

Showcase event for the EDGES Service in Northern Ireland

An Early Intervention Approach Supporting Children, Young People and Families in Need

Early intervention Transformation Programme (EITP): to transform ways of working through embedding early intervention knowledge and evidence based approaches to commissioning and delivering services for children, young people and families in order to achieve better outcomes.

This EITP project was developed in partnership with the Police Service Northern Ireland, Department of Employment and Learning, Department of Justice, Department of Education, Department of Health and Northern Ireland Housing Executive prior to changes in departmental structures.

Children and Young people, aged 12 – 17 years, who are displaying risk taking behaviours (e.g. self-harm, substance misuse, alcohol/ substance fuelled admissions to hospital, offending behaviour and school disengagement) and are assessed as being at risk of any one of the following:

- Family breakdown;
- Becoming looked after;
- Being excluded/suspended from school;
- Becoming homeless; and
- Entering youth justice system

The EITP was planned to have;

- needs led ,responsive yet flexible interventions
- intensive and therapeutic outreach – out of hours
- whole family relationship based and practical/ youth diversionary focussed support
- a key feature - the need for strong **multi-agency working - a systems approach to be adopted**

On 24 November the Edges Service was introduced at the Long Gallery, Stormont by Health Minister Michelle O’Neil and Health and Social Care colleagues.



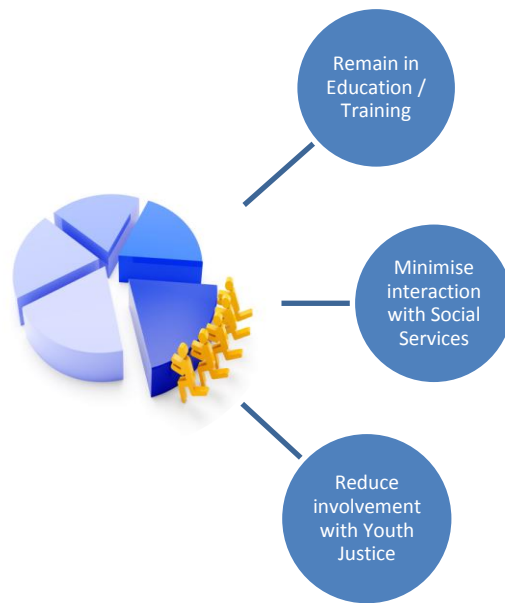
Department of Health Minister, Michelle O’Neill at the EDGES Service Showcase event at Stormont, November 2016



The Edges Service address at the Long Gallery, Stormont

What is the Edges Service?

To provide an evidence informed, specialist 'earlier intervention' service for young people primarily between the ages of 12 – 17, who are on the 'edge of care', custody and / or education



Objectives:

1. To identify, engage and support 600 young people and their families within parts of the Northern and Western Trust areas considered to be at the highest risk of entering the care, justice, homeless system; with a view to diverting them from these systems.
2. To robustly monitor and report the performance of the young people and their families to ensure a sound evidence base is provided to inform an exit strategy following the support

Project Outcomes:

- Reduction in the level of substance misuse
- Improved attendance at school/engagement in training or employment schemes
- Reduction in the number of young people who become looked after/homeless or enter custody during and one year after the programme of intervention
- Reduction in the number of young people coming to the attention of police during and one year after the programme of intervention
- Rise in the number of young people reengaging with universal services
- Improved social and emotional well-being

Where has it been delivered?



The service has been managed and delivered by Start 360 with the support of multi-agency local implementation and operational teams from education, youth justice, social service, youth service, housing executive and police.



The Model of Delivery

- One to One engagement
- Unstructured family work
- Structured family work
- Family Systemic Work
- Diversionary / Group Work



What difference did the Edges Service make?

To date a total of 259 young people have engaged with the service of which many have been experiencing the following difficulties:

- Coming to attention of Police
- Alcohol & Drugs
- Mental Health issues
- Beyond Parental Control
- Risk of Child Sexual Exploitation
- Family Relationship Difficulties
- Peer Relationship Difficulties
- Isolating themselves
- Non-school attendance
- On the Edge of Care



What has been achieved?

- Strong Partnership Working across the various statutory and voluntary agencies
- Families being provided an immediate responsive service when crisis situations arise
- Families & young people empowered to take ownership & responsibility for their own situations
- Social Workers & families reassured that appropriate, timely, intensive support is being provided based on the individual needs
- Reduction in the number of young people needing to be admitted into the CARE System
- Young people feeling they are listened to and supported
- Increase in morale

A parent of 3 young people who benefitted from the service said; “Edges is a totally fantastic group to be involved with and if I ever slip back I know for a fact they would be the first people that I would contact.”

GET IN TOUCH

For further information about the service contact Helen Dunn at Helen.dunn@hscni.net