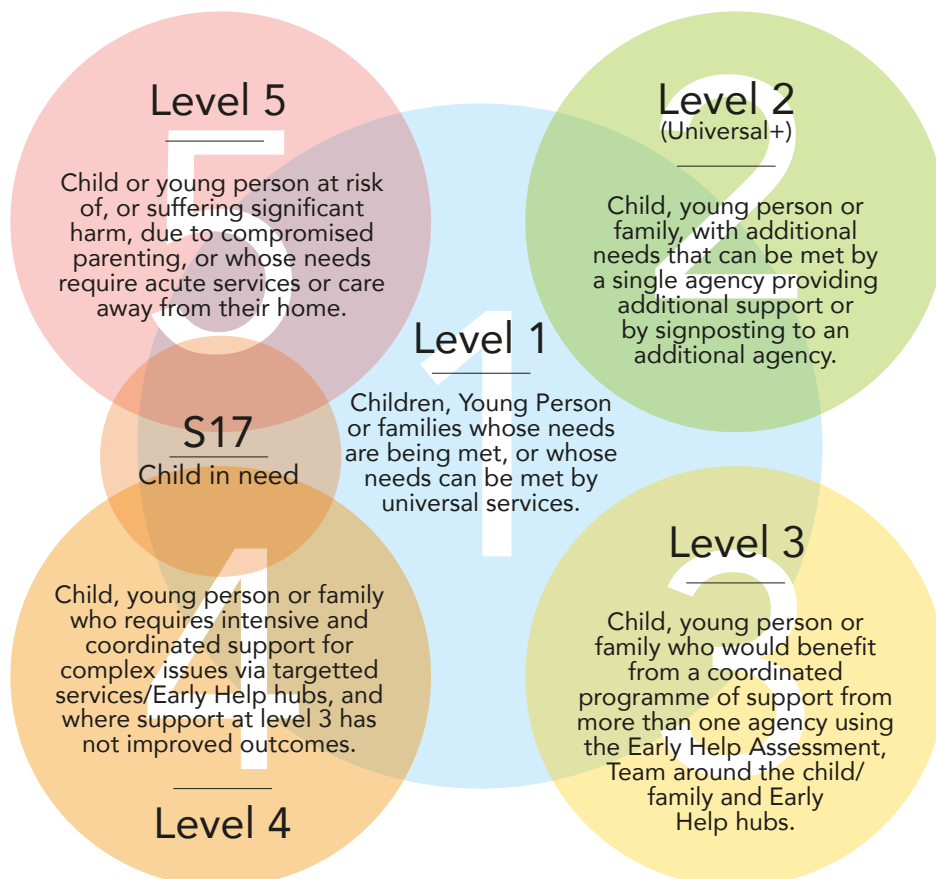
The Manchester Safeguarding Children Board commissioned a refresh of the Levels of Need and Response Framework along with the Early Help Assessment process. The renewed approach aims to assist practitioners in identifying the level of need of a child or young person (in the context of their family/ environment and experiences) and provides guidelines on how to respond with the most appropriate and proportionate intervention at the right time.

The five levels reflect that children will often move between the levels, and indicators are provided to assist in establishing the level of need. It supports the awareness that, whatever the level the child's needs, they continue to be supported by universal services throughout.

For children whose needs and circumstances make them more vulnerable, a co-ordinated multi-agency approach is usually best, based on an Early Help Assessment, with a lead professional to work closely with the child and family to ensure they receive all the support they require. Universal and targeted services, including health visiting, school nursing services and schools, will meet the needs of the majority of children and families. It is an expectation that where families need support, their needs should be identified and addressed with an Early Help Assessment, Team around the Family meeting and a multi-agency action plan. A range of targeted services are available through Early Help Hubs to support these interventions. Extended family support, including grandparent support, will be considered within this approach.

We recognise that children's and young people's needs can be fluid, and our revised framework acknowledges that some children will move between the different levels and that a small number of children will be on the cusp of level 5. To ensure good oversight of cases there will be social workers based in the Early Help Hubs, ensuring that any immediate safeguarding concerns are recognised and referred to the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub).

The Five Levels of Need



A new Early Help Assessment has been developed which is designed to help people to develop self-help and self-management skills in order to better meet their long-term needs, promote health and mental wellbeing, and reduce their reliance on public services. We have developed a new, simpler way for families, adults and young people to assess their own needs, and for professionals to work out ways to support them to take both ownership and control over these needs.

The assessment draws on a person's own assets, strengths and capacity. Self-efficacy, motivation and drivers for change will underpin the approach, with some clear, focused questions to develop engagement and conversations. There are a range of tools to support the assessment and to link this to an offer of help.

The Early Help Assessment will measure the level of need (quantitatively and qualitatively), as well as the self-efficacy to make a change. This will support the aspiration to be able to measure progress made as a result of Early Help interventions.



Integrated Early Help offer

We will deliver on our ambition via a revitalised and remodelled offer of Early Help for the city. Central to the offer will be the establishment of three Early Help Hubs in the north, central and south localities of the city. The hubs will deliver an effective local offer of support as well as being the gateway to more intensive interventions.

The integrated offer of support will link across the age ranges and will build upon the work delivered by Early Years and the Sure Start core offer. We will link the targeted youth support services, family support interventions and interventions for vulnerable adults. Good assessment underpinned by co-ordinated and effective support, with key workers delivering intensive support where there are complex needs, will be the cornerstone of our approach.

We will ensure that there is effective integration between the approach to youth services and other Early Help services that play a role in tackling the range of challenges which can pose risk to a significant minority of young people, including NEET, poor health and wellbeing, substance misuse, gang activity, low educational attainment and violent extremism. This includes the new Targeted Youth Support Service, Manchester Pupil Referral Unit, local schools, the Youth Justice Service and local health services.

We will work closely with key partners to ensure that the best possible offer can be made to people in the city. Partners include staff within Manchester City Council, Greater Manchester Police, housing (including Registered Providers), the National Probation Service, Youth Justice, Community Rehabilitation Company, voluntary and community services, and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue. Key partners include our children's public health service providers (providing health visiting services, the Family Nurse Partnership and school nursing services) and Clinical Commissioning Groups working with GPs, primary care services, community services, maternity services and Acute Services.

The public health team within the Council will ensure that the redesign of public health services, such as the integrated alcohol and drugs services and new Wellbeing Service, are aligned to the Early Help principles and approaches.

What will Early Help Hubs do?

A key aim of the Early Help Hubs is to bring together and better co-ordinate public and partner services. The hubs will be a space for professionals to come together to work more effectively. The space provided will be flexible to support agile workers, and also to facilitate effective multi-agency working.

To support this improved working the hubs will carry out some practical functions, including advice, guidance, triage and case allocation. A key focus will be problem solving and innovation to unlock issues and prevent needs from escalating. The hubs will be the gateway to allocate resources and interventions so as to achieve the outcomes and targets associated with phase 2 of the Troubled Families Programme.

While the vision would be to target resources at our most vulnerable families, a strength of Early Help Hubs will be their links to a universal offer. Being able to link our most complex families with a universal offer would enable them to get the most out of the activities and resources in their community and help them to develop and sustain their own networks of support. Each of the three hubs will develop strong connections to universal services and public assets in the area, such as children's centres, community sector buildings, libraries, schools and GP surgeries, as well as health visiting and school nursing services. The aim would be to use these connections to:

- build capacity in universal services to identify the need for Early Help, and resolve this, or know what to do
- ensure professionals linked to the hub know about the universal offer so that they can connect children and families to this – accessing universal services to achieve outcomes will be a key part of any plan developed with a child, young person and family.

Effectively monitor the impact of Early Help

The hubs will have a role in monitoring the impact of Early Help in a locality. The city-wide Early Help Performance Framework will form a strong foundation upon which local intelligence and data can be overlaid. This will ensure that the Early Help Hubs are in a position to:

- identify local gaps in provision and address these through commissioning
- identify key issues and address these through targeted programmes
- record impact and success.



Our governance

The strategy is owned and governed by Manchester's Children's Board and scrutinises performance to ensure a strong Early Help offer is in place. The day-to-day management of the work is undertaken by the Early Help Operational Board.

Our Annual Plan

To ensure the strategy is delivered an Annual Plan will be produced, documenting a clear audit trail of what has been done and a clear plan of what we will do. Progress against the plan will be reported to the Children's Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board.



Measuring success

Success should be directly measured against the outcomes experienced by children, young people and their families. We have identified a number of indicators to measure our success – we will identify key performance indicators against each measure. We will include quality measures and feedback to measure our progress and success. Performance and impact will be monitored quarterly by the Children’s Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board.



Appendix

Our key performance indicators

It is important that indicators which measure success of Early Help are clear and agreed at the outset within a commonly understood framework based on simple language.

The following data should be collated on this basis in order to develop both baseline measures and to assess impact against a plan:

- Increased uptake of Early Help Assessments.
- Reduction in the number of referrals to the Contact Centre that require either an Early Help offer or no further action from Social Care.
- Increased use of the Early Help Hubs to accessing support for families.
- Increased uptake of children attending early years education programmes for both two-year-old and three- to four-year-old offers.
- Increased quality rating for children using the two-year-old and three- to four-year-old offers.
- Increase in the number of young carers identified, assessed and their families supported.
- Reduction in the number of children not 'school ready' using either the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile or the new Reception Entry measure suite as recommended by the Department for Education.
- Reduction in the number of children and young people living in workless households.
- Reduction in the number of children and young people experiencing domestic abuse.
- Reduction in the number of children and young people experiencing parental mental ill-health.
- Reduction in the number of children and young people experiencing parental substance misuse.
- Reduction in the number of children and young people providing in appropriate levels of care to a family member.
- Reduction in the number of children in need requiring statutory intervention

- Reduction in the number of children and young people on a child protection plan.
- Reduction in the number of children and young people who enter the looked-after-children system.
- Increased use of the Help & Support Manchester Directory.
- Increased levels of school attendance for children and young people.
- Increased levels of attainment for children and young people.
- Increased levels of school attendance for children and young people.
- Increased levels of attainment for children and young people.
- Reduction in the number of obese children aged four to five and aged 10 to 11.
- Reduction in children with one or more decayed, missing or filled teeth.
- Reduction in mental health problems in children and young people.

Useful links

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

manchester.gov.uk/info/500230/joint_strategic_needs_assessment

The Manchester Partnership

manchesterpartnership.org.uk

The Manchester Strategy

manchesterpartnership.org.uk/manchesterpartnership/downloads/file/350/the_manchester_strategy

Manchester's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

manchesterpartnership.org.uk/manchesterpartnership/downloads/file/334/manchesters_joint_health_and_wellbeing_strategy

Council and Health and Wellbeing Board minutes, agendas, papers

manchester.gov.uk/site/scripts/meetings_index.php

