

# Early Help Market Assessment

Commissioning Support, Shropshire Council

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# Summary

## Introduction

The Early Help Market Assessment has been produced to develop a better understanding of current Early Help services and the provision of support within the wider provider market contributing to, or aligned with, the achievement of Early Help outcomes. The Market Assessment aims to outline the context within which services are operating, identify strengths, highlight any gaps and suggest where development of the market may be required.

## Early Help in Context

Early Help is based on the understanding that “Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years”<sup>1</sup>.

Early Help needs can range from parents finding it difficult to manage a child's behaviour, to mental and physical health issues, and families affected by financial and housing difficulties with many more needs in addition. Children in need of support may be disabled, have special educational needs, provide support to family members as young carers, be absent from school, engaged in crime or anti-social behaviour, be at risk of abuse or neglect etc.

A wide range of organisations and professionals have a critical role to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and the engagement of those services is essential within the local delivery of Early Help. Joint working across a wide range of services is necessary to identify children and families in need of support, assess needs and provide the right forms of support to meet those needs.

The support offered by services ranges from universal support to prevent Early Help Needs through to targeted support for assessed needs.

## Current Provision of Early Help

The assessment of current provision of Early Help in Shropshire shows that targeted provision is mixed with some in-house provision by Shropshire Council and some commissioning of external services. Core Early Help services offering targeted support include Children's Centre services, Targeted Youth Support, EnHance and support from Shropshire's Parenting Team.

Other key features of current provision include:

- Cross sector delivery of Early Help, split between public sector and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector services.
- A range of support services including group work, peer support, training and information, and one to one support.
- Local provision of courses designed to develop both parental and professional skills.
- A focus on measuring the difference support makes – using outcomes measurement tools to measure change over the course of an intervention.
- The importance of school involvement in Early Help has been highlighted through the analysis undertaken.
- Working relationships with health services including school nursing, health visitors and midwives.
- Well-developed Early Help partnership working with structures linking strongly to other local partnership Boards.
- A strong relationship between Early Help and Strengthening Families (Shropshire's Troubled Families programme).

## **Understanding the Market**

Considerable work was undertaken in order to research the wider Early Help Market and a provider database of 115 services was established in order to assess the market. The 115 services are largely based on stakeholder mapping exercises undertaken within local meetings but where possible additional services were added where it was clear they were helping to meet the needs Early Help aims to address. It is acknowledged that some services may have been missed and that future work may be required to build on the potential provider database now in place.

Key features of the wider Early Help Market include:

- Very few services outside of public and VCSE sector provision.
- The Market contains a diverse range of organisations offering specialist support for particular needs.
- A significant proportion of the market offer whole family support and all age provision.
- A range of services offering professional support and training.
- Significant numbers of services offering support in line with each of the 6 predictors of Early Help.
- A good geographical spread of support across Shropshire with a large number of providers offering countywide support or support over a larger geographical scale.
- Significant pressure on providers within the Early Help Market, largely as a result of social and economic influences.

## **Findings and Recommendations**

The findings and recommendations outlined in part 4 of the report include the following:

- The importance of schools within Early Help and the need to retain strong partnership arrangements with primary and secondary schools.
- The need to build on existing partnerships with health services to more actively involve all health professionals including midwives, health visitors, school nurses and GPs.
- Opportunities to consider the use of the specialisms available within the market to meet particular needs.
- Opportunities to consider additional referral opportunities for de-escalation and at closure.
- Work to consider whether there are opportunities to align commissioning by Shropshire Council to better achieve shared outcomes and establish Early Help within a broader system approach.
- Consideration of market development and intervention issues including:
  - Partnership development and consortia
  - Volunteering and infrastructure support to build community level resilience
  - Opportunities for new investment and financial models designed to establish greater financial stability within the Early Help market.

It is recommended that the Market Assessment is viewed alongside the Early Help Needs Assessment for a more robust understanding of local need and current provision.

# 1. Introduction

A market assessment is an important way of developing Shropshire Council's perception of the Early Help market. Understanding both a) current services and b) service providers operating in Shropshire with the potential to deliver Early Help support is important in order to inform the commissioning process. It is also important to understand more about the community support available and how that local support builds the resilience and networks with the capacity to support children and families in need of early help.

It should be recognised that any market assessment has its limitations. Perceptions are built on an understanding of current and potential provision using available data and knowledge. An absence of detailed service information can limit the effectiveness of a market assessment. Use of available data and a focus on current provision must be balanced with an understanding of potential: potential for change, innovation, new partnerships and providers' flexibility in adapting to changing needs and transforming services. As the first Market Assessment for Early Help there will, no doubt, be room for improvement. For this reason attention is given to gaps in knowledge and recommendations for filling those gaps.

The aim of the market assessment is to better understand:

- The context within which providers are working
- The challenges impacting upon the provider market
- Gaps in provision
- Strengths evident among the services contributing to the achievement of Early Help outcomes
- Current and possible risks
- Where market intervention and market development activity may be required
- Next steps – considering recommendations

The document is split into 4 main sections:

1. Early Help in Context
2. Current Early Help Provision
3. The Early Help Market
4. Summary of Findings and Recommendations

This document uses available information to consider (for both commissioned and non-commissioned, local provision):

- Provision by strategic outcome
- Provision by area of support and specialism
- Types of intervention provided
- Provision by age group
- Provision of support for parents and carers
- Geographical spread of provision
- Organisational human capacity (staff and volunteers where information available)

This assessment should be viewed alongside the Early Help Needs Assessment and Early Help Market Position Statement. The Early Help Needs Assessment is an essential tool in understanding current and future needs within Shropshire's population. The Market Position Statement will support the Council in its work to communicate with current and potential service providers as part of a wider programme of pre-commissioning engagement with stakeholders.

It would be beneficial if providers and potential providers are given the opportunity to review the contents of this document (and the Early Help Needs Assessment) and highlight where there may be gaps in understanding or misperceptions. Provider and potential provider feedback is strongly encouraged.

## 2. Early Help in Context

### 2.1 Early Help

Early Help covers the support and early interventions that can be provided when the needs of children, young people and their families are not being met by universal services, but they do not meet the threshold for a specialist service such as Children's Social Care. The HM Government report 'Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' (2015)<sup>ii</sup> sets out responsibilities for organisations in the implementation of Early Help and safeguarding. It explains that:

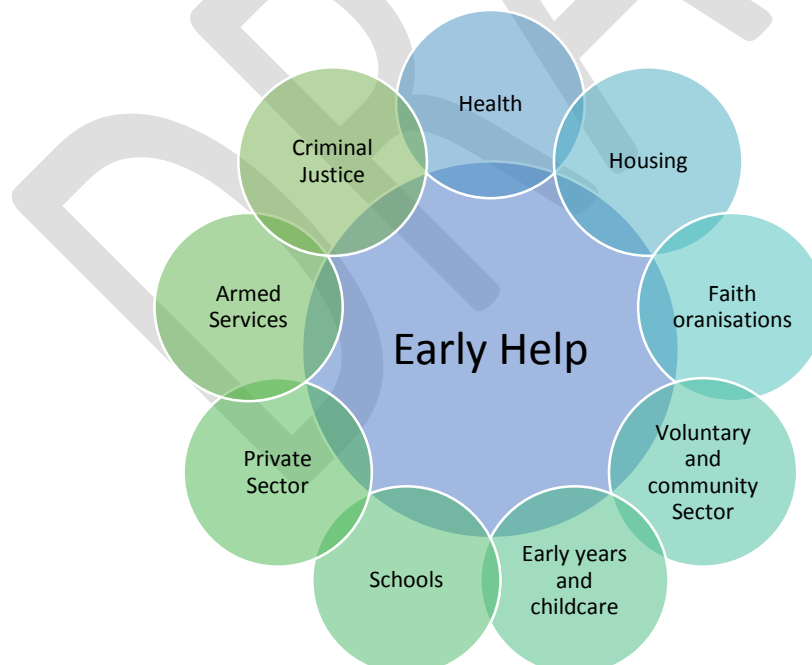
*"A wide range of health professionals have a critical role to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including: GPs, primary care professionals, paediatricians, nurses, health visitors, midwives, school nurses, those working in maternity, child and adolescent mental health, youth custody establishments, adult mental health, alcohol and drug services, unscheduled and emergency care settings and secondary and tertiary care".*

Local Authorities responsibilities under Section 10 of the Children's Act mean that the local authority (Shropshire Council) must make arrangements to promote cooperation between the authority, each of the authority's relevant partners and such other persons or bodies working with children in the local authority's area as the authority considers appropriate. The arrangements are to be made with a view to improving the well-being of all children in the authority's area, which includes protection from harm and neglect.

### 2.2 Early Help Stakeholders

The local authority's relevant partners are detailed within the Children's Act and within 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' but have been listed in the diagram below:

**Diagram 1 Bodies with a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children**



The diversity of organisations with the responsibility for early help will be reflected in the market assessment in section 3 of this document. Alongside an understanding of the early help stakeholders it is also important to understand their responsibilities. Detailed information for each provider is outlined in 'Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to

safeguard and promote the welfare of children' (2015) but an extract is included in Box 1 in order to put the market assessment into context.

### **Box 1 Extract from Working Together 2015: Organisational responsibilities**

These organisations should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including:

- a clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- a senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements;
- a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services;
- clear whistleblowing procedures, which reflect the principles in Sir Robert Francis's Freedom to Speak Up review and are suitably referenced in staff training and codes of conduct, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed;<sup>23</sup>
- arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other professionals and with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB);
- a designated professional lead (or, for health provider organisations, named professionals) for safeguarding. Their role is to support other professionals in their agencies to recognise the needs of children, including rescue from possible abuse or neglect. Designated professional roles should always be explicitly defined in job descriptions. Professionals should be given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively;
- safe recruitment practices for individuals whom the organisation will permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check;
- appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training:
- employers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role;
- staff should be given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare; and
- all professionals should have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time.
- clear policies in line with those from the LSCB for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. Such policies should make a clear distinction between an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice or a complaint. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:
  - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
  - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

### **2.3 Key Elements of Early Help**

There are particular features of Early Help that need to be considered within any market assessment. Working Together (2015), suggests that professionals working with children and their families should be alert to needs of particular groups of children, including the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;



- has special educational needs;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems and domestic violence;
- has returned home to their family from care; and/or
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.

The Ofsted thematic inspection of Early Help 2015<sup>iii</sup> is also helpful. It uses the research undertaken during the inspection process to highlight common early help needs. It highlights that support is required where the following factors are identified:

- Parents struggling to manage their child or children's behaviour
- Children with a learning difficulty, such as an autistic spectrum disorder
- A child displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Parental or child isolation
- Low-level parental mental health or physical ill health
- Vulnerable young parents
- Bereavement
- Parent alcohol misuse
- Financial difficulties/ debts
- Parental learning difficulty
- Early Neglect
- Housing Difficulties (overcrowding and homelessness).
- Risk of school exclusion
- Poor attachment between child and parent

Where availability of data has allowed, the groups and needs outlined above have been explored in more detail within the Needs Assessment. These needs have also been used to inform the market assessment methodology (more detail is included in part 4).

The 'Working Together' guidance also emphasises that the services delivered to meet the needs of these groups may be delivered to parents but should always be evaluated to demonstrate the impact they are having on the outcomes for the child. For this reason the market assessment does not exclude certain adult focused services where they meet the needs of parents and contribute to Early Help outcomes.

## **2.4 Early Help in Shropshire**

Shropshire Council has been working closely with a wide range of stakeholders to develop the early help service offer. A partnership approach is in place and continued improvement is sought using local data and knowledge and taking learning from out of area such as the outcome of the Ofsted thematic inspection referred to above. Shropshire's Early Help vision is:

'A child-centred and coordinated approach to prevention and early assistance where the voice of the child is heard and their experience of life is understood by all professionals working with them'

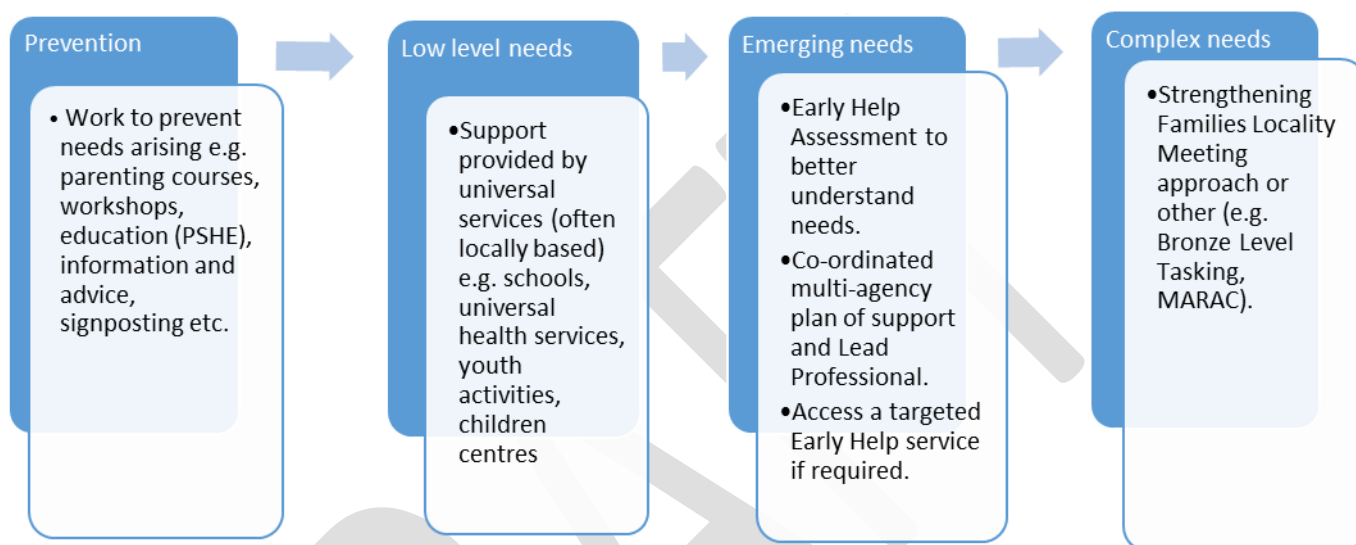
Shropshire Council and its partners have worked to implement the key features of an early help approach including:

- Undertaking local assessment of need.
- Establishing and assessing early help in universal services.
- Facilitating access to health services including drug, alcohol and domestic violence services.
- Provision of targeted early help services.
- Providing parenting programmes.
- Establishing assessment formation sharing mechanisms.
- Development of tools and resources for practitioners.

- Training and skills development.
- Planning, coordination and multi-agency working around the needs of families.
- Measuring the effectiveness of early help services and early intervention programmes.
- Ensuring early help links effectively to local safeguarding arrangements.
- Close working with other programmes such as Shropshire's Strengthening Families (troubled families programme).

The diagram below does not do justice to the processes that exist within Early Help in Shropshire but it does highlight the spectrum of support that is required deliver an effective system for Early Help.

**Diagram 2 The spectrum of Early Help support**



**Universal** The majority of children in Shropshire who require services receive them through universal provision within their local community. Universal services actively promote key health and development messages; assess needs and potential risks at the earliest opportunity; and provide support designed to counteract risk and prevent need.

**Early Help** Where there are specific additional needs of a child or issues impacting on parental capacity that are relatively low level, universal services may be able to take swift and helpful action within the community or setting to meet these.

**Targeted Early Help** If a child or young person's situation is not fully understood, or if there are indicators that a child and family would benefit from coordinated support from one or more agency, an Early Help Assessment and/or Webstar assessment is completed with consent. The range of early help provision required is identified through the assessment and monitored and reviewed through an Early Help Plan. An Early Help plan can also be put in place when risks and needs de-escalate and a child is "stepping down" from a social work plan or specialist service.

The Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board Multi-agency Guidance on 'Threshold Criteria to help support Children, Young People and their Families in Shropshire' provides a threshold framework to enable professionals to work with families at the right threshold at the right time. Across all threshold levels, COMPASS (the Shropshire Multi-Agency Hub) can be accessed to direct professionals to the right service to meet the needs of the child and family and to provide advice on identifying risk or offering Early Help.

Shropshire’s Early Help Commissioning project group has recently undertaken work to map the Ofsted identified needs against 6 themes (working as Early Help predictors). The table below shows the six criteria. The Market Assessment approach has, in large part, been undertaken around these 6 main themes. Information has been gathered to understand where providers and potential providers are contributing to the prevention of these needs.

**Table 1 Predictors mapped against Ofsted identified needs**

<b>Strengthening Families and Early Help Predictors</b>	<b>Ofsted Thematic Inspection Report - Findings From Practice Needs Of Child &amp; Families</b>
<b>1. Parents or Children involved in Crime and/or anti-social behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents struggling to manage their children's behaviour</li> <li>• Child's low self esteem</li> <li>• Child showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour</li> </ul>
<b>2. Children who have not been attending school regularly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of school exclusion</li> <li>• Child's low self esteem</li> <li>• Vulnerable young parents</li> <li>• Child displaying inappropriate sexual behaviour</li> <li>• Parental learning difficulties</li> <li>• Early Neglect</li> <li>• Child showing Early signs of abuse or neglect</li> <li>• Child who is a young carer</li> </ul>
<b>3. Children who need help: children of all ages who need help are identified as in need or are subject to a child protection plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children with a learning difficulty</li> <li>• A child displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour</li> <li>• Early neglect</li> <li>• Housing Difficulties (overcrowding/homelessness)</li> <li>• Poor attachment between parent &amp; child</li> <li>• Child who is disabled &amp; has specific additional needs</li> <li>• Child who is a young carer</li> <li>• Child showing early signs of abuse or neglect</li> </ul>
<b>4. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion or young people at risk of worklessness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Difficulties (overcrowding/homelessness)</li> <li>• Financial difficulties/debts</li> <li>• Parental learning difficulties</li> </ul>
<b>5. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.</li> <li>• Parental or child isolation</li> <li>• Early Neglect</li> <li>• Child's low self esteem</li> <li>• Housing difficulties</li> <li>• Parental alcohol misuse</li> <li>• Family circumstance presenting challenges to child.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Parents and children with a range of health problems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental mental health concerns or physical ill health</li> <li>• Bereavement</li> <li>• Parental alcohol misuse</li> <li>• Vulnerable young parents</li> <li>• Poor attachment between parent and child</li> <li>• Early neglect</li> <li>• Family circumstances presenting challenges to the child</li> <li>• Child carer</li> </ul>

More detail concerning partnership working and current provision in Shropshire is included within the Early Help Strategy 2015 and the section of this report titled 'Current Early Help Provision'.

## 2.5 Market Context

Before taking a more detailed look at the Early Help market it is helpful to consider wider market factors. Shropshire's rural characteristics are fairly well known and these have played a role in influencing the development of the market. Public sector provision is not significantly different from other areas, however the private sector in Shropshire is predominantly made up of small and medium enterprises. In March 2013 there were 14,185 VAT or PAYE businesses operating in Shropshire and more than 9 out of ten had fewer than 10 employees<sup>iv</sup>. 9.1% of the workforce have occupations within the caring, leisure and service sector (in line with the national average)<sup>v</sup>. However, rather than the private sector, it is the public sector and the local Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector that provide the type of preventative, support services that are vital to the provision of Early Help. Shropshire has a higher than average proportion of community and voluntary sector providers. National comparators gathered around 5 years ago are no longer collected but they used to highlight that Shropshire had higher rates of volunteering and community involvement than the national average. Key characteristics of Shropshire's VCSE sector are briefly explored below.

Shropshire has approximately 1,184 registered voluntary organisations in the county and approximately 1,127 community groups<sup>vi</sup>. Shropshire VCS Assembly represents these organisations and groups and has a membership of around 250 groups and organisations covering sub sectors of the VCSE such as such as criminal justice, sport, health, children, older people, arts and heritage, environment and sustainability and more. There are 16 forums of interest representing the diversity of the sector including a specific forum for children and young people's services, the 0-25 VCS Summit. This is briefly described in the section on partnerships in section 2 of this document.

Data from the Ipsos MORI survey of charities and social enterprises carried out in 2010<sup>vii</sup> involved:

- 214 Shropshire VCSE organisations working with children aged 15 or under
- 165 organisations working with young people aged 16-24
- 85 organisations working with carers and parents.

446 organisations completed the survey in total suggesting a high proportion of Shropshire's VCSE organisations work in the area of children and young people's services. Although the information is now 5 years old, national studies carried out by the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) in 2011 and 2015 suggest that way the sector is split (e.g. by service type and beneficiary type) has changed very little over the last few years<sup>viii</sup>.

Chart 1 highlights how Shropshire's VCSE sector is structured in relation to the type of beneficiaries VCSE organisations support. This context is helpful background to the market assessment described in part 3 of this document. The very thorough study carried out by Ipsos MORI identified a total of 464 registered organisations serving Shropshire's children, young people and parents and carers.

At the national level NCVO highlighted that 51% of VCSE organisations work with children and young people, the largest proportion of all beneficiary types. (37% worked with the general public). Analysis of VCS Assembly member organisations in Shropshire fits this national picture. 49% of Shropshire's Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA) member organisations work for the benefit of children and young people.

**Chart 1 Shropshire’s VCSE Organisations by Beneficiary Type**

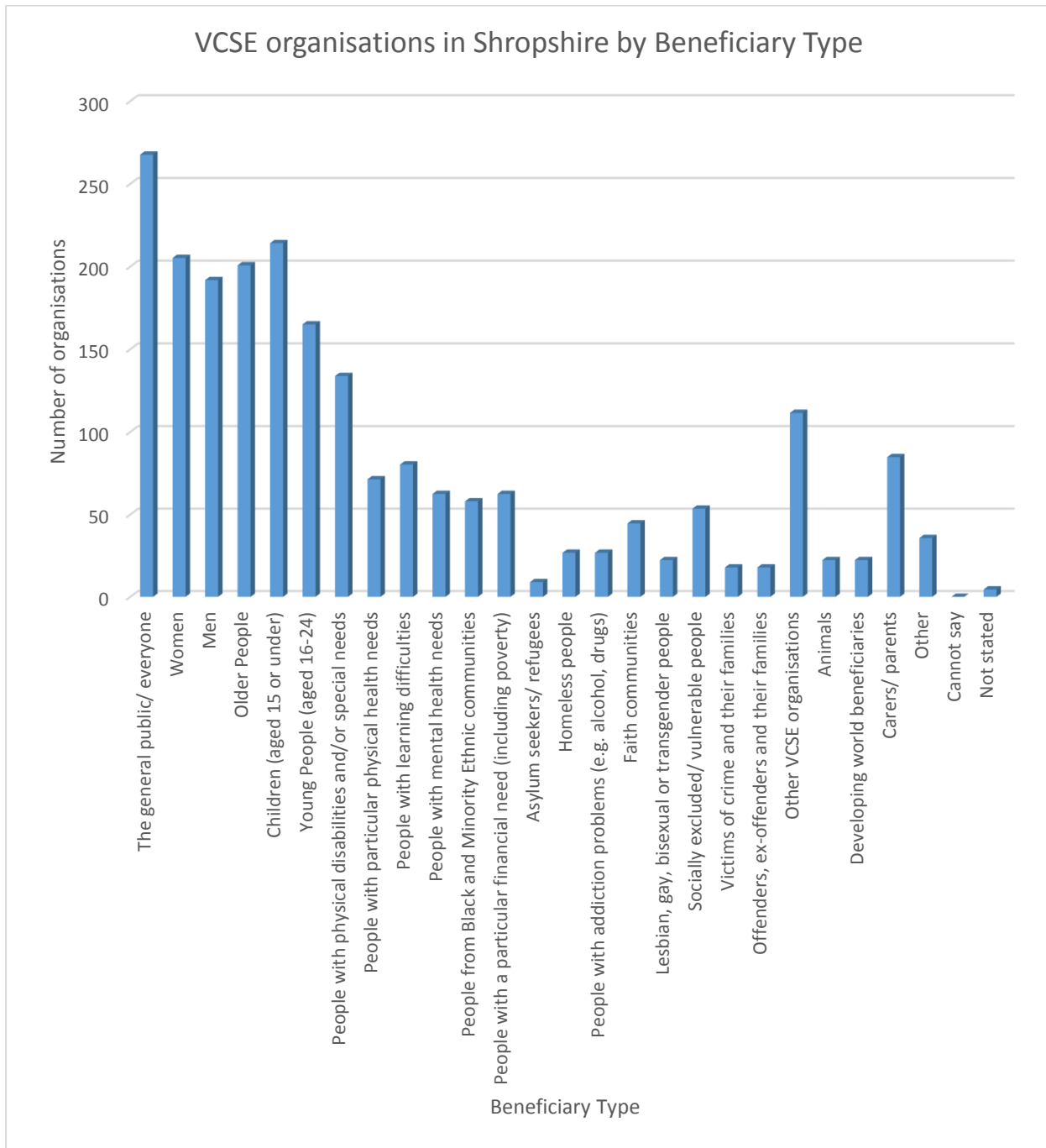
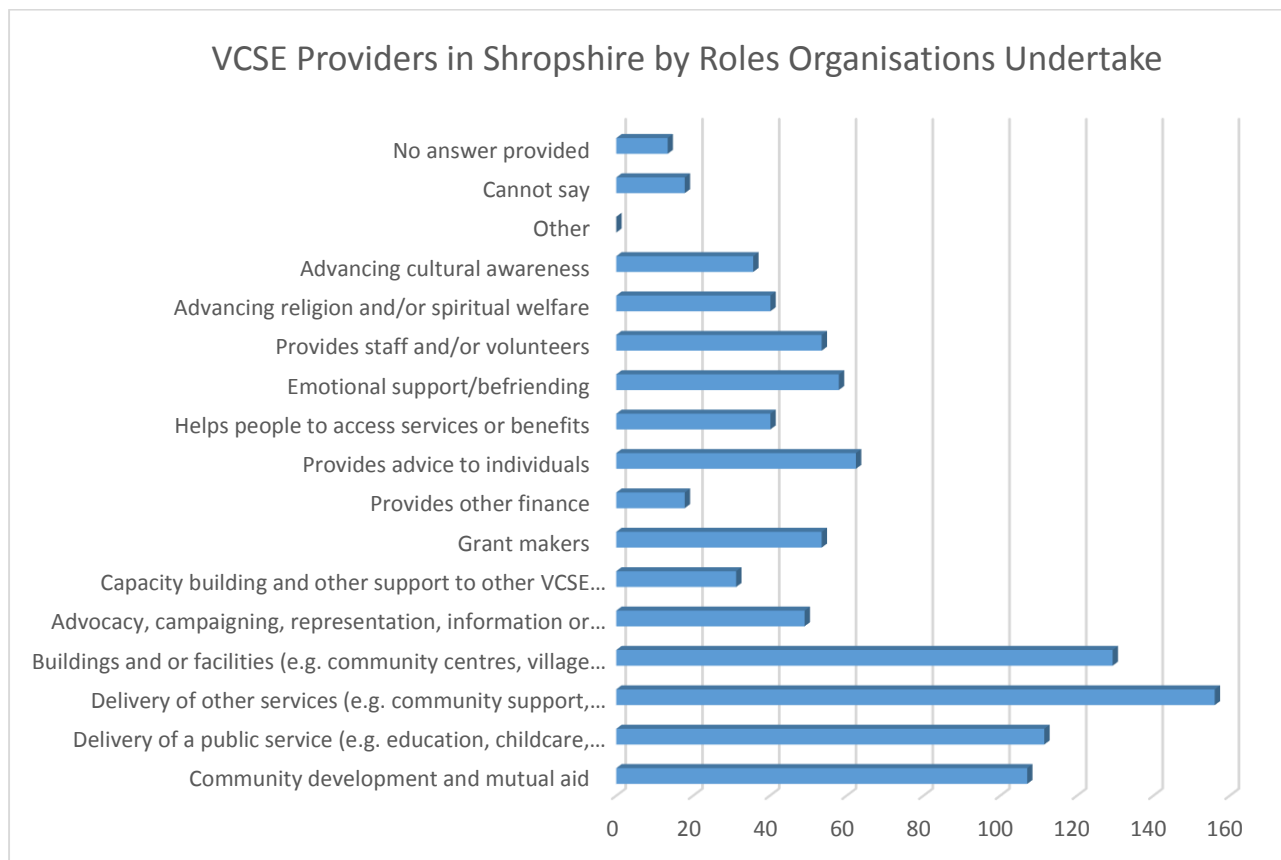


Chart 2, based on the same Ipsos MORI survey, shows that:

- 60% of Shropshire’s VCSE sector provide a public service or another type of service (such as childcare, education, and community support)
- 14% provide advice to individuals
- 13% provide befriending or emotional support.

This is a helpful insight into the range of provision being delivered by VCSE providers in Shropshire.

**Chart 2 Shropshire’s VCSE Sector by Role of Organisation/ Type of Support**



## 2.6 Strategic Context

The cross cutting nature of Early Help, and its importance within the provision of all services providing support to children and their families, means that there are a significant number of strategic and operational issues that could be included as context within the market assessment. In order to summarise this information, only key headlines have been included within the PESTLE analysis below. More information can be found in the Early Help Strategy 2016.

**Table 2 PESTLE Analysis of key contextual issues**

Political	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in the way local authorities are financially supported by Government means that most local authorities are re-evaluating how they operate, restructuring and re-designing services and moving towards a commissioning model (with either a more defined commissioner/ provider spilt or the externalisation of in-house services). Shropshire Council is progressing through this significant change and this is important context for the market assessment. It will also feature as a consideration in the final section of this document covering key findings and recommendations.</li> <li>• There is a national drive to bring social care and health services together and over recent years we have seen work to integrate Public Health into local authorities and the development of the Better Care Fund.</li> <li>• The importance of preventative services is now more widely understood and more central to the way systems of services are being designed and implemented.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The political decision to take schools away from Local Authority governance towards a more independent position within the market is an important contextual consideration, altering the relationship between schools and Local Authorities.</li> <li>• Work is taking place to jointly plan services with close working between local authorities and CCGs. For example, CCGs and Local Authorities are now required to submit transformation plans to set out how Government investment will be spent to transform CAMHS. Joint working is taking place across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Early Help commissioning is being closely considered alongside CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service). Another example of local joint working is in the planning/commissioning of school nursing.</li> <li>• Work continues to implement the national guidance outlined in Working Together 2015 and the recommendations within the Ofsted thematic inspection 2015. For example consideration of the step down from social care to Early Help.</li> <li>• There are a number of Government led programmes that fit alongside Early Help and complement its work. It is important that links continue to be made across different programmes such as the Healthy Child Programme.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reductions in public budgets made available to Local Authorities and other public sector bodies mean that many Early Help stakeholders are undergoing significant change and experiencing economic pressures. This consideration is essential in maintaining strong partnerships (many public sector stakeholders are being required to take on more responsibility at a time of reduced expenditure and resourcing).</li> <li>• The implementation of austerity measures mean that public sector budgets remain static or have reduced. Even when services remain protected within budgets this can have an impact upon service delivery and the back office support public sector bodies (including the local authority) are able to give service providers.</li> <li>• Public sector bodies, including the local authority have reduced expenditure on grants and voluntary sector contracts whilst relying more heavily on voluntary and community sector providers of preventative services.</li> <li>• Positive economic changes for individuals can increase costs for employers. Recent developments include increases in the minimum wage and a movement towards paying the living wage.</li> <li>• The Government has been working to provide free childcare. Parents of three year olds have been eligible for 15 hours free childcare for some time but now eligible children are now also able to receive 15 hours of free Early Years education per week over 38 weeks of the year from the beginning of the term after they turn two years old (eligibility includes parents on low incomes and those receiving income related benefits).</li> <li>• More recent investment opportunities have included the introduction of a new European Funding Programme and the European Structural and Investment Fund, including EU and Big Lottery investment through the Social Inclusion focused Building Better Opportunities Programme. Similar investment is also focused on employment and skills and supported by the Skills Funding Agency (including support for those Not in Education, Employment or Training, NEET and pre-NEET 15+).</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economic pressures highlighted above are generating social pressures. Research suggests that demand for support services is increasing as members of the public are affected by austerity measures including welfare reform. The cost of living is rising and wage levels are not keeping pace. Local research<sup>ix</sup> suggests that more people are now</li> </ul>



	<p>presenting to support services with more than one concern but rather complex needs ranging from debt, housing difficulties, lack of transport, relationship breakdown and mental health issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With reductions in the resources available to public sector organisations there is a strong drive to enable behavioural change among those who use support services. There are moves to communicate more with members of the public to change expectations of public services, ensuring that needs are met rather than wants, and where possible people and the communities they live in are provided with the information, skills and knowledge to become more resilient and less reliant on public services.</li> <li>• Immigration and the current work to accept and support refugees is having an impact on service provision with a greater demand for support for families who are new to the UK and may need additional support with language and cultural barriers.</li> </ul>
<b>Technological</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is strong national drive to digitalize public services and with austerity measures in place digital services can help to reduce costs. It is important to consider this issue in the context of working in a rural county with significant rates of digital exclusion. (Not only caused by a lack of digital infrastructure but also due to population characteristics).</li> <li>• Developments in technology have the potential to generate service improvement and should be considered within the context of a market assessment. There is greater potential now than ever before for the sharing of information through on-line facilities, the sharing of open data between public sector organisations and other service providers and an increasing ability to share information with other areas of the country or other countries, for example greater access to digital online assessment and impact/ quality tools. Other examples include improvements in programmes capable of assisting with data storage and analysis for needs and market assessment (although new technology does often rely on the availability of budgets to invest).</li> <li>• Weighed up against the positive technological developments is the need to ensure that the digitalization of services do not prevent the face to face service provision that can mean children and families requiring Early Help are recognised and worked with quickly, before problems are able to escalate.</li> </ul>
<b>Legal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been many policy changes over the last 2 years (some of which are referred to under 'political' above). Some of those should be viewed in the context of legal responsibilities and others are regulatory. The Children and Families Act 2014 has had a widespread impact on shape of service provision.</li> <li>• Equality legislation is important context for Early Help. The protected characteristics outlined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission include disability and pregnancy and maternity.</li> <li>• The Localism Act 2011 presented a significant change in the approach the national Government required of local government. Rather than simply providing services for people, Localism requires Local Government to put in place the policies and tools that allow communities and local residents to do more for themselves such as taking on the running of a service or ownership of a local asset.</li> <li>• The EU General Data Protection Regulations are currently reforming the way data protection is carried out within organisations and this is likely to have an impact upon the wider market.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rural nature of Shropshire is an important consideration within Early Help. With the population dispersed over a large geographical area any service provision but consider access, transport, the financial costs of rurality and how rural isolation may be overcome.</li> </ul>



- Environmental considerations are also relevant when considering variance between communities. Some communities within Shropshire feature as more deprived communities and are often highlighted in need of more attention. The Early Help Needs Assessment will highlight where there are differences in need and other sources of information should also be viewed such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).
- Since the introduction of the Public Services (Social Value) Act in 2012 there has been an increased focus on the environmental, social and economic value that can be generated through public sector commissioning and procurement. Shropshire's Social Value Group is working to embed a more robust approach to social value within the county and over the last 2 and more years it has seen a noticeable improvement in provider understanding of the way in which environmental, economic and social value can be measured and reported.

This PESTLE analysis is complemented by some more detailed issue analysis included in Part 4 of this report. The recommendations included in Part 5 of the report have also been developed whilst considering these important contextual issues.

### 3. Current Provision of Early Help

#### 3.1 Providers within the Current Provision of Early Help

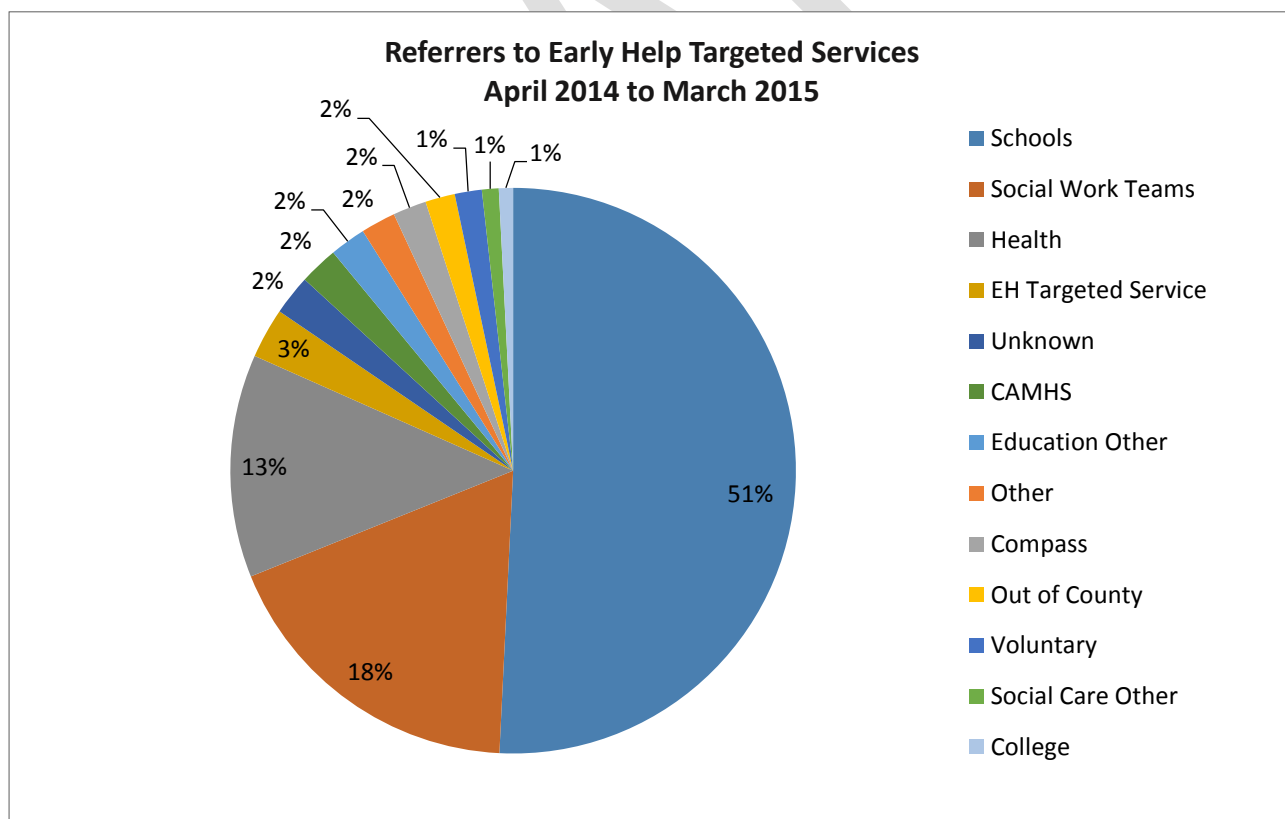
This section of the Market Assessment considers the current involvement of providers in Early Help in Shropshire. The main providers of targeted Early Help services are:

- Children’s Centre Services (Shropshire Council)
- EnHance (Commissioned)
- Targeted Youth Support (Shropshire Council)
- Lifelines (Commissioned)
- Parenting Team (Shropshire Council)
- British Red Cross Young Carers (Commissioned)
- Autism West Midlands (Commissioned)

As outlined in Part 1, there is a spectrum of Early Help ranging from preventative activity, information and education, through to more targeted interventions and support. The role of each provider within this spectrum is explored in more detail below.

Before individual consideration of providers, it is helpful to use available data to understand the way in which providers contribute to Early Help as a whole system. Chart 3 highlights the service providers referring into Early Help Targeted Services between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015. The Compass Tracker provides the data source for this analysis.

**Chart 3 Referrals to Early Help Targeted Services by Provider**



There were 1357 Targeted Early Help Referrals made from April 2014 to March 2015 (logged on the Compass Tracker). Schools generated the greatest proportion of referrals of all providers. Of all Targeted Early Help referrals from April 2014 to March 2015 schools made 51%. Of those referrals, 60% were made by Primary Schools, 37% by Secondary Schools and 1% each by Independent Schools, an All Through School and Special Schools.

18% of Early Help referrals were made by social workers at varying levels of intervention and 13% of Early Help referrals were made by Health professionals. Health professionals making referrals included Midwives (27%), Health Visitors (25%), School Nurses (24%) and GPs (15%).

**Chart 4 Early Help Assessments by Service Provider (April to September 2015)**

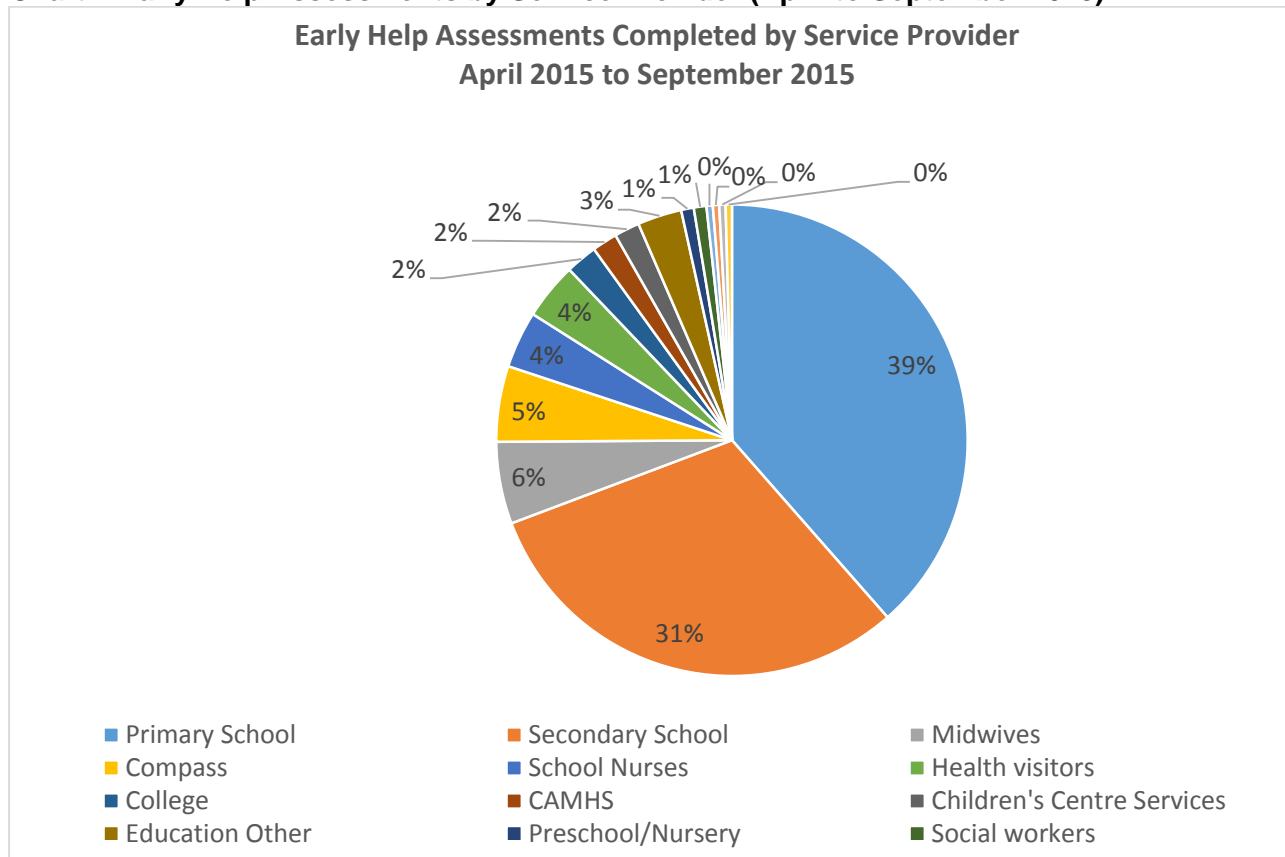


Chart 4 shows that a total of 231 Early Help Assessments were completed from 1 April to 30 September 2015. Of those assessments, schools completed 161 (70% of the total): 89 (38.5%) were completed by Primary Schools; 71 (30.7%) were completed by Secondary Schools and 1 (0.4%) was completed by a Special School. Much smaller proportions of total Early Help Assessments were completed by other services, with 6% the next largest proportion completed by Midwives.

Chart 5 is very similar but it highlights the type of workers/roles undertaking the assessments. The results are interesting and show that the numbers of assessments completed within schools are split fairly evenly between teachers and school counsellors/pastoral support (within primary schools the proportion of teachers completing the assessments is a little higher but the split is more even within secondary schools). Targeted Family Support Workers completed 9% of the assessments, other education workers 8%, and other 8%.

**Chart 5 Early Help Assessments by Professional Role (April to September 2015)**

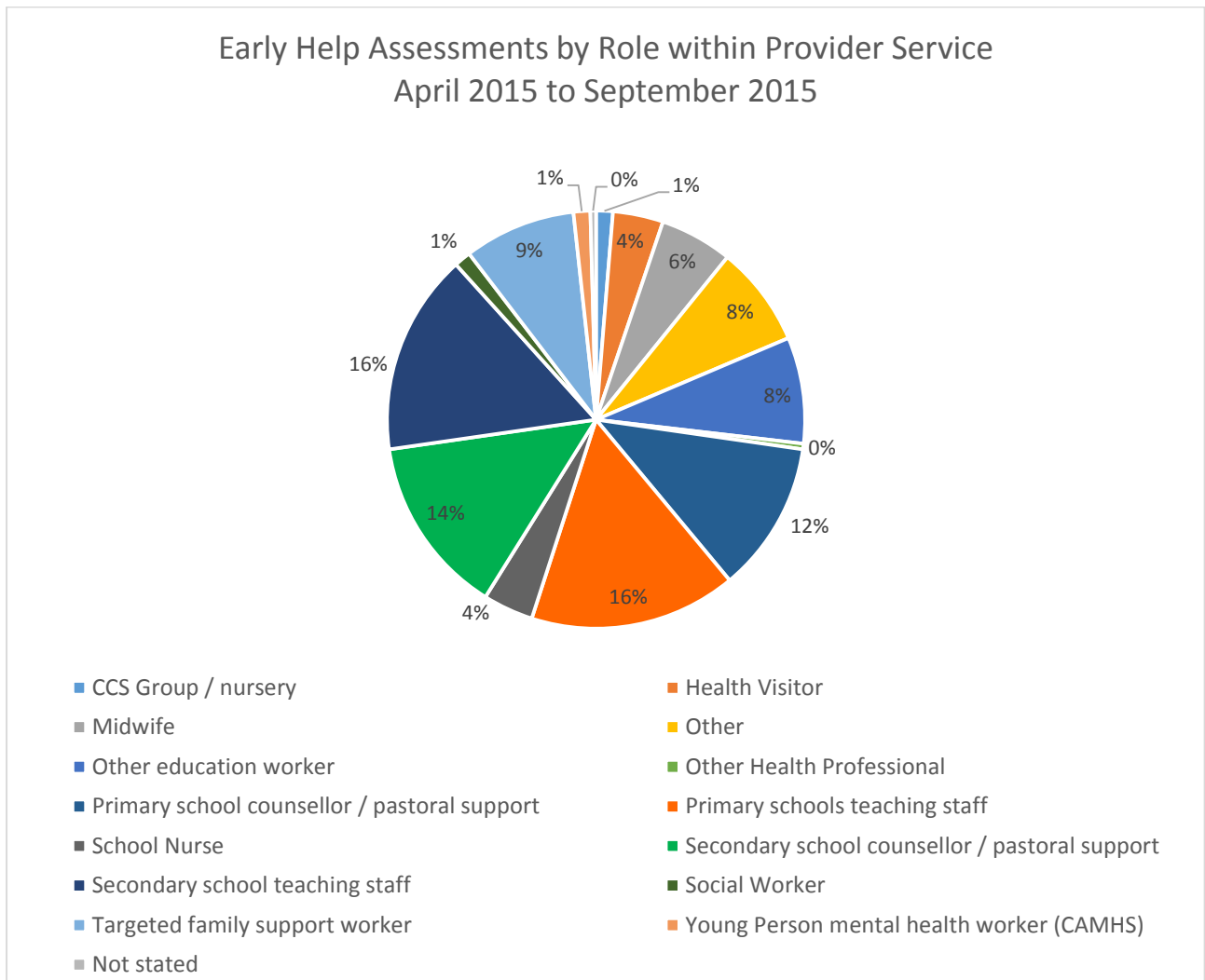


Chart 6 allows consideration of lead professionals in February 2015. This provides another layer to help develop an understanding of provider involvement in the provision of Early Help. Chart 6 shows that schools were Lead Professional for 494 children (54% of total cases). Out of these 323 (35.1%) were Primary Schools; 161 (17.5%) were Secondary Schools; and 10 (1.1%) were Independent Schools. This supports the previous analysis demonstrating just how important the role of schools is within Early Help.

The remaining 46% of lead professionals in February 2015 were split among a large number of other provider services. Enhance workers were lead professionals for 6% of the cases (with other voluntary sector services totalling 1%), Targeted Youth Support provided lead professionals for 6% of all the cases and health visitors also contributed 6%. School nurses were lead professional for 4%, Midwives 4% and Children’s Centres 4%.

**Chart 6 Early Help Lead Professionals at February 2015**

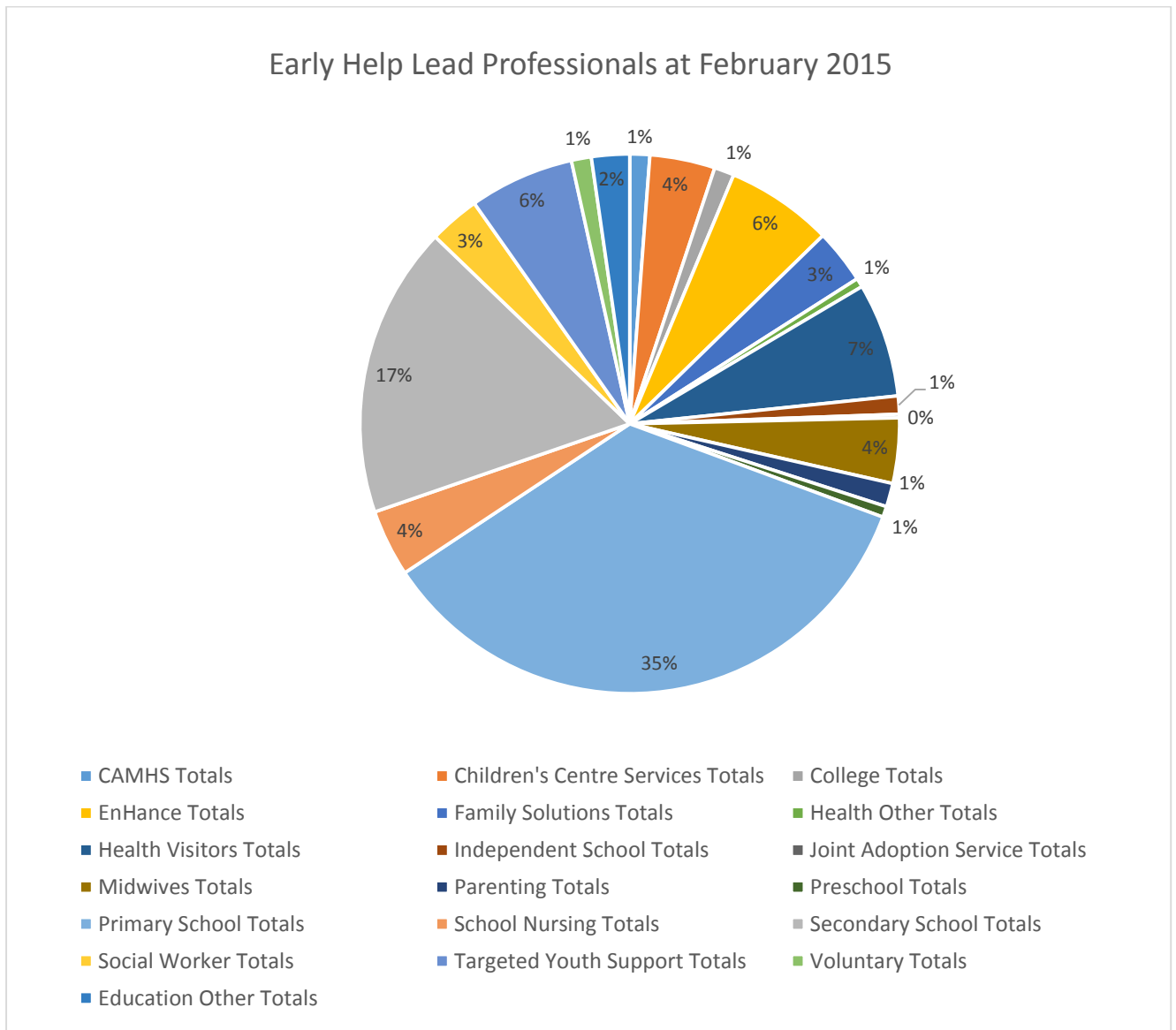


Chart 7 covers Early Help Targeted Referrals for the year 2014/15 and it is based on data from the Compass Tracker.

Chart 7 considers the onward referrals made but it is not reflective of the actual take up of those referrals, or the services those referred go on to access. Nevertheless this is important within the consideration of the provider market. Chart 7 shows that a significant number of the referrals in 2014/15 are made to CAMHS (26%), remaining proportions for other services were smaller and included Lifelines at 3% and Parenting Practitioner Support at 2%.

It should be noted there have been recording gaps as a result of different systems being used which may impact on this information.

**Chart 7 Early Help Targeted Referrals 2014/15**

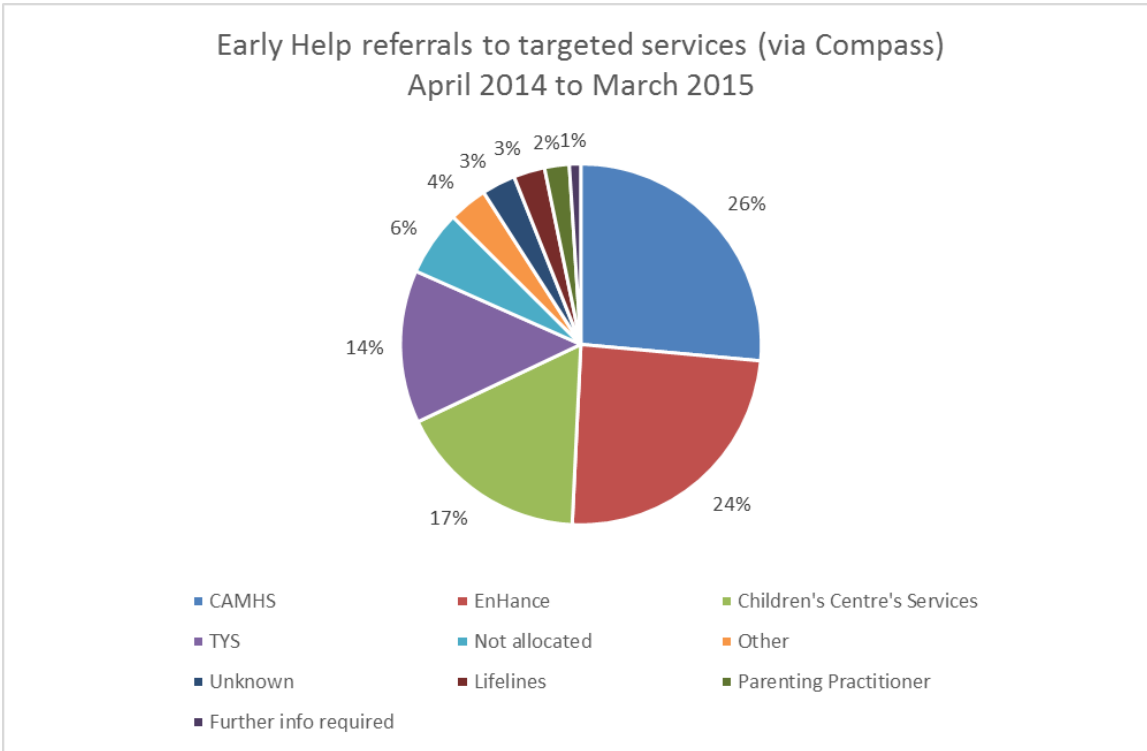


Chart 8 is used to show the new cases of Early Help Targeted services between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015. However, it must be noted that the Parenting Team did not begin its work until September 2015 so only 7 months of data is included. Another note is that all cases are included for Children’s Centre Services, including existing cases so the numbers are higher than they would have been if the data was available for new cases only. For this reason, a lack of consistency in the data, it is not possible to compare providers.

Despite the inconsistency in data and possible reporting of both new and existing cases from Children’s Centres, Chart 8 gives an indication of the numbers of new cases services received in the year 2014/15.

**Chart 8 Early Help Targeted Support – New Cases 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015**

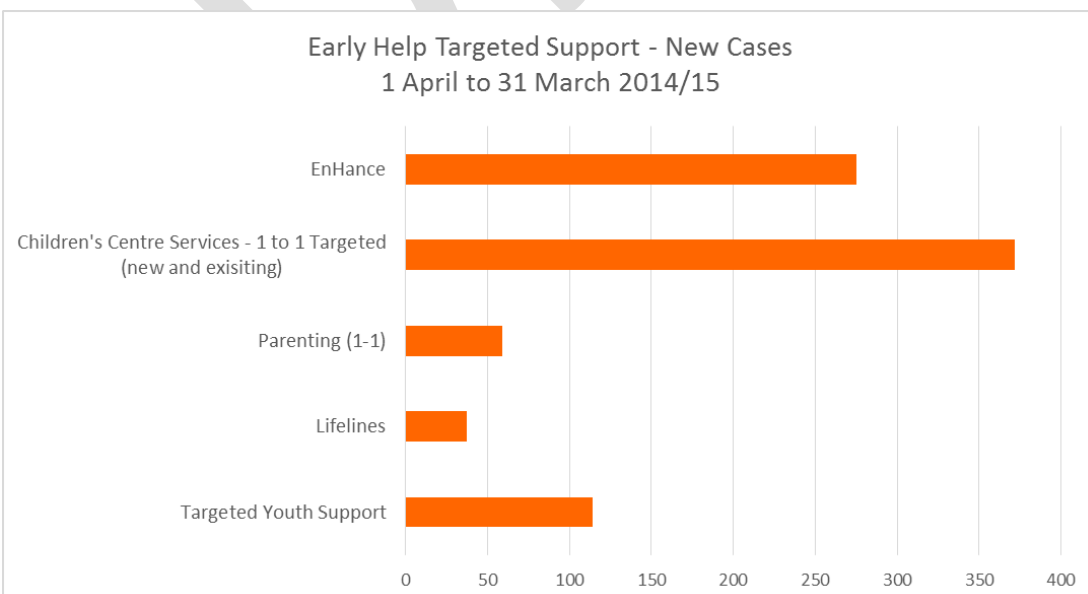


Table 3 explores the length of service provided by provider and highlights that Lifelines tends to work over a longer timescale (an average of 34.6 weeks) and 1:1 parenting support is provided over the shortest average timescale of 14.6 weeks.

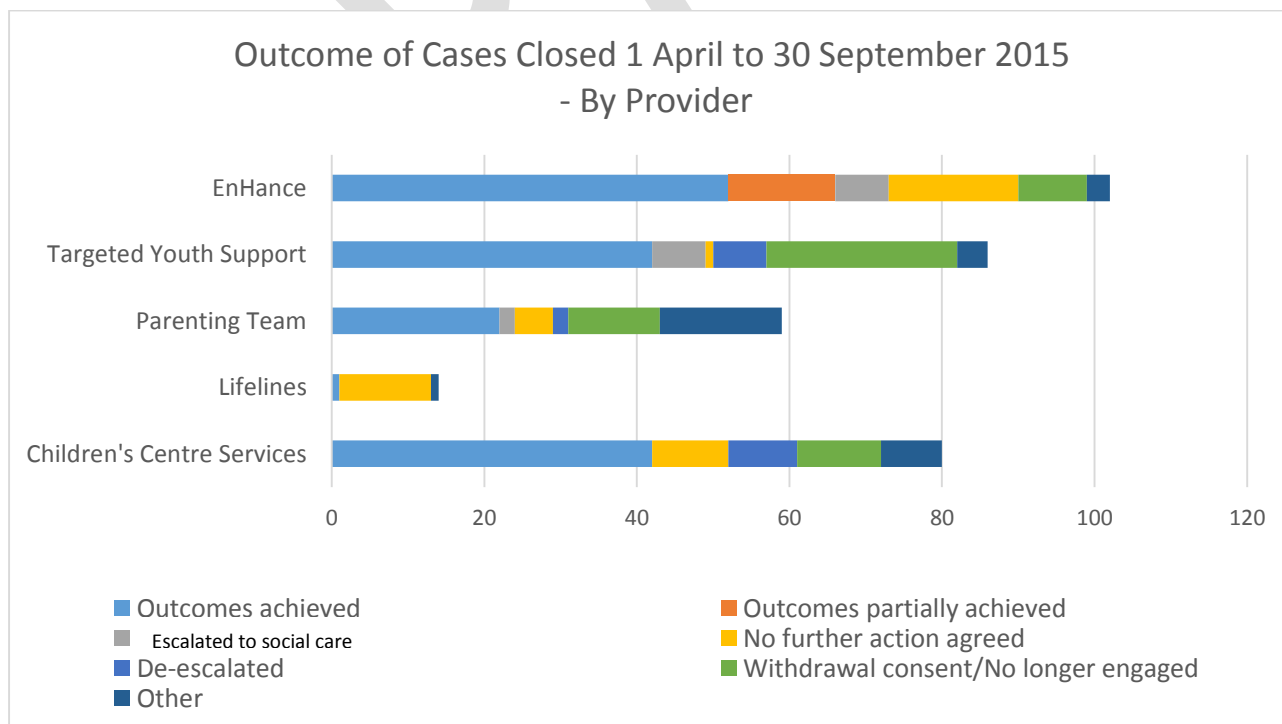
**Table 3 Length of intervention for Targeted Early Help by provider: 2014/15**

Service	Average length of intervention (weeks)	1 and 12 weeks	13 and 24 weeks	25 and 34 weeks	35 and 44 weeks	45 and 52 weeks	Over 1 year	Remained open	Not known
Targeted Youth Support	24.9	10	20	13	7	3	2	57	
Lifelines	34.6	4	9	7	8	1	6	2	
Parenting (1-1)	14.6	23	21	6	0	0	0	8	1
EnHance	20.1	46	141	53	11	4	2	120	
Children's Centre service	Data unavailable								

Early Help closures have also been considered in the context of provider involvement. Chart 9 has been used to illustrate the team/provider closing an Early Help case and the outcomes they achieved. This data is only available for Shropshire Council services and EnHance - it does not cover further external, commissioned provision. Of the cases closed between 1 April 2015 and 30 September 2015, 86 were closed by Targeted Youth Support, 80 by the three Children's Centres areas and 59 by the Parenting Team.

Chart 9 shows that there are very low numbers of escalation to social care with only 23 of the 142 closed cases being recorded as "stepped up". 205 of the closed cases have had their outcomes achieved (49%).

**Chart 9 Outcome of Cases Closed by Early Help Provider/Service/Team**



Outcomes partially achieved is a closure reason used by EnHance only.

From considering the involvement of service providers at referral, assessment and closure it has been possible to build up a general picture of provision but the type of Early Help services are looked at in more detail over the following pages.

### **3.2 Schools**

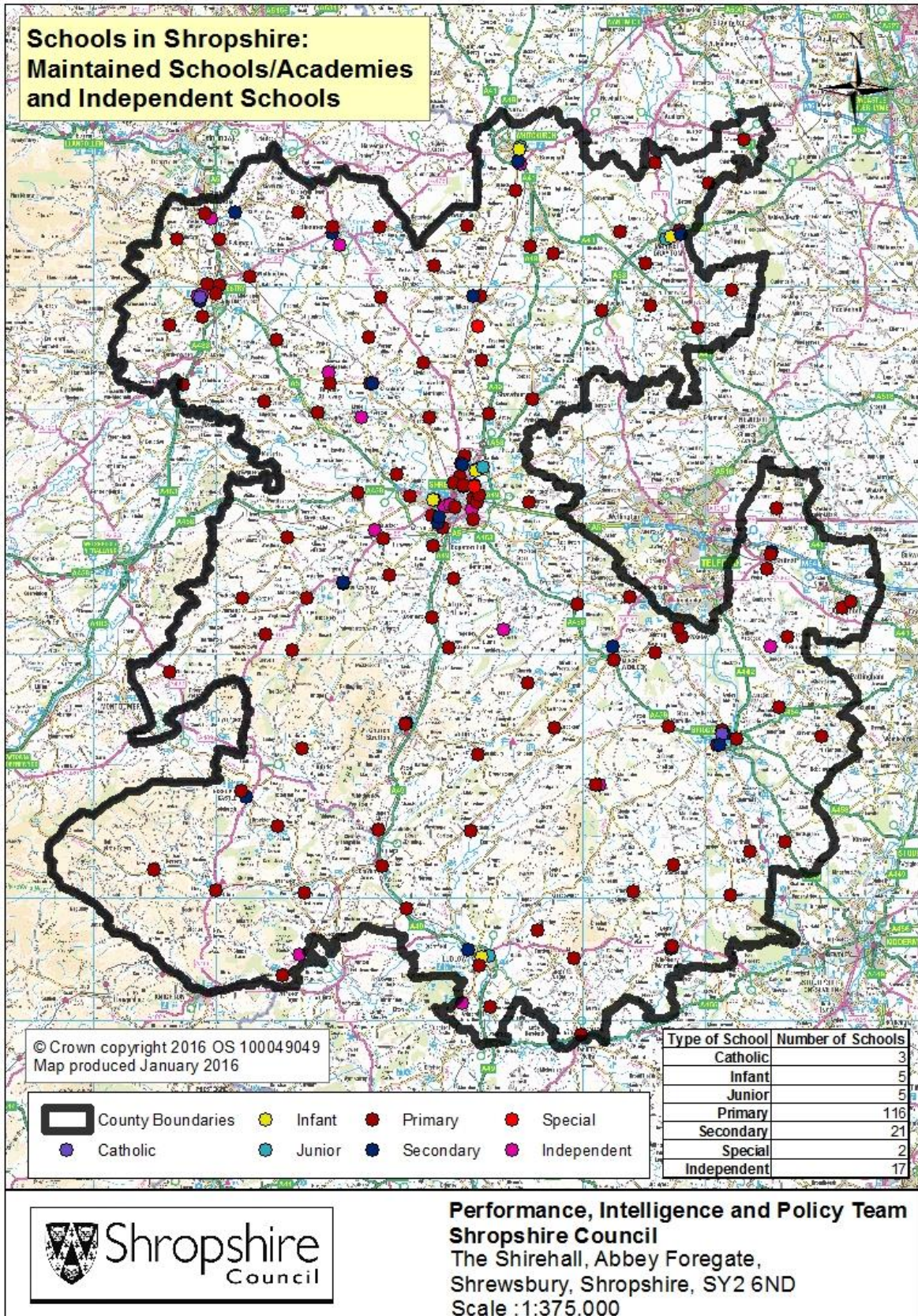
Schools play an essential role in recognising and identifying children who are vulnerable. The analysis above shows how important schools are within the provision of Early Help in Shropshire. In the financial year 2014/15, 51% of referrals to Early Help were made by schools, 70% of assessments between April and end of September 2015 were made by schools and schools were lead professionals for 54% of cases when data was extracted during February 2015.

Map 1 has been included to illustrate the geographical spread of schools in Shropshire. This is an important illustration because there are very few other services with the geographical reach of schools. The local, community based accessibility of schools and relationship developed between schools and the children and families who access them is critical in the identification of Early Help needs. Schools also have an important role in both the universal and targeted provision of Early Help (see Table 4). Information concerning how schools contribute to Early Help is outlined in the December 2015 Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee reports available on the Shropshire Council website. Some of the information from that report is used below.

The important role schools play within Early Help means it is essential that school based professionals to receive training in identifying the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to identify and respond early to the needs of all vulnerable children. During 2015, 99 members of school staff attended Early Help Network meetings designed to support professionals and raise practice standards in the delivery of Early Help. Schools also receive regular information through the Early Help newsletter and have access to online information and resources. Other training programmes available to schools to support in identifying and responding to early help needs include the Think Good Feel Good Programme (TAMHS), Understanding Your Child parenting programme and training needs identified as the Strengthening Families programme is developing.



Map 1 Location of Schools in Shropshire





**Table 4 The Role of Schools in Early Help**

Universal Early Help	Targeted Early Help	Partnership work via referral or consultation with COMPASS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding your child courses and workshops</li> <li>• Signposting to information or other services e.g. health visitor and school nurse.</li> <li>• Think Good Feel Good, whole school approach</li> <li>• Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), including child sexual exploitation awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding your child courses and workshops</li> <li>• Think Good Feel Good intervention e.g. anger management, relaxation.</li> <li>• Family Support Worker</li> <li>• Learning Mentor</li> <li>• Parent Support Advisor</li> <li>• PHSE specific support – Empower Programme</li> <li>• Family Learning</li> </ul>	<p>Working with an outside agency in partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted Youth Service</li> <li>• EnHance</li> <li>• Early Help Social Worker</li> <li>• Lifelines</li> <li>• Children’s Centres</li> <li>• Information Advice and Guidance (IAG)</li> <li>• CAMHS</li> <li>• Employment Advisor</li> <li>• Young Carers</li> <li>• Education Access Service</li> </ul>

Shropshire Safeguarding Children’s Board provides a multi-agency training schedule that all schools in Shropshire can access. However the majority of safeguarding training for schools is delivered within schools themselves. During 2014/15 there were over 2000 attendances at a range of safeguarding training by school staff during 2014-1. Training is also provided and accessed in a variety of ways including online modules for certain subjects.

A variety of models and levels of provision exists in schools with some schools employing staff as family support workers and others using learning mentors to engage the wider family and address issues. Some schools work creatively in clusters sharing resources and or working in partnership with other services to deliver Early Help, for example co-delivery of Understanding Your Child. 46 primary schools and 7 secondary schools are trained to deliver the Understanding your Child Parenting Programme. There are some good practice examples of schools starting to commission additional health support to meet needs, learning from these and developing collaboration is key to all agencies managing with less resource.

### 3.3 Children’s Centres

Children’s centres are intended to be a ‘one stop shop’ for all children under five and their families and offer a wide range of both universal and targeted services within the community. The services provide support for parents and help them to access:

- health services for children and their parents
- integrated childcare and early education
- information and advice about children’s services, parenting support and a range of family support services
- training and advice so that parents are helped to gain skills and find work.

All the different organisations that offer these services through a Children’s Centre work together to give the best support possible to all children and families in the community. These services are collectively known as Sure Start Children’s Centres. Regulated by Ofsted, inspections check whether Children’s Centres help families with young children to find out about and use the services they need.

Children’s Centres work with a variety of organisations including maternity services, health visitors, nurseries, pre-schools, schools, community enablement officers, benefits team, social care, voluntary and not-for-profit agencies to build on existing provision to develop responsive, needs led local services for families and their community.

Children's Centres offer support to families in a number of ways. There is range of universal groups across Shropshire where families can get advice and support if requested or if needs are identified. Families may attend a targeted group e.g. to support families where there is domestic abuse, pregnancy related depression, a child with special educational needs or disabilities, a teenage parent etc. or a training course. The teams also work with individual families, usually in their own homes, supporting the family to develop their action plan to meet their needs. Additionally, the service works with other agencies to signpost families to other appropriate services delivering both universal community support and the Early Help offer.

The previous analysis showed that, for the targeted support Children's Centres delivered:

- 2% of Early Help Assessments between April and end September 2015
- Children's Centres worked as Lead Professionals on 4% of cases (as measured at February 2015).
- 17% of all targeted referrals were for Children's Centres in 2014/15.

Table 5 is helpful because it provides an overview of Children's Centre access activity for a full year (2014/15). It helps develop an understanding of the universal provision undertaken and wider community level reach.

**Table 5 Shropshire Children's Centres Access Data 2014/15**

	North	Central	South	Out of county members	County total
<b>No of children</b> accessing universal groups and activities	1524	1214	1447	176	<b>4361</b>
<b>No of families</b> accessing universal groups and activities	1569	1213	1401	170	<b>4353</b>
<b>No of families</b> accessing targeted support via universal group	570	282	446	47	<b>1345</b>
<b>No of families</b> accessing targeted support via universal themed session	298	67	56	9	<b>430</b>
<b>No of children</b> accessing targeted groups*	129	70	79	0	<b>278</b>
<b>No of families</b> accessing targeted groups*	141	81	87	0	<b>309</b>
<b>No of children</b> on targeted caseload	181	126	184	0	<b>491</b>
<b>No of families</b> on targeted caseload	138	97	125	0	<b>360</b>
<b>Known children</b> (at March 2015)	5095	4855	4924	0	<b>14874</b>

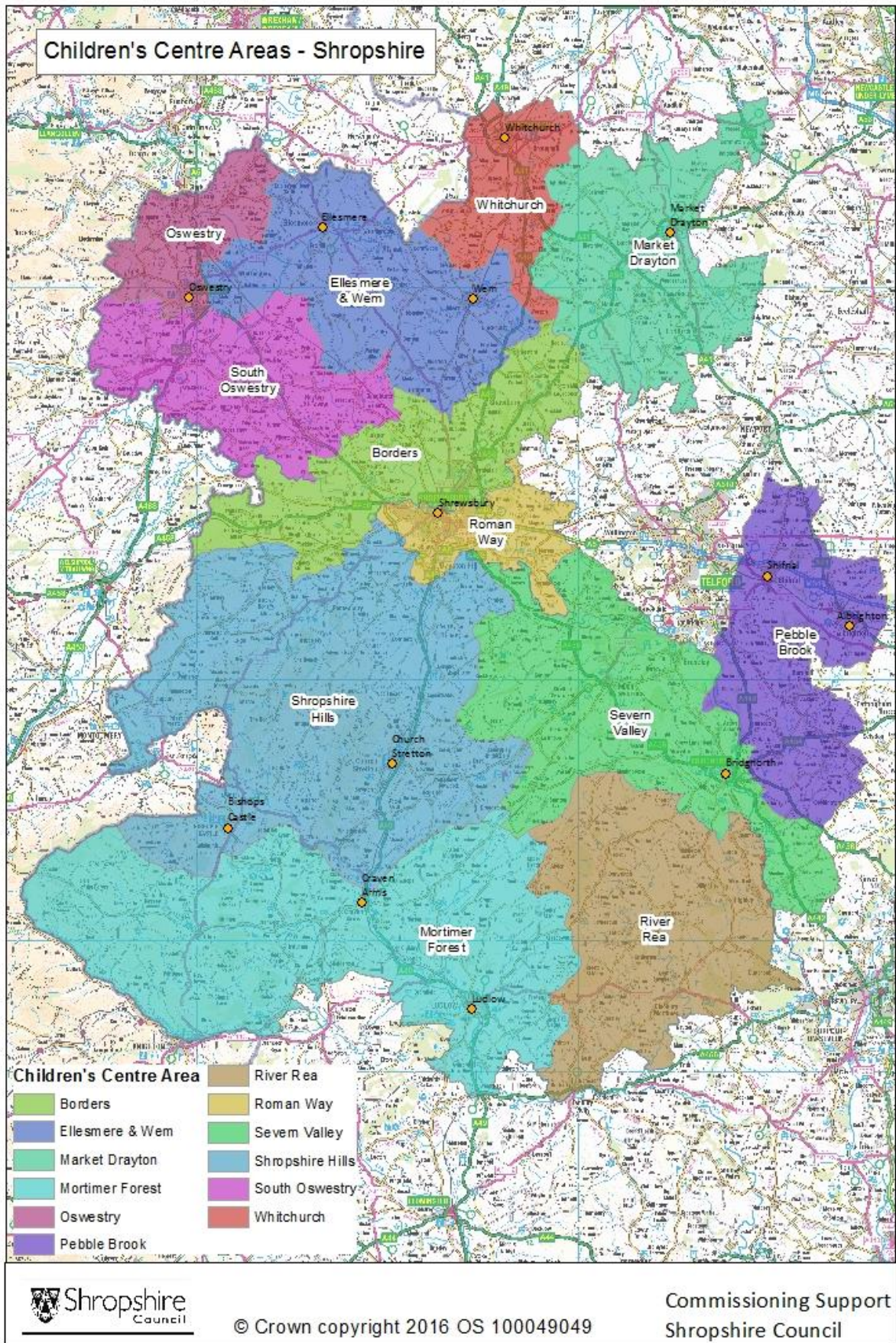
\*Targeted groups include:

- Freedom Programme & Recovery Tool Kit for survivors of Domestic Abuse
- Women's Refuge drop-in support sessions
- Understanding Your Child
- Baby massage
- 'No Worries' managing stress and anxiety
- Young Parents Groups
- Functional Skills
- Play Pals groups for Children with SEND
- Journey into Motherhood PRD group
- Oasis – referral only support groups

Map 2 is also helpful because it highlights the location of children's centres and illustrates the catchment areas for each.



Map 2 Location of Children's Centres and Children Centre Areas





### 3.4 Parenting Support

The Parenting Support team is part of Shropshire Council and offers both universal and targeted support. It delivers a range of support including:

- ‘Understanding your child’ and ‘understanding your teen’ parenting courses predominantly within children’s centres and schools.
- On-line understanding your child courses.
- Three understanding your child/teen groups for parents of children with additional needs.
- Work with School Development Groups to train professionals so that they can deliver support within their own areas.
- Parenting practitioners offer a targeted early intervention service, offering support to parents in understanding and managing their children’s behaviour. Referrals for a parenting practitioner are submitted via the Compass, using the Early Help referral process.

The analysis earlier in this section demonstrates how this service contributes to Early Help but additional data provided for 2013/14 and 2014/15 includes is shown in Table 6.

**Table 6 Parenting Support Headline Data 2013/14 and 14/15**

Activity	2013/14	2014/15
2 day Foundation Training for professionals	Data not available	136
Training professionals as group facilitators	Data not available	54
Number of Understanding your child/teen groups	31	43
Number of workshops	6	13
Number of parents who completed a group	199	263
Number of parents who attended a workshop	46	112
Number of Dads who completed a group	23	46
Total number of children who had parents attending a group	391	514
Number of parents who attended a group who have a child with additional needs	Data not available	74

### 3.5 Targeted Youth Support (TYS)

TYS is a specialist early intervention and prevention service for vulnerable young people aged 11-19, providing a range of support in order to help them gain the resilience and skills they need to progress into adult life. Targeted work may include:

- Child sexual exploitation and other risky behaviours
- Domestic abuse
- Emotional resilience including suicide prevention and self-harm
- Homelessness prevention
- Transition
- Working with young people with autism and mild to moderate learning needs
- Mediation and advocacy for young people i.e. between their parents or carers, education provision etc.
- Developing independence skills
- Substance misuse, working closely with the young people’s substance misuse team

TYS works directly with young people, ensuring their voices are heard and understood by the adults in their lives, developing Early Help plans involving family members and other significant people to ensure that the progress made can be sustained by their wider support network beyond their Early Help involvement. This may also require direct working with parents and carers. TYS will also deliver targeted group work programmes where need has been clearly identified. For example the Empower programme which promotes young women's understanding of healthy relationships, having been referred through the Child Sexual Exploitation panel.

Targeted Youth Support's activity is included in the overall analysis but a summary is included below and in Table 7:

- TYS was lead professional for 6% of cases at February 2015
- The geographical split of TYS service provision is fairly well balanced between central, north and south areas.
- At the beginning of October 2015, TYS had 122 active cases suggesting that numbers remain fairly stable.

**Table 7 Summary of TYS data 2014/15**

	2014/15
Number of referrals	162
Number of referrals that were considered inappropriate	40 (24.7%)
Total accepted referrals	122

### 3.6 Lifelines

Lifelines is another Shropshire Council service. It is a county-wide project aimed at children aged between 5-16 who have experienced a bereavement and are suffering from unresolved grief. The service is based within the school environment and provides one-to-one therapeutic support to the child/young person to help them move forward from their loss. Currently this service is free to all schools. This is a small service with limited capacity. There are two part time support workers running the service. As a result the contribution to the total Early Help support provided is small in proportion. The previous analysis shows Lifelines had 3% of referrals for targeted Early Help in 2014/15 and 37 new cases in 2014/15.

### 3.7 Early Help Social Workers

The Early Help Social Work team provide consultation, advice and direct support to practitioners within the Early Help offer. There are 5 full time Early Help Social Workers within the team. Although the Early Help Social Workers do not holding a case load, they are available to advise and offer direct support to colleagues from all agencies. These social workers offer consultation through COMPASS, in addition to working directly with others in the community.

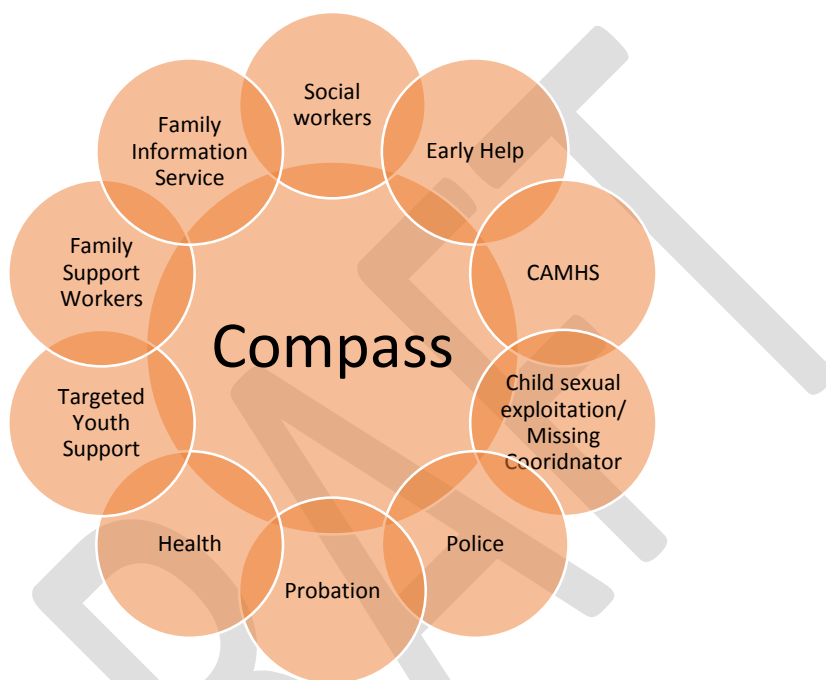
Early Help Social workers offer a range of support including:

- Home visits with professionals
- Advice clinics in the locality areas
- Supporting the construction of Early Help Assessments
- Attending Early Help meetings to offer safeguarding and preventative advice
- Supporting Lead Professionals in the development and monitoring of targeted early help plans for children stepping down from Social Work plans
- Undertaking targeted consultations to practitioners dealing with more complex cases
- Supporting communities with creating their own support networks
- Bringing forward and sharing with other practitioners the latest safeguarding tools and knowledge
- Providing a telephone duty system (normal office hours), to respond to requests for consultation with an Early Help Social Worker.

Compass is the single point of contact for receiving new enquiries regarding concerns for the welfare or protection of children and young people in Shropshire. Compass promotes the offer of Early Help to children and families in the first instance, where it is safe to do so. Compass provides other professionals with support and guidance in completing assessments for Early Help and delivering Early Help plans. This support includes the opportunity to book a consultation with either an Early Help social worker, a primary child and adolescent mental health worker, or a targeted youth worker.

The Compass team comprises a range of agencies and professionals working together and these are illustrated in the diagram below.

**Diagram 3 Partners involved in Compass**



If the Compass Hub believes that the child would benefit from extra help, or that the parent/carer needs support, they'll signpost the family to the right service, ensuring that support is provided quickly. If the Compass Hub believes that the child's needs can be appropriately met by services and support already in place then no further action will be taken and the contact will be closed down. If the Compass Hub decides the child is a 'child in need' or at risk of harm, the referral will progress to a social work assessment, and a social worker from one of the case management teams will be allocated to complete the assessment. Parents can also access Compass directly via Shropshire Council's First Point Of Contact (FPOC).

### **3.8 Enhance**

Enhance is commissioned by Shropshire Council to provide Early Help interventions for children young people and their families when their needs cannot be met by routine universal services, but they do not meet the threshold for a specialist service such as Children's Social Care or CAMHS. YSS Ltd are the lead organisation, working with Homestart and Shropshire Providers Consortium (SPC). Enhance has been developed to fully integrate into the overall Shropshire Early Help offer and aims to provide a flexible service, using a variety of interventions, to build resilience in children, young people aged 0 -19 and their families. The service offers a range of targeted and focused interventions covering:

- One-to-one key worker support for the child/young person.
- Mentoring by trained volunteers for the child/young person to access positive activities and broaden their life experiences.
- Support for parents/carers of children/young people.

There are 18 key workers employed by the project who include a number of staff seconded to the project from the partnership organisations. Key workers are responsible for assessing the clients' needs and developing an action plan. Volunteers are also an important part of the service and work to help parents to develop effective parenting strategies with the aim of building confidence and skills and helping parents understand their children better. Volunteers also work as mentors with children and young people to help them have better school and social experiences. The project currently has 34 volunteers: 27 are active or available and 7 have asked to be put on hold. Referrals into the service are through Compass.

The analysis shows that:

- Enhance workers formed 6% of the total for lead professionals at February 2015.
- Enhance received 24% of the total targeted referrals in 2014/15.
- Enhance received 275 new cases within the year 2014/15 and worked with 378 cases in total.
- 64.7% of the children/families Enhance supported in 2014/15 had their outcomes achieved or partially achieved.

Data from the EnHance quarterly reports for quarters 1 and 2 2015/16 is shown in Table 8.

**Table 8 Summary of Enhance data**

	Quarter 1 2015/16	Quarter 2 2015/16
Number of open cases	174	186
Number of referrals	92	59
Number of new cases	43	44
Number of cases closed	59	43

EnHance quarterly reports are detailed and break down data by age group, location etc. The reports also include detailed information regarding the outcomes achieved and difference made. It is worth noting that the EnHance reports highlight how important school referrals are with April to September 2015 seeing 64.4% referrals made by schools.

More recently the Social Return on Investment for Enhance has been calculated at £6.91 for every £1 spent\*. The total cost of project delivery over a 10 month period is £441,000 and the total social value of the project for that period is calculated at £3,045,952

### 3.9 Shropshire Young Carers

Shropshire Young Carers is a countywide support service supported by the British Red Cross. It provides support for young people aged 5 to 18 years who carry out significant caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility, which would normally be undertaken by an adult. Young carers commonly care for a family member who is ill, disabled, suffers with mental health difficulties or has alcohol/drug related issues. Support is provided through a network of peer support groups across the county and by working in partnership with schools. Support includes:

- respite
- 1:1 support
- A network of friends in similar situations
- peer support
- "child time"
- a chance to relax, have a break and have fun

Peer Support meetings are run on a monthly basis in Ludlow, Bridgnorth, Market Drayton/Whitchurch, Oswestry, and three separate age appropriate groups in Shrewsbury. At the end of June 2015 the service was working with 173 children/young people and their families.



### 3.10 Autism West Midlands

Autism West Midlands has a team based in Shropshire working with families/carers and professionals working with children with autism and autistic traits aged 0-18 years. The service contributing to Early Help has included:

- The provision of information, support and training for parents of children with autistic traits in the community and in the home
- The provision of information, support and training to children with autistic traits in the community and in the home
- The provision of information, support and training to professionals who provide universal support to children with autistic traits in the community and in the home. This can include and is not limited to health, social care and VCS staff.
- General awareness of autism related needs and support.
- Contribution to multi-agency meetings centred on families.
- Contribution to local strategic / special interest groups.

Table 9 summarises data for the service for the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015.

**Table 9 Summary of Autism West Midlands Data**

1 April to 30 September 2015	Quarter 1 2015	Quarter 2 2015
Number of new families within the quarter	29	25
Family support (phone, advice appointment, targeted support at home)	130	181
Number of parents attending parental training (Total parents – some parents attended multiple sessions)	76 (109)	76 (105)
Attendance at advice clinics	44	25
Number of group sessions offered	9	13
Number of attendees at group sessions	63	52
Total number of parents accessing group support sessions	65 (6 months total)	
Information and Advice for Professionals	31	22
Number of professionals trained within quarter	30	15

The data provided by Autism West Midlands suggests that a significant number of parents are being reached by the service each quarter, either through one to one support by phone or face to face, or through group sessions and advice clinics.

### 3.11 Summary of Early Help Support

A description for each services has been included above but Table 10 provides a useful summary.

**Table 10 Targeted Early Help Services**

Service	Where provided?	How provided?
<b>Targeted Youth Support (TYS)</b>	Countywide. At school, at home, at youth centres and other community venues. Venues to suit the young person's plan, interests and needs.	*Mostly 1-1 with young people and with family members as appropriate. *Some group work (on a needs basis) *Co-ordinating the EH plan when Lead Professional

Service	Where provided?	How provided?
<b>EnHance</b>	Countywide. At school, at home, at youth centres and other community venues. Flexible with venues - wherever is best for service users	*1-1 with young person and/or parents as well as whole family approach. *Parenting - group work and 1-1 *Co-ordinating the EH plan when Lead Professional
<b>Parenting Support</b>	*Countywide. *Groups/workshops: Children's Centres, schools and community venues *1-1: Home	*Groups, workshops and 1-1 parenting support *Co-ordinating the EH plan when Lead Professional
<b>Children's Centre Services</b>	Countywide. *Universal: Children's Centres *Targeted: At home, Children's Centres, Flexible with venues - wherever is best for service users	*Universal: Groups, Drop in *Targeted: 1-1 with family, group work, 1-1 work within drop in groups *Co-ordinating the EH plan when Lead Professional
<b>Lifelines</b>	Countywide. In the school environment (support), at home (assessment and review).	*1-1 therapeutic support for young people. With parents/carers for assessment and review. *Co-ordinating the EH plan when Lead Professional
<b>British Red Cross Young Carers</b>	Countywide	*Groups and activities *1 to 1 support
<b>Autism West Midlands</b>	Countywide	*Group support *1 to 1 support by phone and face to face *Training * Professional advice and support

The Young Carers Service and Autism West Midlands Service will sit outside of Early Help from April 2016 but it is important to consider them within this document as they continue to contribute support that will help address Early Help needs.

### 3.12 Current Early Help Workforce

Workforce considerations should be included within a market assessment exercise. The Early Help Effectiveness Report, produced on an annual basis, contains helpful evidence and workforce feedback. The 2015 Effectiveness Report is currently live and so it is not available at the time of writing but the Effectiveness Report 2014/15 key findings relating to workforce issues are summarised below in order to build understanding of the Early Help Workforce. In 2014, 630 professionals were contracted with a survey and 114 practitioners responded in December 2014. The findings showed that the practitioners reported:

- An increase in knowledge concerning where to go for information on services (86%: an increase of 14.6% on 2013).
- They were more able to plan appropriate strategies using their assessments (89.5%: an increase of 14.5%).
- They better understand thresholds (68.4%: an increase of 12.2%).

- They are better able to analyse and evaluate the information within their assessments (89.5%: an increase of 10.7%).
- They felt more skilled in completing assessments (80.7%: an increase of 9.8%).
- They felt more confident in talking to parents/carers about difficult issues (91.7%: an increase of 8.3%).
- There was a slight reduction in confidence in identifying when it is appropriate to signpost to other services (88.6%: a decrease of 6.6%).
- Practitioners highlighted a decrease in confidence making appropriate referrals to other services (79.8%: a decrease of 4%).
- Practitioners feel more confident in managing cases within Early Help (92%: an increase of 28%).
- There has been an increase in practitioners' understanding of the process (92%: an increase of 14%).
- An increased number of practitioners find the process easy (60%: an increase of 13%) although this figure remains relatively low.
- There was a slight decline in the percentage of practitioners who found pathways to support clear and this remains a relatively low number (57%: a decrease of 8%).
- 72% (66) of the practitioners who completed the questionnaire had a professional consultation. The 66 reported increased accessibility to Early Help Social Workers and CAMHS primary workers.

It is important that these research findings are considered alongside the Early Help needs Assessment and Market Assessment in order to build a more fully formed understanding of key issues and to inform future commissioning.

### 3.13 Partnership Working

Partnership working is vital in enabling the effective functioning of Early Help and the groups in place within Shropshire secure the involvement of both current providers and the wider provider market. The diagram below summarises the partnership working in place but the Early Help Strategy 2015 should be referred to for more detailed information about the Early Help offer, how services fit together and how partnership groups operate and their areas of focus.

#### Shropshire's Safeguarding Children Board

The Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board coordinates and monitors how the services and professional staff work together to protect children from abuse or neglect. The agencies involved include the Police, Education, Health, Probation, the voluntary sector and other organisations who work with children as well as Children's Social Care who have the lead responsibility. The Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board is responsible for overseeing the effectiveness of Early Help (more detail can be seen in Working Together 2015, as previously referenced).

#### Shropshire Children's Trust

Shropshire Children's Trust aims to improve outcomes for children and young people. It brings a range of organisations together alongside representatives of young people and parents and it is responsible for developing and overseeing delivery of the Children, Young People and Families Plan.

#### Early Help Partnership Group

The multi-agency group responsible for the delivery of the Early Help Strategy. The group reports to the Children's Trust Board. It also supports wider engagement of stakeholders and works to arrange stakeholder sessions in order to communicate key developments.

### Early Help Stakeholder Performance Group

The Early Help Stakeholder Performance group, is a multi-agency group responsible for coordinating and evaluating auditing activity, performance outcomes and service user feedback and reports into the Early Help Partnership group.

### Early Help Leadership Team

The leadership team members are responsible for the co-ordinated delivery of services providing early help intervention to families and support to Lead Professionals in the assessment and delivery of EH plans.

### Other Partnership Groups Early Help links with....

Health and Wellbeing Board

Strengthening Families Strategic Board

Healthy Child Programme Board

Schools Partnership Groups (multiple)

VCS Assembly, 0-25s VCS Summit

The 0-25 VCS Summit (previously known as the Children's Summit) aims to improve opportunities for voluntary and community organisations to participate in the working of Shropshire Children's Trust and wider children's services. The Forum usually meets 4 – 5 times a year wide a wide range of VCS services represented on the group.

### 3.14 Strengthening Families through Early Help

The Troubled Families expanded programme (2015-2020) requires Local Authorities and their partners to engage in ongoing service reform according to evidence of effectiveness and savings. It aims to transform the way that public services work with families with multiple problems to take an integrated whole family approach, to help reduce demand for reactive services.

Following consultation and co-design with stakeholders the Shropshire Strategic Group for Troubled Families agreed the approach for the expanded programme in Shropshire should further integrate early help provision and activity and maximise the effectiveness of locality working through both networks of people and places working towards an agreed set of outcomes. This approach was named "Strengthening Families" and incorporates the Troubled Families programme and Early Help. The agreed aims of the Strengthening Families programme in Shropshire include:

- Providing relevant, timely support to families, some of whom will be included in the Troubled Families Programme
- Working with families at the earliest stage to make positive changes and build their resilience, at the same time reducing the chance that they will need further support in the future
- Providing more emphasis on allocating the right intervention to families with more complex needs and developing a shared responsibility to agree how this is delivered.

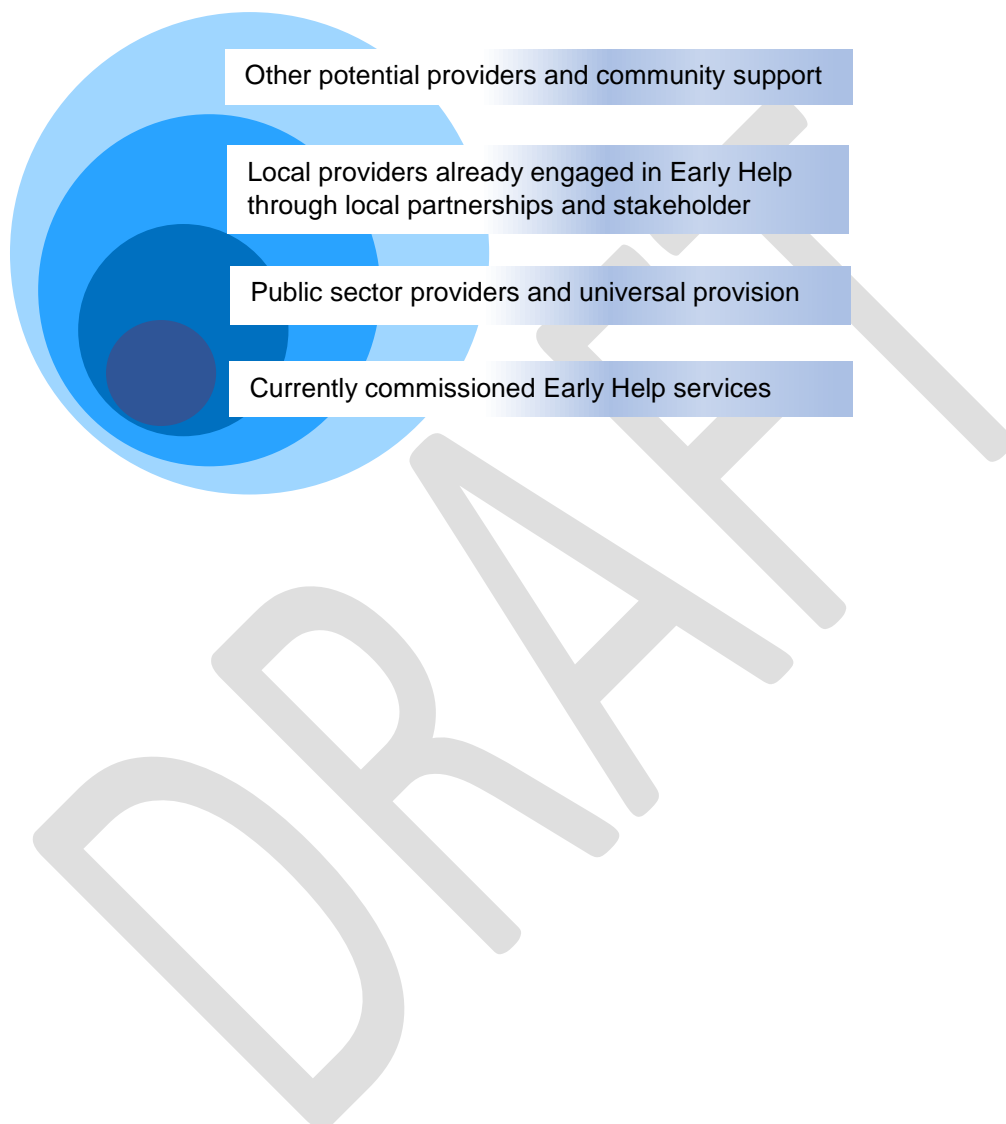
Under Strengthening Families, the Early Help process and provision are being integrated with the Troubled Families programme to align to the aims, essentials and principles of Strengthening Families and work towards the jointly agreed Strategic Goals of this programme. The intention being to further develop and succeed in ways of working that strengthen families at the earliest

stage to make positive changes and build resilience to prevent further problems from arising or escalating.

### 3.15 Beyond current provision

The next section of the report looks at how the current providers outlined within this section sit within a wider market delivering services supporting children and families within Shropshire and contributing to the Early Help outcomes. The diagram below outlines the different layers of provision that exist within the market.

**Diagram 4 Layers of the Early Help Market**



## 4. Understanding the Market

### 4.1 Scope

The Early Help market has been assessed to include known organisations delivering support in line with the 6 predictive factors included in the Early Help Framework and outlined in Part 2:

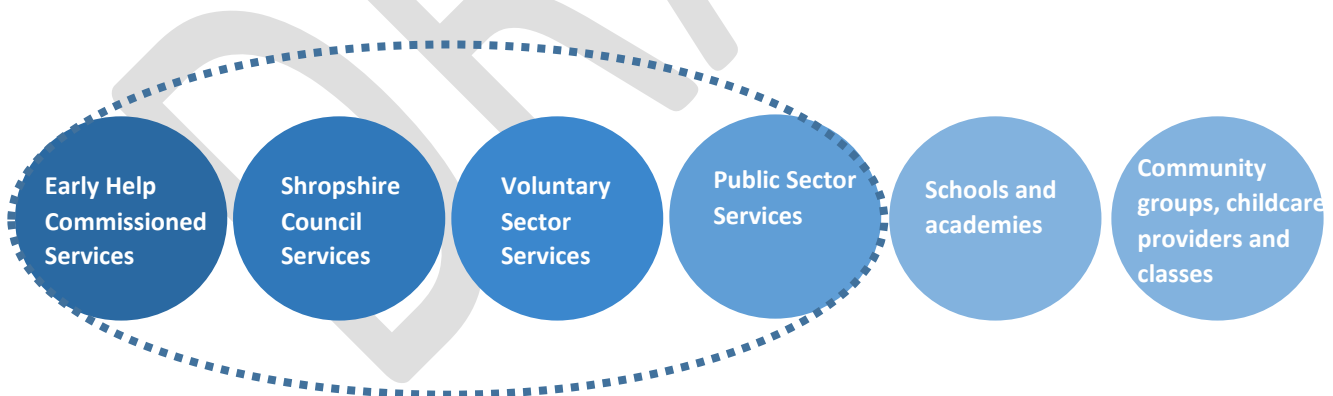
1. Parents or Children involved in Crime or anti-social behaviour
2. Children who have not been attending school regularly
3. Children who need help: children or all ages who need help are identified as in need or are subject to a child protection plan
4. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness
5. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
6. Parents and children with a range of health problems

A mapping exercise was undertaken in late 2015 using information gathered from Strengthening Families locality meetings. The mapping identified 130 bodies contributing to the achievement of Early Help outcomes in Shropshire. This list of 130 was then filtered to remove non-service providers. For example training programmes, projects and some community groups were removed so that only service providers remained. Key elements of information were then obtained for each provider organisation (data was captured using information collected by Shropshire's VCS Assembly and internet searches of organisation websites). The resulting market assessment database contains 115 local service providers.

It is likely that some organisations will have been missed from the research despite considerable effort being taken to include all known organisations working to deliver support that contributes to Early Help (and the needs highlighted in Part 3).

The diagram below emphasises the scope of the assessment. Current providers are included alongside public sector and voluntary sector services contributing to Early Help outcomes.

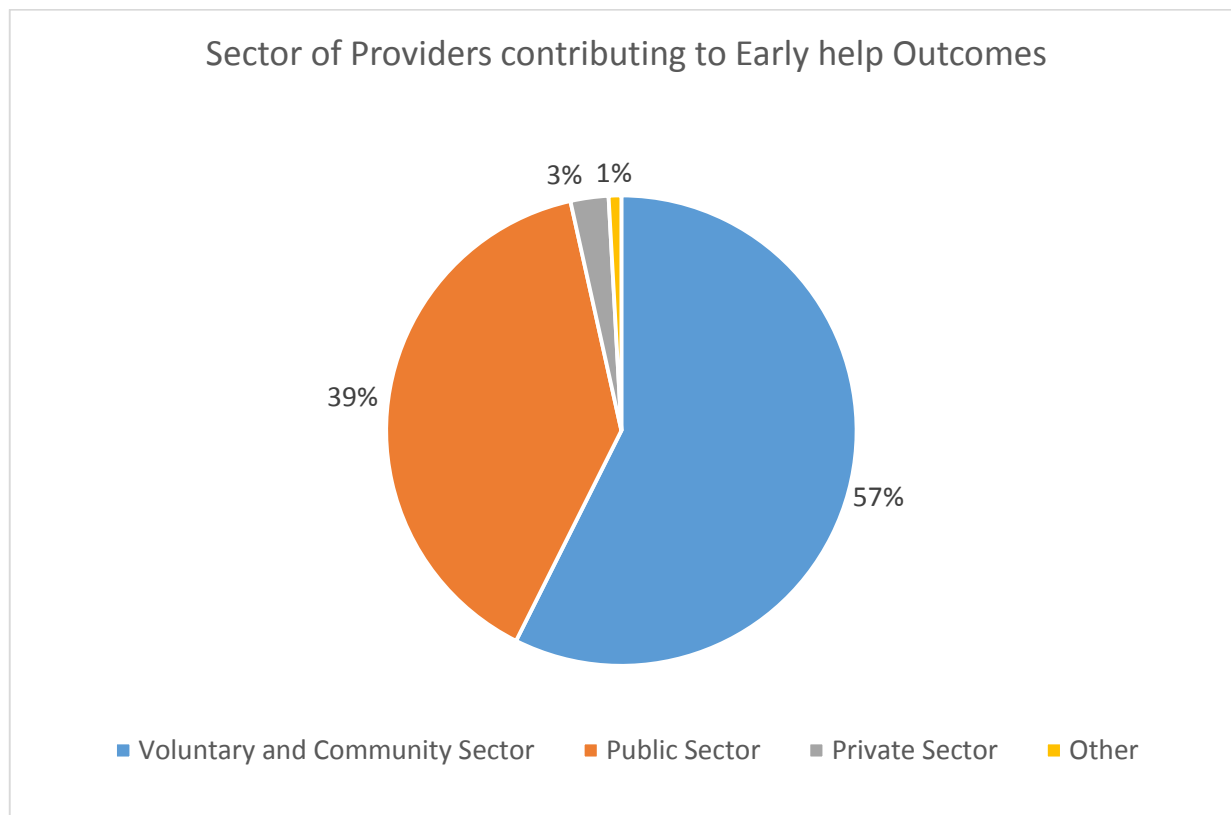
**Diagram 5 Scope of the Market Assessment**



Although not included within the assessment, the importance of informal volunteering and community groups should not be underestimated. These groups, although not established as service providers, often provide essential locally based support or social support for children and families. Schools are not included within this section of the report but the importance of schools within Early Help is highlighted within the previous section.

Chart 10 highlights the providers included by sector. 57% are VCSE sector services and 39% public sector services.

**Chart 10 Sector of Providers within the Market Assessment**



#### **4.2 Service Provision within the Early Help Market**

Chart 11 provides the primary purpose of each organisation within the Market Assessment. It shows that the greatest proportion of organisations included within the assessment have support for children and young people with special educational needs and disability as a primary purpose (15%), followed by youth activity (14%) and health and wellbeing services (14%), and safeguarding, community safety and abuse support (11%).

There are very few services working to provide befriending support but it is possible that an assessment of informal community based provision (unregistered VCSE support) could highlight more informal, unsupported befriending support. It should be noted that some organisations may class themselves in multiple categories but only the organisations primary purpose has been included in this instance.



**Chart 11 Primary Purpose of Provider Organisations**

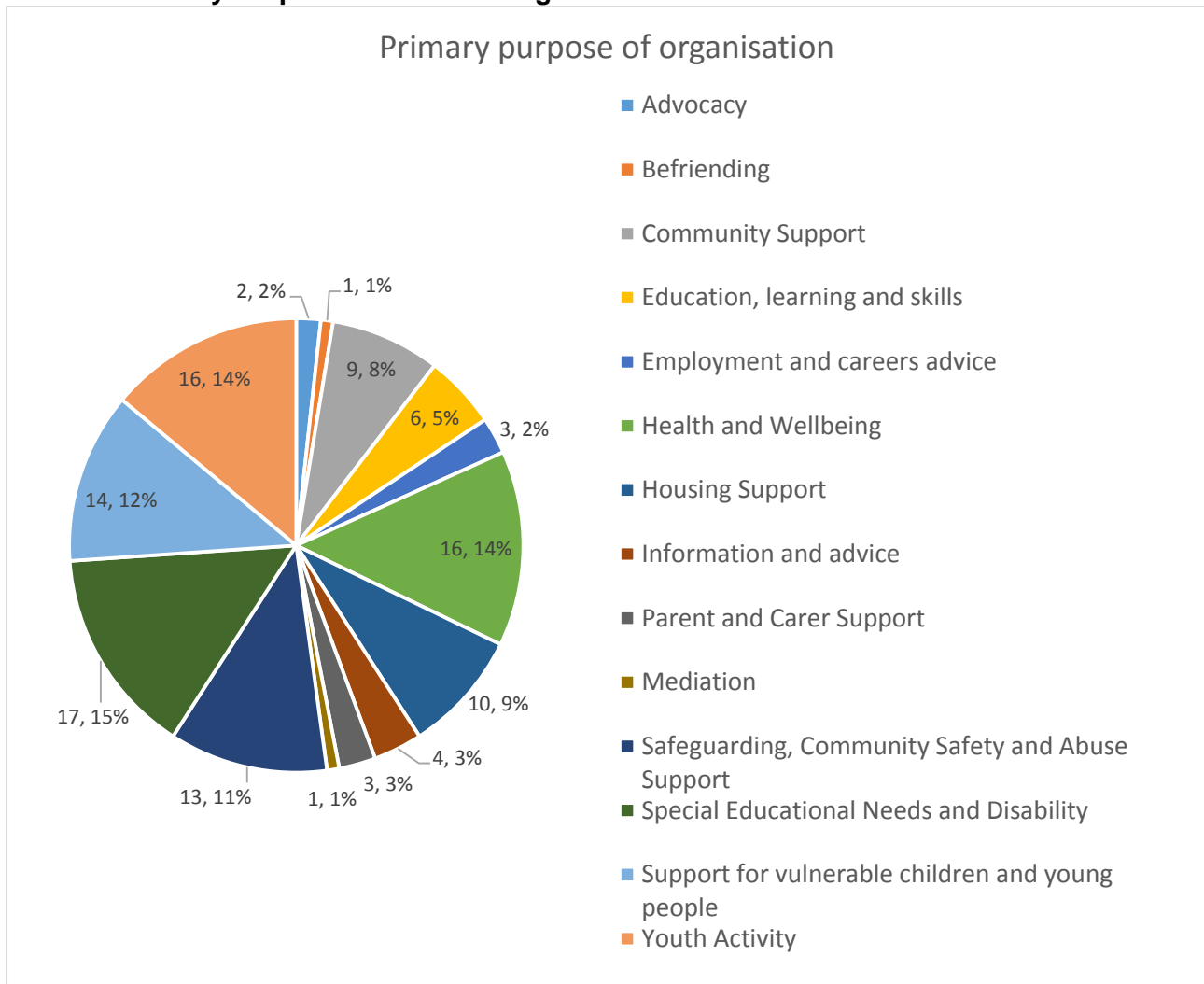
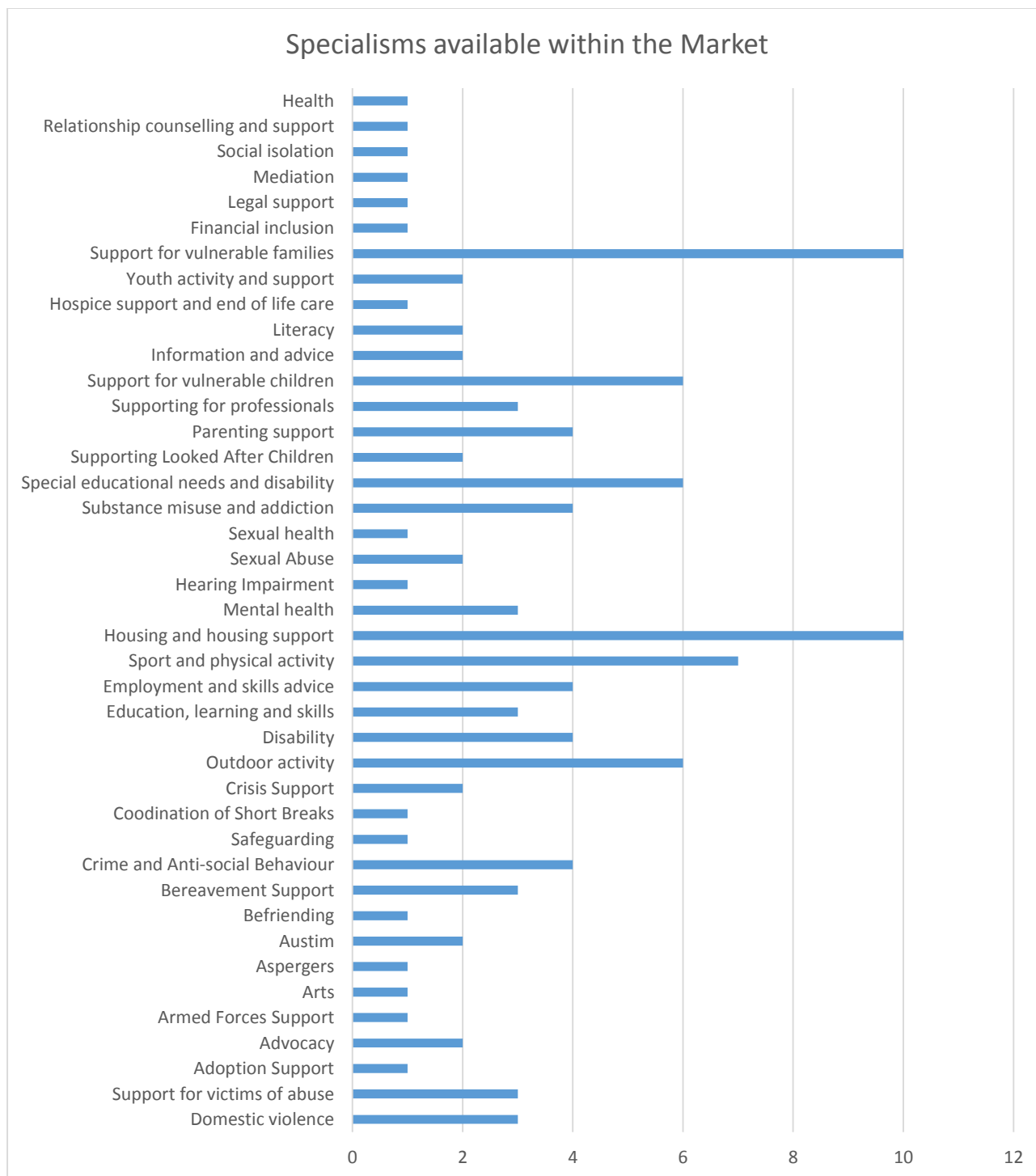


Chart 12 includes a little more information on the specialisms that organisations within the market assessment deliver. Specialisms are best understood by looking at organisational level data and information but the analysis below is provided to give an overview of the Early Help market. The chart helps to highlight where there multiple organisations providing support to meet similar needs and where there is a heavy local reliance on a small number of specialist providers.

There are larger number of organisations contributing to Early Help within the housing/ housing support and support for vulnerable families categories (for example Shropshire Rural Support, Barnabus Community Projects). Other types of specialism featuring strongly within the market include organisations providing sport, outdoor experiences and organisations supporting special educational needs and disability (SEND). A number of organisations also provide support for vulnerable children (for example YSS, Barnardos, Action for Children).



**Chart 12 Specialisms available within the Early Help Market**



In total 39 of the 115 organisations considered within the Market Assessment promote that they offer broader family support rather than focus on the needs of the individual (34%).

In order to better understand the methods used to support children, young people and families, the market assessment considered the type of services offered by providers and potential providers. Chart 13 shows the results. Information and advice forms a significant service element (for 51% of providers); followed by advocacy, mentoring and befriending (37%); education, training and skills (33%) and volunteering (32%). 21 organisations (14%) offer counselling and 22 offer short breaks. A further 22 organisations provide communities venues and drop in facilities.

**Chart 13 Types of Support Delivered within the Market**

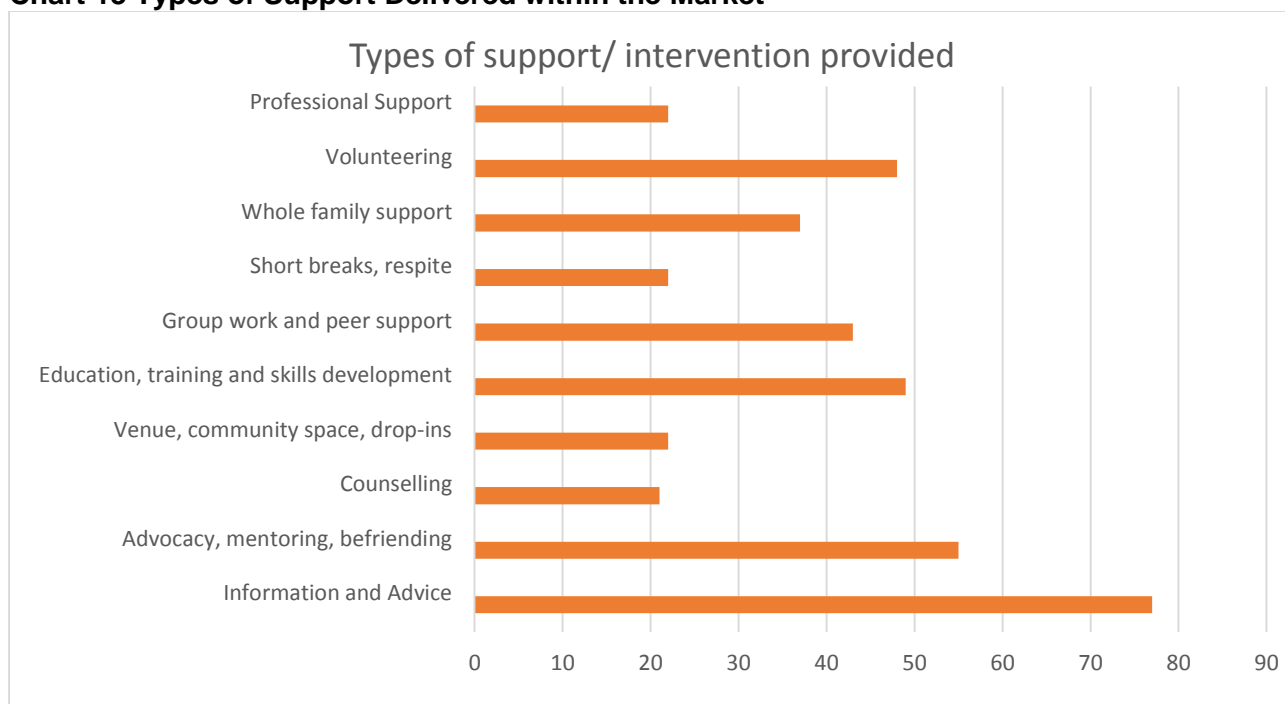


Chart 13 shows that 22 organisations (19%) offer support to professionals. The theme of that professional support (usually in the form of training) has been broken down in the table below. Bodies providing essential professional support within Early Help include Shropshire’s Safeguarding Children Board and Compass. Other organisations, as specialists in their areas, offer professionals support in understanding and supporting families with needs; for example Autism West Midlands on Autism. It is possible that there are more specialist services able to provide professional support but not currently promoting that service offer within the public information they produce.

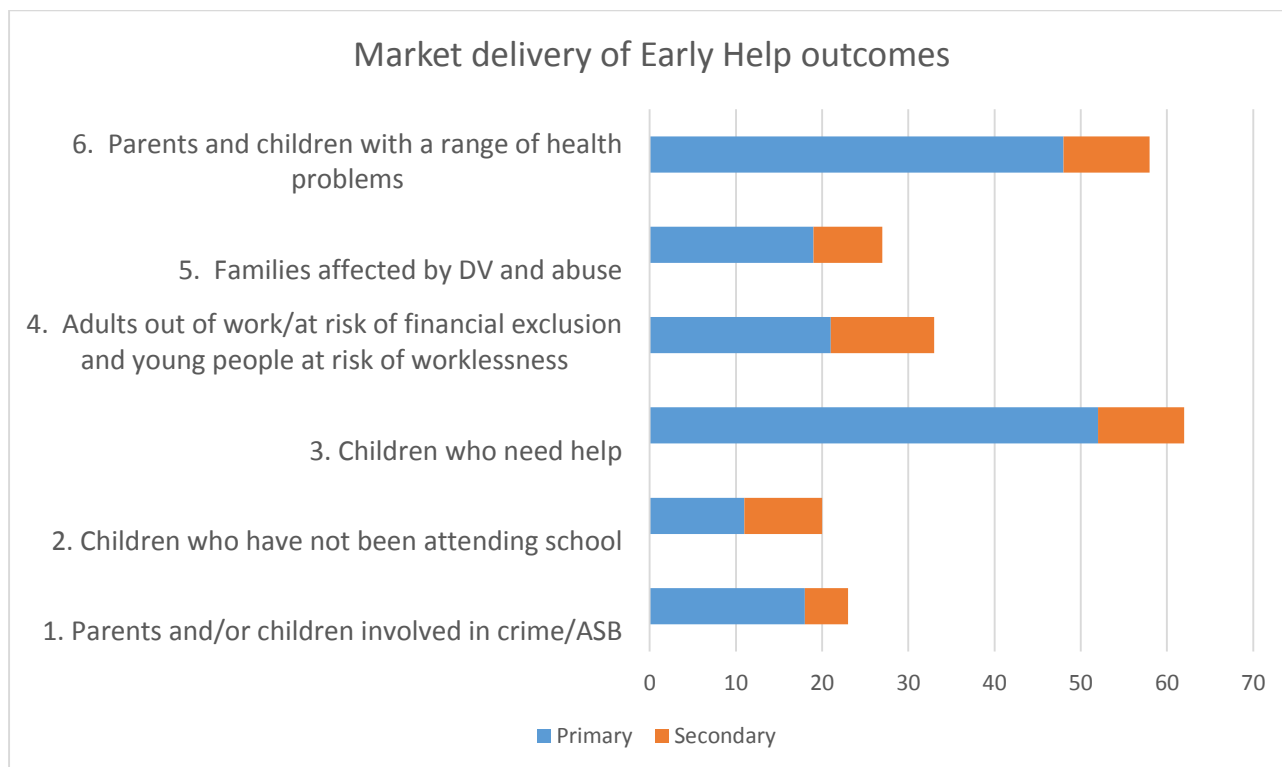
**Table 11 Professional Support and Training Offered by Theme**

Theme of professional support offered	Number of organisations
Support for vulnerable children families	4
SEND	3
Bereavement Support	2
Mental Health	2
Adoption Support	1
Aspergers	1
Autism	1
Disability (All forms)	1
Education	1
Employment and careers advice	1
Looked after children	1
Therapies and interventions (inc. outdoor activity)	1
Safeguarding	1
Sexual Abuse	1
Social Isolation	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>

### 4.3 Provision and the Early Help Predictors

The Market Assessment has also considered how providers and potential providers are contributing towards the Early Help (and Strengthening Families Predictor) and addressing the needs aligned against the 6 predictors. Chart 14 and Table 12 show that more organisations are delivering support against the predictor ‘children who need help’ than any other category. The second strongest category within the market is support for parents and children with a range of health problems.

**Chart 14 Proportion of the Market Delivering the 6 Predictors**



**Table 12 Organisation Level Delivery Against the 6 Predictors**

Strengthening Families and Early Help Predictors	Organisations within the Early Help Market providing support against the 6 predictors.	
<b>1. Parents and/or Children involved in Crime or ASB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnardos</li> <li>• Bromford</li> <li>• Compass</li> <li>• Coram Voice</li> <li>• Early Help Advisors, Social Work Practitioners, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• EnHance (YSS, Homestart, SPC)</li> <li>• Fire Service</li> <li>• Home Group (inc. Stonham, Brook House)</li> <li>• Police Community Support Officers</li> <li>• RAF and Army Welfare</li> <li>• Severnside Housing</li> <li>• Shropshire Housing Group (includes Meres and Mosses and South Shropshire Housing Association)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shropshire Parenting Team (Parenting Courses)</li> <li>• Shropshire Youth Association</li> <li>• SOVA</li> <li>• SUSTAIN Housing Support</li> <li>• Targeted Youth Support, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• The Hive</li> <li>• Trident Reach</li> <li>• Tuition Medical and Behaviour Support Service (TMBSS)</li> <li>• West Mercia Police</li> <li>• West Mercia Youth Offending Service</li> <li>• YSS</li> </ul>

Strengthening Families and Early Help Predictors	Organisations within the Early Help Market providing support against the 6 predictors.	
<p><b>2. Children who have not been attending school</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aquarius</li> <li>• Barnardos</li> <li>• Compass</li> <li>• Coram Voice</li> <li>• Early Help Advistors, Social Work Practitioners, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Education Access and Inclusion Service (Education Welfare Officers)</li> <li>• EnHance (YSS, Homestart, SPC)</li> <li>• HomeStart</li> <li>• National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)</li> <li>• Police Community Support Officers</li> <li>• RAF and Army Welfare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red Cross</li> <li>• Severnside Housing</li> <li>• Shropshire Housing Group (includes Meres and Mosses and South Shropshire Housing Association)</li> <li>• Shropshire Parenting Team (Parenting Courses)</li> <li>• SOVA</li> <li>• SUSTAIN Housing Support</li> <li>• Targeted Youth Support, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• The Gateway Education Centre, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• YSS</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Children who need help</b>  <b>i) Younger Children</b>  <b>ii) Known But Not At Threshold</b>  <b>iii) Children Receiving Social Care</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A4U</li> <li>• Action for Children</li> <li>• After Adoption</li> <li>• All in @ short breaks</li> <li>• Aquarius</li> <li>• Autism West Midlands</li> <li>• Autonomy</li> <li>• Barnardos</li> <li>• Beanstalk</li> <li>• Beech Tree</li> <li>• Bromford</li> <li>• CAB, IASS</li> <li>• Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)</li> <li>• Compass</li> <li>• Coram Voice</li> <li>• Country Treks, Live The Adventure Ltd</li> <li>• Cycling Projects</li> <li>• Disabled Children's Team</li> <li>• Early Help Advistors, Social Work Practitioners, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Educational Psychology Service, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• EnHance (YSS, Homestart, SPC)</li> <li>• Fusion Arts Oswestry</li> <li>• Green Oak Foundation</li> <li>• Home Group (inc. Stonham, Brook House)</li> <li>• Housing Options, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Independent Review Unit, Shropshire Safeguarding Children's Board</li> <li>• Leaving Care Team, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Looked After Children Education and Health Team, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Lower Bush Farm</li> <li>• Ludlow Foyer</li> <li>• Marches Family Network</li> <li>• Multicultural Development Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NewStart Networks CIC</li> <li>• Parent and Carers Council (PACC)</li> <li>• RAF and Army Welfare</li> <li>• Red Cross</li> <li>• Relate</li> <li>• Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA)</li> <li>• Sectra Autism Inclusion Service</li> <li>• Sensory Inclusion Service</li> <li>• Severndale Specialist Academy</li> <li>• Severnside Housing</li> <li>• Shrewsbury Mencap</li> <li>• Shropshire Football Association</li> <li>• Shropshire Housing Group (includes Meres and Mosses and South Shropshire Housing Association)</li> <li>• Shropshire Parenting Team (Parenting Courses)</li> <li>• Shropshire, Telford &amp; Wrekin Sexual Health Services, Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership NHS Trust</li> <li>• SOVA</li> <li>• Special Educational Needs Team, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Surestart Children Centres and support services, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• SUSTAIN Housing Support</li> <li>• Taking Part</li> <li>• Targeted Youth Support, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• The Albrighton Trust</li> <li>• The Glade Centre (SARC)</li> <li>• Tickwood Care Farm</li> <li>• Trident Reach</li> <li>• Woodlands Outreach</li> <li>• Your Space</li> <li>• YSS</li> </ul>

<b>Strengthening Families and Early Help Predictors</b>	<b>Organisations within the Early Help Market providing support against the 6 predictors.</b>	
<b>4. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of workless-ness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A4U</li> <li>• Action for Children</li> <li>• Barnabus Community Projects</li> <li>• Barnardos</li> <li>• Beech Tree</li> <li>• Bromford</li> <li>• Chums Befriending Service</li> <li>• Compass</li> <li>• Coram Voice</li> <li>• County Training</li> <li>• Diocese of Herefordshire</li> <li>• Diocese of Litchfield</li> <li>• Early Help Advisors, Social Work Practitioners, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Enable</li> <li>• EnHance (YSS, Homestart, SPC)</li> <li>• Family Nurse Partnership, Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust</li> <li>• Home Group (inc. Stonham, Brook House)</li> <li>• Information, Advice and Guidance &amp; Transition Service, Inspire to Learn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job Centre Plus, DWP</li> <li>• Leaving Care Team, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Library Services, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Relate</li> <li>• Severnside Housing</li> <li>• Shropshire Housing Group (includes Meres and Mosses and South Shropshire Housing Association)</li> <li>• Shropshire Parenting Team (Parenting Courses)</li> <li>• Shropshire Rural Support</li> <li>• Shropshire Youth, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• SUSTAIN Housing Support</li> <li>• Targeted Youth Support, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• The Gateway Education Centre, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Trident Reach</li> <li>• Welfare Reform Team, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• YSS</li> </ul>
<b>5. Families affected by DV and Abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action for Children</li> <li>• Axis</li> <li>• Barnardos</li> <li>• Bromford</li> <li>• Compass</li> <li>• Coram Voice</li> <li>• Early Help Advistors, Social Work Practitioners, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• EnHance (YSS, Homestart, SPC)</li> <li>• Freedom Programme</li> <li>• Green Oak Foundation</li> <li>• Home Group (inc. Stonham, Brook House)</li> <li>• Housing Options, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• NewStart Networks CIC</li> <li>• Police Community Support Officers</li> <li>• RAF and Army Welfare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refuge</li> <li>• Severndale Specialist Academy</li> <li>• Severnside Housing</li> <li>• Shropshire Housing Group (includes Meres and Mosses and South Shropshire Housing Association)</li> <li>• Shropshire Parenting Team (Parenting Courses)</li> <li>• South Shropshire Domestic Violence Service</li> <li>• SOVA</li> <li>• SUSTAIN Housing Support</li> <li>• Targeted Youth Support, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Trident Reach</li> <li>• West Mercia Women's Aid</li> <li>• YSS</li> </ul>
<b>6. Parents and children with a range of health problems</b> <b>i)Mental illness</b> <b>ii)Substance Misuse</b> <b>iii)Vulnerable new mothers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action for Children</li> <li>• Alcoholics Anonymous</li> <li>• Aquarius</li> <li>• Autism West Midlands</li> <li>• Axis</li> <li>• Barnabus Community Projects</li> <li>• Barnardos</li> <li>• Beech Tree</li> <li>• Bromford</li> <li>• Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Shrosphire Community Mental Health Trust</li> <li>• Community Substance Misuse Team</li> <li>• Compass</li> <li>• Confide</li> <li>• Coram Voice</li> <li>• Cruse Bereavement Care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Saints FC Community Foundation</li> <li>• NewStart Networks CIC</li> <li>• Parent and Carers Council (PACC)</li> <li>• Prime Resolution</li> <li>• RAF and Army Welfare</li> <li>• School Nursing, Shropshire Community NHS Trust</li> <li>• Severnside Housing</li> <li>• Shropshire Community Leisure Trust</li> <li>• Shropshire Community Substance Misuse Team</li> <li>• Shropshire Deaf Children's Society</li> <li>• Shropshire Football Association</li> <li>• Shropshire Housing Alliance</li> <li>• Shropshire Parenting Team (Parenting Courses)</li> </ul>

Strengthening Families and Early Help Predictors	Organisations within the Early Help Market providing support against the 6 predictors.	
<p><b>Continued....</b></p> <p>6. Parents and children with a range of health problems</p> <p>i)Mental illness</p> <p>ii)Substance Misuse</p> <p>iii)Vulnerable new mothers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cycling Projects</li> <li>• Diocese of Herefordshire</li> <li>• Diocese of Litchfield</li> <li>• Early Help Advistors, Social Work Practitioners, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• EnHance (YSS, Homestart, SPC)</li> <li>• Family Nurse Partnership, Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust</li> <li>• Foodbanks</li> <li>• Green Oak Foundation</li> <li>• Health Visitors, Shropshire Community NHS Trust</li> <li>• Home Group (inc. Stonham, Brook House)</li> <li>• HomeStart</li> <li>• Hope House</li> <li>• Housing Options, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Leaving Care Team, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Lifelines</li> <li>• London Road Sports Centre</li> <li>• Lower Bush Farm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shropshire Housing Group (includes Meres and Mosses and South Shropshire Housing Association)</li> <li>• Shropshire Rural Support</li> <li>• South Shropshire Domestic Violence Service</li> <li>• SOVA</li> <li>• Special Educational Needs Team, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Strettons Mayfair Trust</li> <li>• SUSTAIN Housing Support</li> <li>• Targeted Youth Support, Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Targeting Mental Health Support (TaMHS)</li> <li>• Trident Reach</li> <li>• Winston's Wish</li> <li>• Wyldwoods</li> <li>• YSS</li> </ul>

Analysis of the service providers providing services across the 6 predictors shows that there are 12 organisations providing services across the majority of the predictors. 4 of those 12 are housing support providers and the majority of the remaining organisations are already a core part of the current Early Help provision. Housing support features very strongly and for that reason it is given extra attention below.

#### 4.4 Housing Support

The main housing providers in Shropshire have been listed in Table 13. There are some additional housing providers focused on housing for older people such as sheltered housing schemes. Those housing providers that don't appear to offer any forms of support in Shropshire for Early Help include:

- Housing 21
- South Staffordshire Housing Association
- Sanctuary Housing
- Stonewater

Most, if not all, housing providers work to resolve anti-social behaviour within the areas of their own housing (strong relationships exist with the police and other's in the criminal justice sector). As a result anti-social behaviours has not been included as an additional category. Information has been taken from websites but it is possible that additional support may be available but not promoted on-line.

The SUSTAIN Consortium has been commissioned by Shropshire Council to provides a wide range of housing support services designed to help vulnerable people to develop the skills and experience they need to maintain their accommodation and live independently within the community. Services are provided to individuals and groups and cover a range of support including, money management, benefit applications, community involvement, staying safe, health and reducing harm such as substance misuse, domestic violence support etc. Ludlow Foyer is the main specialist for young people within the consortium.



**Table 13 Housing Providers in Shropshire**

Housing Association	Housing Support Provision	Support for Families	Support for Young People	Domestic Violence Support	Employment and Money Management Advice	Mental Health Support	Learning Disabilities Support
<b>Bromford</b>	Delivered by Bromford.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ Supported Housing
<b>Stonham</b>	Part of Home Group. Home Group provide a wide range of support services.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ Floating Support
<b>Meres and Mosses and South Shropshire Housing Association</b>	Both housing bodies are part of Shropshire Housing Group. Part of the SUSTAIN Consortium.	✓	✓ Ludlow Foyer also part of Shropshire Housing Group	✓ Works with Refuge and SS DV Service	✓	✓	✓ Home Life Scheme helps with life skills and correspondence also a Turning Around support service
<b>Sevenside</b>	Part of the SUSTAIN Consortium.	✓	✓ Support over 18s	✓	✓ Drop in support at hubs		✓ Works with Shropshire Disability Network
<b>STAR Housing</b>	An Almo (arms-length organisation) providing housing services on behalf of Shropshire Council. Part of the SUSTAIN Consortium	✓		✓	✓		
<b>Trident</b>	Trident Reach (the Charity established to provide specific support services)	✓	✓ Supports those aged 16-25	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Shropshire Rural Housing Association</b>	Older people focused but housing is offered for families, couples and single people as well as older people.	Volunteers provide some general pastoral support.					

Housing Association	Housing Support Provision	Support for Families	Support for Young People	Domestic Violence Support	Advice	Employment and Money Management	Mental Health Support	Learning Disabilities Support
<b>Wrekin Housing Group</b> (Includes the Wrekin Housing Trust, Shropshire Housing Alliance, The Furniture Scheme, Reviive, Fuse and Choices.	Works with its VCSE providers and Shropshire Housing Alliance to provide support services. Shropshire Housing Alliance was formed from the merger of: Housing Young People in Shrewsbury, Homeless in Oswestry Action Partnership and North Shropshire Homeless Action Partnership.	✓				✓		

#### 4.5 Information and Advice

Information and advice services play an important role and contribute to Early Help support. The Market Assessment process has included all known information, advice, advocacy, guidance and support services. However, a small number are worth highlighting due to their close links with Early Help:

- The Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) was commissioned by Shropshire Council in 2015 and is delivered by a consortia with Citizen's Advice Shropshire acting as lead partner, working with OSCA, Taking Part and A4U. Shropshire IASS provides free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support regarding special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including health and social care. Information and advice is offered to young people up to 25 years of age in education or with an apprenticeship, and have SEND or related health and social care needs, and live in Shropshire. The service is also available for parents/carers of a child with SEND or related health and social care needs.
- Shropshire Family Information Service provides free information and advice on all aspects of family life. It provides information for women expecting a baby, parents with young children or teenagers. Particular areas of focus include childcare provision and family support services. The Family Information Service Directory is an online database featuring local and national organisations and services that exist to support families, covering topics such as, events and activities, drugs and alcohol, health and safety, disabilities and additional needs and family. It also includes details of local events, social or support groups or organisations.
- Shropshire Council has established the Shropshire Local Offer in response to the Children and Families Act 2014. The Local Offer, brings together information concerning provision across education, health and social care for children and young people who have special educational needs (SEN) or who are disabled.

#### 4.6 The Workforce within the wider Early Help Market

42 VCSE organisations (members of the VCS Assembly) report data on staff capacity. The 42 organisations employ 2,366 people. However, a small number of very large organisations including housing organisations working over the West Midlands area have large work forces with only a proportion contributing to the Early Help Outcomes. Removing organisations covering a large geography from the analysis shows that the remaining 28 VCSE organisations employ 418 people, an average of 15 members of staff, working 19 hours a week.

Part time working is quite common within the VCSE sector with national figures showing that 39% of the sector's workforce are part time (compared to 25% in the private sector and 30% in the public sector)<sup>xi</sup>. Other key characteristics are that the voluntary sector tends to employ well qualified and slightly older people compared to other sectors (38% of the sector are aged 50 and over (28% of the private sector workforce) and 45% have a university education 26% in the private sector)<sup>xii</sup>.

#### 4.7 Volunteering

36 VCSE organisations (members of the Assembly) reported data on levels of volunteering within their organisations. The 36 organisations have 2,134 volunteers but in order to understand the volunteers working in Shropshire rather than outside of the county the larger West Midlands wide and national organisations have been removed from the analysis. The remaining 28 local organisations have 1,084 volunteers (an average of 39 volunteers each) working an average of 2 hours a week each.

Volunteering is an important element of service provision for Early Help and this needs further attention. There is a strong political drive to encourage people to volunteer and support others within their own communities. The current Government are working to encourage Local Authorities to consider how they can enable social action through the way they commission services. Early Help is an area of commissioning that may be able to take advantage of current research and learn from other areas currently piloting new ways of using commissioning practice to promote social action. Volunteering has been considered in more detail under the 'Market Feedback and Key Issues' section below.

#### 4.8 Service Offer by Age Group

Analysis of the wider market for Early Help highlights a complex picture of service delivery by age group. Reading the public information produced by organisations highlights a lack of clarity in the services being offered by providers. Many services offering support services to address the needs Early Help aims to address do not make their 'service offer' clear. Trying to find information concerning the age groups accepted by a service proved challenging and it was necessary to trawl through lots of information sources for many providers before eligibility criteria could be identified. Some providers did present a clear service offer but this tended to be the minority rather than majority. Table 14 highlights the information collated on age range.

**Table 14 Age ranges of services offered within the wider market**

Age Ranges of Services Offered	Number of organisations	Percentage of total
All ages	47	43
0-25/ Children and young people	13	12
16 and over	2	2
Young adults	2	2
Adults	11	10
5 or 6 to 16/school age	7	6
0-19	5	5
0- 18	4	4
8 or 9 to 18/19	2	2
10 or 11 to 18 or 19	4	4
Other specific age groups	12	11
Not stated	4	4

43% of services within the wider Early Help Market provide services open to all ages and some clearly promote a whole family support service. 12% offer services for 0-25 year olds. 10% provide support for adults and many of those are offering services for parents.

#### 4.9 Geographical Spread

The analysis of geographical location of services has been undertaken against commonly used and understood geographical boundaries, similar to the old district and borough council areas: Central, North West, North East, South West and South East. Strengthening Families uses 6 geographical areas/localities for its work. These were developed around the Children Centre areas, with each Strengthening Families area being comprised of a number of Children's Centre Areas. This sees the central area split into 2 areas. Social worker assessments are being mapped against three geographies (North/Central/South).

The map below highlights the main location of area based services alongside a list of services contributing to the Early Help outcomes that operate on a countywide basis. Of the 115 services listed 95 (83%) are countywide services (although not all may be offering forms of support in all locations). Locally based services including schools, children's centres, childcare providers and groups and classes (such as baby massage) are not included separately on the list of services compiled.

**Map 3 Locations of Area Specific Services**



**Table 15 Countywide Services within the Early Help Market**

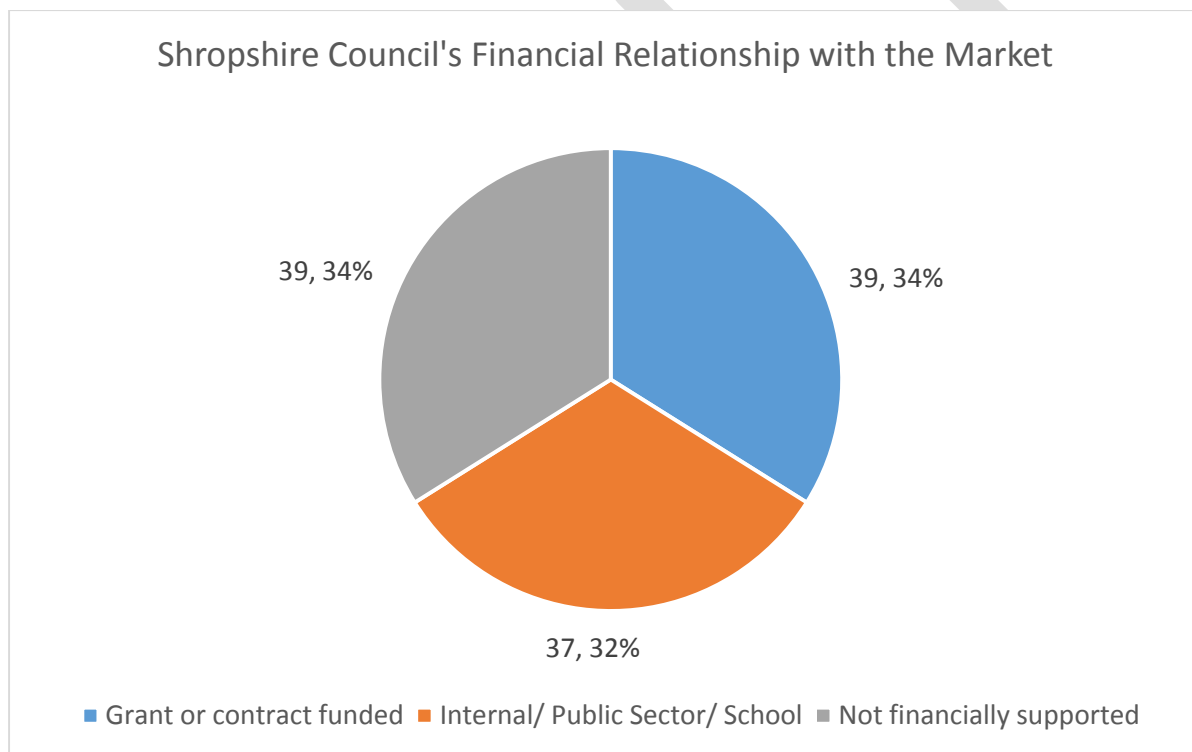
<b>Organisations Delivering Services across Shropshire</b>		
A4U	Family Information Service, Shropshire Council	Severndale Specialist Academy
After Adoption	Family Nurse Partnership, Community Health NHS Trust	Shropshire Community Substance Misuse Team
Alcoholics Anonymous	Fire Service	Shropshire Deaf Children's Society
All in @ Short Breaks	Foodbanks	Shropshire Housing Alliance
Aquarius	Freedom Programme	Shropshire Community Substance Misuse Team
Autism West Midlands	Green Oak Foundation	Shropshire Parenting Team (Parenting Courses)
Autonomy	Health Visitors, Shropshire Community NHS Trust	Shropshire Rural Support
Axis	HomeStart	Shropshire Youth, Shropshire Council
Barnardo's	Hope House	Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Sexual Health Services (NHS Trust)
Beanstalk	Housing Options, Shropshire Council	Shropshire Youth Association
Bromford	Independent Review Unit, Shropshire Safeguarding Children's Board	SOVA
CAB, IASS	Information, Advice and Guidance & Transition Service, Inspire to Learn	Special Educational Needs Team, Shropshire Council
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Shropshire Community Mental Health Trust	Job Centre Plus, DWP	Children Centres and support services, Shropshire Council
Chums Befriending Service	Leaving Care Team, Shropshire Council	SUSTAIN Housing Support
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)	Library Services, Shropshire Council	Taking Part
Compass	Lifelines	Targeted Youth Support, Shropshire Council
Confide	Looked After Children Education and Health Team, Shropshire Council	Targeting Mental Health Support (TaMHS)
Coram Voice	Multicultural Development Team	The Glade Centre (SARC) Trident Reach
County Training	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)	Tuition Medical and Behaviour Support Service (TMBSS)
Cruse Bereavement Care	NewStart Networks CIC	Welfare Reform Team, Shropshire Council
Cycling Projects	Parent and Carers Council (PACC)	West Mercia Police
Disabled Children's Team	Police Community Support Officers	West Mercia Women's Aid
Early Help Advisors, Social Work Practitioners, Shropshire Council	Prime Resolution	West Mercia Youth Offending Service

Organisations Delivering Services across Shropshire		
Education Access and Inclusion Service	Red Cross	Winston's Wish
Educational Psychology Service, Shropshire Council	Relate	Woodlands Outreach
Empathy	Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA)	Your Space
Enable	School Nursing, Shropshire Community NHS Trust	YSS
Enhance (YSS, Homestart, SPC)	Spectra Autism Inclusion Service	

#### 4.10 Commissioned Provision within the Market

The financial relationship providers within the market assessment database have with Shropshire Council is an important consideration. Of the providers contributing to the achievement of Early Help outcomes, 32% are public sector services, 34% are not commissioned and 34% are commissioned or grant funded in some way (some via consortium bids, others directly). Chart 15 displays the findings below.

**Chart 15 Levels of Commissioning within the Early Help Market**



#### 4.11 Market Feedback and Key Issues

Shropshire's voluntary and community sector and public sector commissioners have strong and positive relationships. In order to support mutual understanding, Shropshire VCS Assembly regularly asks its members to feed in issues impacting on the sector. Understanding the pressures being faced by providers and potential providers is helpful in any market assessment exercise. Shropshire VCS Assembly collects evidence through a 'state of the sector survey' and annual feedback from its 16 Forums of Interest. The results of 2015/16 feedback on the issues impacting on VCSE providers are summarised below.



**Table 16 Issues Reported by VCSE providers 2015/16**

<b>Finance and Sustainability</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The public sector has not been able to provide the VCSE sector with the same financial support over the last 5 years. Both national and local studies have highlighted the degree of this reduction in financial support. This has increased competition for public sector grants and contracts. Where grants and contracts are still in place the values have generally reduced (with the exception of VCSE consortia contracts).</li><li>• Public sector bodies have moved away from grant funding towards larger, longer term contracts. This means that many organisations reliant on grants for core funding have experienced budget pressures.</li><li>• Whilst public sector support has reduced, many national funding programmes have ended.</li><li>• Recognising that many grant schemes are ending. There is a national drive to encourage VCSE organisations to explore social finance models including short term loans whilst more sustainable business models are developed.</li><li>• Low interest rates mean that some charitable trusts do not have the same budgets to fund VCSE groups and organisations.</li><li>• Where grant funding is still in place, it has not seen any inflationary increases despite increased costs of service provision.</li><li>• Significant costs pressures because of issues such as pension opt in, pension liabilities from council pension scheme, increased travel costs, salary increases with no grant increases to match, increased volunteer expenses.</li><li>• Many VCSE organisations are reporting that they have been using reserves to continue service provision. This is not sustainable.</li><li>• Due to financial pressures some organisations have had to start charging for services and this has an impact on people using VCSE services.</li><li>• The increase in the minimum wage has put increasing pressure on VCSE organisations. When the national living wage comes in that will lead to further financial pressures.</li><li>• The introduction of workplace pensions is another additional cost.</li><li>• Many organisations have reduced the range and/ or level of services they offer. A common approach has been to reduce the number of locations services are offered from.</li></ul>
<b>Workforce</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many VCSA member organisations have reported been making redundancies in the last year due to the financial pressures outlined above.</li><li>• Wage levels within the VCSE sector can be lower than in other sectors and there are concerns that increasing pressure on staff makes staff retention more difficult. (Pay increases are not possible due to the financial pressures).</li><li>• Remaining staff members are under enormous pressure due to smaller workforces and increased demand/need for VCSE support (see below).</li><li>• More VCSE organisations report that considerable amounts of time are spent applying for contracts and grant opportunities, taking time away from service provision.</li><li>• More contracts are being responded to as partnerships/consortiums. Although this can bring many positive benefits, it can also be complicated to deliver and more time consuming than a single service contract.</li><li>• With fewer people retiring early, VCSE organisations have been reporting that it is more difficult to find and keep board members with the right skill sets.</li><li>• Increasing pressure is placed on voluntary sector staff and volunteers as they are asked to deal with more complex cases (see below).</li><li>• Contracts (unlike grants) are usually payed in arrears rather than in advance. If there are limited funds held in reserves, VCS organisations can find it difficult to manage payments/ bankroll.</li></ul>

## Demand for Services

- VCS services report seeing more people with multiple and complex needs and those at the point of crisis. (Often leading to a need for longer term support). It appears increasingly common for people to report all or many of the problems listed below:
  - Lack of access to transport
  - Inadequate housing
  - Relationship problems
  - Problems with mental and/or physical health
  - Debt and poverty
- VCS Assembly members have, since 2012, been reporting increases in numbers of people unable to access public services because they fall below thresholds of need. Thresholds appear to be rising in some areas of service provision as public sector funding is cut.
- VCS organisations report increasing numbers of referrals to voluntary sector services as a result of changes in public sector services.
- There have been increases in the number of people presenting with debt and financial problems.
- More people need support understanding and accessing welfare benefit advice (changes in the system have led to a greater demand for support).
- With the loss of some public transport services more people report difficulties in accessing services.
- Some VCS services are now operating waiting lists and there are concerns that this presents a risk to those in greatest need.

## Volunteering and Infrastructure Support

- The Government report 'Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' (2015) includes references to volunteers working within voluntary organisations and how important it is for those volunteers to understand how they need to respond when they identify a child in need of help. "*Paid and volunteer staff need to be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, how they should respond to child protection concerns and make a referral to local authority children's social care or the police if necessary.*"
- Shropshire's VCS Assembly members have concerns that volunteering is not well understood. There are different types of volunteering with the main distinctions being; a) formal volunteering (giving unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations to benefit other people or the environment) and b) informal volunteering (informal volunteering means giving unpaid help as an individual to people who are not relatives). There are considerable differences between these types of volunteering and what can be expected of those people who volunteer.
- The profile of those who volunteer is changing. With reductions in pension pots, rising cost of living, an aging population and reduced capacity or growth within health and social care services, more people are staying in work longer and/or caring for others rather than retiring early and becoming volunteers.
- Government policy is requiring those on benefits to volunteer. Often those individuals required to volunteer will volunteer for much shorter periods of time and need increased levels of support and management to develop the skills and confidence to volunteer effectively.
- Volunteer support comes at a cost including volunteer management, volunteer training and expenses. Finding sources of income to cover those costs is increasingly challenging.
- Whilst demand for volunteering is growing, funding for volunteer recruitment and brokerage in Shropshire has been lost due to national changes in funding support. Shropshire's VCS Assembly has, for some time, been communicating concerns over the availability of infrastructure support (including volunteering support) to facilitate community activism and promote community resilience.
- There are reports that increasing demand is being placed on volunteers. Volunteers are increasingly asked to deal with more complex cases and this has implications for volunteer recruitment and retention (and potential legal implications if mistakes are made).

### External Influences

- There are ever increasing legislative demands on VCSE services and greater expectations/requirements from trustee board members.
- VCS Assembly members report that it is becoming more challenging keeping up with policy changes and maintaining public sector relationships. Staff changes as a result of redundancies and restructures can hinder the development of cross sector relationships.

Early Help engagement activity will be ongoing through the partnership groups outlined in part 3 of the document and through other engagement events. This joint working and communication plays an important role in informing Shropshire Council's understanding of the Early Help Market and how the factors above and other market considerations are influencing local service provision. The final section of this report highlights learning from the market assessment and makes recommendations for consideration.

DRAFT

# 5. Findings and Recommendations

## 5.1 Findings

In considering a) the context to Early Help, b) the current provision of Early Help and c) the wider Early Help market (consisting of organisations working to provide support against Early Help needs and predictors) the following findings have emerged:

- a) The contribution of all bodies with a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and referred to within 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' (see part 2) is not clear within the current Early Help system.
- b) Early Help is currently provided through a combination of services provided by Shropshire Council, public services such as schools, and services commissioned from VCSE sector organisations. This mixed economy approach can bring with it a number of social and economic benefits, and provide a more robust system should one organisation or sector be put at risk.
- c) There are robust partnership structures in place around Early Help and strong links between partnership Boards. Partnership working between public sector services and VCSE organisations appears robust at all levels from operational to strategic (Children's Centre services reports highlight strong engagement with other services at the local level).
- d) The Market Assessment has highlighted the different layers of Early Help, from the currently commissioned services and in-house services to the public and VCSE sector services in place in Shropshire offering the types of support and services that can meet the needs Early Help is designed to identify. 115 organisations were included within the assessment but it is likely that there are more within the market not known to Shropshire Council or missed through the research process.
- e) The majority of services within the Early Help market are small. Outside of public sector provision, services tend to be larger countywide or regional VCSE providers.
- f) Although it may not be clear from the analysis presented within the report, the detailed look at services within the wider Market suggests that there are some gaps in support. For example, abuse support, including domestic abuse, is largely provided within adult focused services. Similarly support for families who are economically, socially and rurally isolated tend to have an adult focus (see recommendations).
- g) There is a strong family focus among some services, particularly within children's centres and within the evidence presented by Autism West Midlands. Other services may work effectively to engage family members but this is not necessarily highlighted within the data available.
- h) The importance of schools within Shropshire's Early Help system stands out within the assessment and available data. 51% of referrals into Early Help are made by schools and schools provide 54% of lead professionals. The current Early Help system appears to rely heavily upon this important relationship.
- i) Engagement with health services is shown within the data available. Midwives, health visitors, school nurses and GPs have all made Early Help referrals but they are small in number and suggest that there is scope to further develop these existing relationships. In the same way there appears to be limited involvement from childcare providers.
- j) The providers in place within the wider Early Help market offer a wide range of service types covering professional support, volunteering, short breaks, counselling, group and peer support work, advocacy and information and advice. However, few offer more informal, community

based befriending and this could be of great value within Early Help, particularly where longer term support is required beyond short term targeted support.

- k) Although an issue not limited to Early Help, the wider market assessment, presents a confusing picture for access to services by age. It is clear from the analysis undertaken that more services are not starting to offer support across all age ranges or for 0-25 year olds but the age ranges accepted are very diverse and not always well explained.
- l) The analysis of current provision and the wider market has included consideration of the geographical spread of services. The analysis suggests that a large proportion of services within the wider market offer support on a countywide basis. However, the analysis has also shown how important local community based bodies are within Early Help, particularly access to schools and children's centres.
- m) The assessment of the Early Help market highlights provision against the 6 predictors and associated needs. This shows that there are numerous services within Shropshire offering the type of support needed to address needs. However, within the currently commissioned provision (including in-house provision) there is a focus on more generic rather than specialist support. For example it is clear that current Early Help services address behaviour issues, bereavement, and poor attachment between children and parents/carers. There is less evidence within current provision that support is available for learning difficulties and SEN (outside of the Autism West Midlands support), substance misuse (onward referral is not shown), housing difficulties and financial exclusion. Current provision appears to offer limited specialist support.
- n) The analysis demonstrates low levels of onward referral from Early Help, either through escalation or de-escalation. Of 421 cases closed (April to September 2015) only 46 (11%) were deescalated or referred on. A different data source allows consideration of which services are referred to and highlights CAMHS, Children's Centres and Targeted Youth Support as the main services referred to.
- o) Some of the data provided suggests that a proportion of referrals are considered inappropriate. This was particularly high within Targeted Youth Support at just under 25%. This suggests a need to consider how inappropriate referrals can be reduced in number.
- p) Provision across a number of different services can provide choice and increase accessibility. However, it is possible that the same children and families are receiving support from multiple services and this may need to be explored in further developing understanding of the current system.
- q) The data considered within the market assessment highlights a strong focus on meeting the needs of children, young people and parents. The tools used within Early Help support an understanding of the difference made within families. However, there is limited information at a service level concerning service effectiveness, impact and social value.
- r) Access to information concerning the availability of local services has shown improvement and services offering the type of support to meet Early Help needs can be easily found through the information produced by the Family Information Service, with the Local Officer and IASS offering covering support available for children and parents around Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).
- s) Early Help could benefit from more digital provision. Schools and children's centres currently provide important face to face provision and are accessible at the community level. However, there could be potential for more preventative information to be shared on-line for those families in need of information but not ready or willing to access schools and children's centres. Parenting courses are now online but there are some Early Help needs that are not the result of poor parenting (for example needs relating to learning disabilities, mental and physical health, children with caring responsibilities, financial difficulties and housing difficulties can arise in families where parents demonstrate very good parenting skills).

- t) Many services within the current and wider Early Help market do not make their service offer clear.
- u) The VCSE services within the wider Early Help market use volunteers within the workforce. Volunteer numbers are robust with an average of 39 volunteers per service provider, however, the number of hours each volunteer provides is, on average, 2 hours per week. This suggests a heavy reliance on the paid VCSE workforce.
- v) The Market Assessment has not been able to assess how children and parents access Early Help at different life stages. Support universal support is focused on children's centres and schools, with less evidence of how other age groups access Early Help.
- w) There is evidence of some good practice in the support offered for parents and children within groups or on a 1:1 basis, however, an analysis of the data available (qualitative data has not been considered) suggests that the system is reliant on a core service offer and it does not yet appear coherent and well embedded within a wider system of non-commissioned support.
- x) 34% of the non-public sector services included within the assessment are currently funded or contracted by Shropshire Council (although not directly for Early Help).
- y) There are considerable pressures on both public and VCSE providers, many of which are a result of economic factors. Increasing costs of running services at a time of reducing budgets and increasing demand threaten to limit service continuation, opportunity for innovation and development.

## 5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made as a result of the assessment undertaken but it should be recognised that this was not a broad assessment of Early Help and as a result commissioners may feel that some of the recommendations have resulted from a lack of wider knowledge.

- a) Shropshire's Early Help offer system may benefit from more active involvement from the full range of bodies with a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It is recommended that work takes place to explore how housing, childcare providers, armed forces welfare organisations, a wider range of local VCSE organisations could play a more active role in Early Help (assisting those bodies in their work to fulfil their duties and meet requirements). It is becoming increasingly important to adopt a system focus for Early Help beyond commissioned and in-house delivery.
- b) Where there may be gaps in the wider Early Help Market or where provision exists with an adult focus, it is recommended that partnership working takes place to explore how services are promoted and offered to whole families and how the needs of children may be met. It may be possible to use different financial models to undertake this market development work.
- c) The involvement of health services is mentioned within the findings above and it is recommended that this is considered as an element of further development. Partnership working is already in place between Early Help and the Healthy Child Programme Board but there appears to be potential to further engage school nurses, health visitors, midwives, GPs and other services in the delivery of Early Help, particularly in initial referral.
- d) Shropshire's housing providers offer a range of housing support services, some of which are commissioned by Shropshire Council. It is recommended that discussions take place to consider whether Early Help considerations can be built into future engagement with housing providers and whether shared outcomes can be achieved through the alignment of commissioning activity.



- e) In light of significant external influences upon the market it is recommended that Early Help Commissioners consider whether a small proportion of the overall budget may be retained for market investment, infrastructure support and short term investment to allow innovation and flexibility of response beyond the core Early Help provision.
- f) It is recommended that consideration be given to specialist services with the experience required to meet needs experienced by smaller numbers of children and their families. Currently onward referrals are not being made to the specialist services that exist in Shropshire and are well placed to provide counselling and other interventions to meet assessment needs. It is recommended that, over time, a model for securing specialist support is considered such as investigating the need for the spot purchasing of specialist support.
- g) Digital service provision is starting to feature more strongly within the field of Early Help but, with prevention a core element of Early Help it is possible that there are more opportunities to develop on-line services and support. It is recommended that this is an opportunity that should be explored with current and potential providers.
- h) The issues feedback obtained by the VCS Assembly and explored within the wider market assessment highlights the economic pressures currently being experienced by the VCSE sector. With the VCSE sector forming a significant part of the Early Help market it is recommended that commissioners work together with providers and potential providers to understand, and implement measures to manage, risk.
- i) It is recommended that cross sector working takes place to explore financially sustainable models of service provision to secure long-term stability within the provision of Early Help.
- j) It is recommended that commissioners for Early Help consider the wider market, including how it may be further developed and where support may be required. Engagement with the wider market is effective but in an area of support like Early Help where a diverse range of needs need to be met, there is significant potential for market interventions such as the development of consortia working, additional training and skill development where required and support for providers wishing to innovate or diversify in order to meet identified needs.
- k) As part of market development considerations it is recommended that commissioners consider whether any support can be made available to providers to assist them in their work to communicate their service offer, to members of the public, other services and commissioners. Currently many providers do not clearly explain the type of support they offer, their eligibility criteria (including age as mentioned in findings above) or how their services are accessed.
- l) It is important to understand the local response to the political drive for Council's to externalise services. Currently Shropshire's Early Help offer is heavily reliant on in-house services and some Council services are similar to those services provided externally within the wider market. It is recommended that consideration be given to the potential for competition with VCSE services in particular and whether there is potential for new service models.
- m) Although not explored within the market assessment there has been considerable work in Shropshire to develop consortia in both private and VCSE service provision. Currently consortia arrangements are not well developed within the Early Help Market and it is recommended that this is considered as a potential opportunity to be discussed with VCSE providers and potential providers.
- n) Currently there isn't a systematic approach to obtaining provider/market feedback on commissioning and procurement. Partnership working is strong, and informal feedback is ongoing, however, it is recommended that this is complemented by some more robust market feedback considering issues such as barriers to market entry (particularly since the Early Help market predominantly comprises small providers). It is recommended that this is built into future commissioning and the results used to inform the future development of Early Help.

- o) The findings have shown that Early Help is delivered through both public and voluntary sector service provision. It is recommended that the role of the private sector is explored, not as a service provider, but for its potential to participate in investment in the system through new models of social investment. The outcomes Early Help aims to achieve fit well with the new models of social investment being designed at a national level and trialled across the country such as Social Impact Bonds.
- p) It is recommended that the role of volunteering within Early Help is considered in more detail. Volunteers are referred to within the national guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2015) but the assessment highlighted that despite a volunteer workforce in place within the market, volunteer hours are low and infrastructure to support volunteer recruitment and management is currently lacking local investment.
- q) It is recommended that service level impact is better assessed and reported for both commissioned and non-commissioned services. In particular the Social Value of Early Help services is considerable but the social, economic, and environmental value is not currently well measured or promoted (despite this there are some excellent examples within the wider market, particularly among information and housing providers). Social value considerations are many and varied and include skills and training, employment opportunities, ethical purchasing, minimising environmental impact and social inclusion and partnerships.
- r) The Market Assessment has been carried out at the same time as the Early Help Needs Assessment. It is recommended that information from the two assessments is now brought together to allow for a better understanding of demand/needs and supply to be developed. It is suggested that this analysis is featured within the Early Help Market Position Statement.
- s) It is recommended that Shropshire Council develop a more systematic approach to the collection, review and use of service provider data. This Market Assessment has been developed using public information available from 115 service providers and has proved a time consuming process. Developing ongoing collection of service provider data will be of significant benefit across the Council and support the future production of market assessments.

## References

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- <sup>i</sup>HM Government (2015) 'Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children', HM Government
- <sup>ii</sup> HM Government (2015) 'Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children', HM Government see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
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- <sup>iv</sup> Shropshire Council's Facts and Figures, Employment and Economy: <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/facts-and-figures/employment-and-economy/businesses-and-jobs/business-base/>
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- <sup>ix</sup> Social Inclusion Research by Impact Consultancy and Peridot Associates Ltd. All documents from: <http://www.bbomarches.com/resources/evidence-base/>
- <sup>x</sup>Social Return on Investment Report, The Enhance Project, September 2013 – June 2014 (10 months).
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- <sup>xii</sup> NCVO (2015) UK Civil Society Almanac 2015/ Workforce, NCVO <http://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac15/workforce/>