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Introduction

The visual and operational apparatus of safeguarding in England is basically based on preventive measures. A key principle of contemporary child welfare is Early Help, which is meant to aid with children, adolescents, and their families promptly, thus avoiding an upward spiral to a serious situation. Strategic Partnerships for Safeguarding are formed by local authorities, healthcare institutions and law-enforcement agencies, and they are obliged to provide early intervention services.

However, the efficiency of the Early Help strategy is highly dependent on how well its implementation is presented to the community. Nowadays, digital online portals are seen as an effective way of civil engagement, therefore this report aims to assess, compare and analyse the methods of delivering the Early Help service through three different local authority websites: Leicester City Council, Norfolk County Council, Leeds City Council. This approach promotes collaboration, resilience, and positive outcomes for vulnerable families together.

Early help system

According to the regulatory document Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), Early Help is not a standalone service, but rather an attitude of collaboration and partnership. The purpose of Early Help is to act along the continuum of need thereby increasing family resilience, eliminating the chance for vulnerable situations to appear, such as issues connected to the parents' mental health, homelessness and abuse, and eventually improving the long-term prospects of families' lives prior to statutory intervention according to Section 17 or Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

As noted in the Early Help System Guide of DfE, efficient and developed system implies the "whole family" approach rather than focusing on a child or parent only. Early Help looks at the family unit in its entirety. It is based on a model of a multi-tier threshold and enables a designated Lead Professional to create a system of organized and voluntary support taking into consideration the families' specific circumstances.

Multi-agency working

Multi-agency work is a collaborative process through which professionals from working agencies come together to help meet the needs of children, young people, and their families. In doing so, agencies communicate with each other to share information, experiences, and resources to ensure that clients receive proper help. It should be acknowledged, however, that many problems faced by families are complicated and need more than one agency to be dealt with. In this sense, multi-agency practice allows for a comprehensive assessment of a family's situation and appropriate help rendered.

Joint work and communication make it possible to obtain information on a family's situation and understand what to do. As it is stated in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), safeguarding children and promoting their welfare is a shared responsibility. One could say that safeguarding cannot be completed by one practitioner or organization.

Leicestershire county council

The official website of Leicestershire County Council is the county council's official online presence and is an informative source for citizens regarding several services provided to them. Since it is an official website of local government, the site has all the required information needed to make the public aware of the services available and transparent operations of the council. Nothing on the website is written without proper consideration of its legal background, as the website is administered by the council's employees, which distinguishes the site as a reliable and trustworthy material for academic purposes concerning the situations linked to public health, social care and the ones connected to the well-being of communities.

The website will provide fragile members of the community with an array of valuable information regarding the public services intended for vulnerable groups of society. From the site's pages, users will learn about the adult social care, children's social care, public health, education and schools, transport, roads, waste and recycling, libraries, environmental protection, and its support for businesses and communities. The adult social care pages will help in getting information about care assessment, support for caregivers, independent living, and everything related to safety and independence of disabled and older people.

Norfolk county council

The Norfolk County Council website acts as the authentic online source for the Norfolk County Council and offers authentic information about the services, help, and resources for people living in the county. As a local authority website, the site is a reputable source of information because the information is created and handled by the organization that provides public services. The information contained in the website is prepared according to relevant legislation, governmental regulations, and local policies and so makes it a good source for academic research especially in the areas of health and social care, public health, education, and community support.

The main aim of the site is to provide citizens, professionals, and other interested people with simple-to-reach information about the services provided by the council and ways of receiving help. The site gives a wide range of information regarding such topics as care and

support, children and families, education and learning, traffic and transport, libraries, environmental issues, security, and community resources.

In the area of health and social care, the web page talks about subjects such as adult social care, providing help to caregivers, providing health and well-being advice, ensuring safety, and helping people live independently. It provides details about how to get help, request assessments and find the needed advice. It also offers information on how to provide protection to vulnerable adults by identifying possible problems and making sure the necessary care is organized so that people can be safe. In addition, the website further mentions everything that has to do with the families and kids including connection concerning early education, family assistance and services for those in need of special education owing to either disabilities or other reasons. It is highlighted that it is the responsibility of the council to assist in the development and education of Children. Moreover, it includes information on various public health programs designed to maintain population health and prevent diseases.

The website can further provide a good point of reference for both researchers and professionals as it gives an insight into the way local government keeps on working. To summarize, the website of the Norfolk County Council is an essential and useful source of information. It contains relevant and timely information regarding various governmental social service programs and policies in the area.

Staffordshire County Council

Staffordshire County Council's website is its online voice and contains accurate information about services, advice, and assistance that are accessible to people living in the region. The website is a local authority site and attains its reliability from the fact that the information on it comes straight from the organisation that is responsible for providing public services. It provides current and legislative accurate information, government instructions, and local policies, which makes it a good source for the means of conducting academic research.

The primary aim behind the website is offering information to citizens, specialists, and other interested parties on how to access services provided by the local authority. There is a huge number of areas covered by the website such as adult social care, children and young people's services, education, health and wellbeing, community support, transport, libraries, environmental services and waste disposal, among others.

This website section dedicated to adult social care offers details on how to access care and support, which includes help provided to those who require assistance in maintaining independence, solutions available for caregivers, possible care options, care provision

methods, protection, and the services offered to those with disabilities, autism, and sensory impairment. Additional information about how assessments work is also available to visitors of the site, as well as data on available help for families and individuals.

The site also addresses children's needs, especially about matters revolving around child protection, childcare, and services addressing matters of early development of kids. Additionally, information provided in the health and wellbeing section discusses preventative measures that allow tackling pressing issues concerning health problems and solving health-related problems. Students, researchers, and others will find valuable information about how local authorities help to improve public health, care for vulnerable people, and assist communities on the Staffordshire County Council website. It gives clear examples of how councils coordinate the services they provide with those of other agencies to provide the required assistance.

In conclusion, the Staffordshire County Council website is a trustworthy source of information as it gives a fascinating overview of local services, initiatives, and policies that aim to improve the health and quality of life of people living in Staffordshire.

Comparative analysis

The websites for the Leicestershire, Norfolk, and Staffordshire County Councils successfully convey the Early Help and family support services by providing information that allows children, young people, and their families to get the necessary help before the problem grows bigger. Each website emphasizes the relevance of early intervention and meets the principles stated in the Early Help System Guide that mentions that Early Help should be accessible, coordinated, and aimed to improve outcomes for children and families. All three websites include information about children's services, safeguarding, family support, education, as well as health and wellbeing, and they also inform the residents on how to access assessments, referrals, and professional assistance. Also, the websites pay attention to cooperation between authorities, health service providers, schools, social workers, and NGOs which complies with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and defines safeguarding as a mutual responsibility of various parties.

Regardless of their similarities, the websites differ in the way they present Early Help services. Among the three, Staffordshire County Council has the clearest framework, with information segmented into distinct sections dedicated to describing the support available and referral steps for both families and staff. Leicestershire County Council provides comprehensive information while also showing how various services operate towards helping people, whether they are children, grown-ups, or caregivers. On the other hand, Norfolk County Council's website contains useful information about social services, family

support, and safeguarding; however, some data is spread across various web pages, meaning that users will require additional time to find the service they require. Although all three websites have substantial amounts of valuable information, there are notable differences in navigation methods and terminology used that may determine how easily families can comprehend the services available to them during difficult times.

The three local authority websites communicate about Early Help services in a successful manner, underlining the importance of protecting children and helping families through collaborative work. They are a source of reliable information containing relevant contact information, referral routes and advice that encourages getting help at the right time. At the same time, the provision of Early Help information should be improved in several aspects. First, the websites could be rendered more uniform by providing the same information across them. Second, the complexity of the language used can be reduced so that it is easier to understand. Third, the flow of the information on the websites needs improvements in terms of navigation and visualization of the services with the help of the flow charts or infographics.

A deeper analysis then reflects contrasting figures on how each local authority facilitates access to Early Help and ensures families can seek assistance. An exemplary case is that of Staffordshire County Council. The Council promotes its Family Hubs as the main source of domestic services like parenting advice, financial advice, child development service, together with Early Help services at one place. The website presents a special section on Early Help and provides parents with comprehensive information concerning the essence of Early Help, as well as reasons for its utilization by families. The approach adopted by the Leicestershire County Council is also noteworthy since it readily states that its Family Help service provides needed assistance when general services like schools or GPs fail. The Family Help service also provides families with self-referral option and special forms for professional referral about such issues as domestic violence and mental health problems. As for Norfolk County Council, it provides extensive information on the scope of issues that Early Help aims to address, strongly promoting the idea of seeking support for families at the earliest convenience.

Reference

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