

Impact Report:



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Investing in the Future: Manchester City Council & Public Health Team Champion Trauma-Informed Support in Early Help Teams

Preamble

Manchester City Council and the Public Health Team have taken a transformative step to better support children and families facing complex challenges. They have commissioned seven Early Help practitioners as Healing Together facilitators, reflecting a proactive commitment to frontline practitioners. This initiative equips them with evidence-based training, valuable resources, and ongoing support to address the deep-rooted effects of trauma. By investing in their workforce, the Early Help teams are strengthening their impact and ensuring families receive the best possible care.

The real success lies in the profound shift in practice.

Lauren Ashton,

Early Help Team Leader, shares first-hand insights into how the Healing Together programme is making a lasting difference to practitioners' practice and the lives of the families they serve.



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In North of Manchester, we currently have three Early Help Practitioners trained to facilitate the Healing Together programmes. Our Early Help offer is an evidence-based intervention service, and having practitioners trained in supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse and the programme supporting children with angry feelings has widened our interventions available to our families across Manchester.

Through the direct supervision of these practitioners, I have seen improvement across a range of areas, including confidence in working directly with young people, understanding of trauma and the impact domestic abuse has on young people, and understanding a range of emotions young people feel- including anger.



All practitioners within the service receive Domestic Abuse training and have skills around **gathering voice of the child**. However, following the training to facilitate the Healing Together programmes, practitioners feel this has been built on and allowed them to have a clear evidence-based intervention to deliver. Within Early Help, our practitioners can often feel overwhelmed with the vast level of needs that they work within. For our practitioners that have been trained it has given them clarity on interventions suitable for a variety of cases.

In addition to this, I have seen an increase in passion and interest in delivering work with young people. This has had a knock on to the wider team and seen a peak in interest around interventions we deliver to our families and young people.

For those that have been trained, I have seen an increase in drive of wanting to complete direct work with young people, even if this has been outside of Healing Together programme. As an Early Help Team Leader, I have been able to see a change in confidence and almost culture change in views around direct work with young people.



Case Studies

The following case studies have been written by the frontline practitioners trained to deliver the Healing Together programme. Both case studies have been anonymised to preserve the anonymity of the families.

ae



Catching a Child on The Edge of Care: A Whole Family Approach to Domestic Abuse

Background

Fiona and Sally are siblings from a large family who have received support from Early Help and Child in Need planning from Children Services. They have experienced domestic abuse for an extended period, leading to challenging behaviours and struggles with emotional regulation. Mike, another sibling, was on the edge of care and residing with grandparents due to safety concerns. **Fiona and Sally were at risk of permanent exclusion from school due to their behaviours and struggles with regulation.**

The Healing Together Sessions

Fiona and Sally accessed their Healing Together sessions together in a safe school environment, facilitated by their Early Help worker, a trusted adult. The siblings completed the Healing Together programme that support children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

Although the programme was not completed with their mother, the information shared with the children was communicated to her via the Show and Share sheets, and appropriate topics were explored with the mother.

Impact and Outcomes

The Healing Together programme has had a measurable positive impact on the whole family:

- **Edge of Care:** Mike did not directly access the sessions, but there has been a change in parental response to Mike, leading to a more understanding approach. Mike has returned to the family home and he is feeling more settled.
- **Access to Education:** Sally has remained in their education provision, with improved behaviour across the board. The school is now more aware of Sally's challenges and lived experiences, improving their responses to behaviours.
- **Emotional Awareness:** Sally and Fiona now understand their emotions better, allowing them to manage and seek support more effectively.



Conclusion

The family home is now a much happier and settled for all the children. Despite only 2 of 6 children accessing the Healing Together programme, it has had an indirect positive impact on them all. Mike is no longer moving between family members' homes and has moved back home with his mother. The family, previously struggling without professional involvement has now been stepped down to universal services and is coping well.

By stopping Mike going into care, the council made a weekly saving of £5,400*.

The early intervention is a lifeline for Mike & his family.

* Average cost for children in care



Weekly savings
£5,400



The impact on Sam, School & Home

Background

Meet Sam, a young boy living with his mother, who has been facing some tough challenges. Sam struggles with anxiety, school difficulties, and unresolved feelings about his absent father. These issues have taken a toll on his mental health, leading to emotional outbursts, reluctance to attend school, and a negative self-image.

School has been particularly hard for Sam. He feels singled out by teachers, which hurts his self-esteem. He also feels misunderstood by those around him, including his teachers, who he believes don't fully grasp his complex emotions.

To help Sam navigate these challenges, he engaged with the Healing Together programme that supports children and young people experiencing difficulties with their angry feelings.

The Healing Together Sessions

The Healing Together sessions provided Sam with a safe space to explore his emotions and develop practical tools to boost his confidence and well-being. These sessions included a mix of activities, discussions, and reflective exercises to help Sam process his experiences, recognise his strengths and access a safe grounded adult.

Impact on Sam

The [Healing Together programme](#) has had a measurable positive impact on Sam's emotional well-being and confidence.

- **Improved Confidence:** Sam has shown increased self-assurance in handling situations at school, such as speaking up about his needs and participating in activities he previously avoided.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Sam has developed healthier ways of expressing his frustrations which has reduced the frequency of emotional outbursts at home and school.
- **Self Esteem:** The sessions highlighted Sam's positive qualities, reinforcing his self-worth and ability to overcome adversity.
- **Enhanced Relationships:** The sessions have helped Sam articulate his feelings to his mother and school staff, improving communication and understanding within his support network.



Conclusion

The Healing Together sessions have proven to be an invaluable resource in supporting Sam through his challenges.

By providing him with a structured, nurturing environment, Sam has been able to explore and process his emotions, use strategies that he feels comfortable with, and grow in confidence.

This case study highlights the effectiveness of the programme as a tool for empowering children like Sam to navigate their personal challenges and communicate their needs with the adults around them.





A message from Gareth Nixon

*Programme Lead - ACEs and Trauma Informed Practice
Department of Public Health, Manchester City Council*

I have been working with Dr Asha Patel and her team at Innovating Minds for a couple of years. Initially we ran a pilot with some of our partners including Barnardo's, Catalyst Psychology and Manchester Women's Aid. The 2023 impact report (including feedback from children and practitioners) was positive, particularly around supporting emotions and providing techniques for children to calm their brain and bodies.

In Manchester we are striving to reduce health inequalities for all residents through our Making Manchester Fairer work and seeking to become a UNICEF Child Friendly City, a place where every child feels safe and secure. We also have an ambition to be a trauma responsive city, where the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma is recognised, and support is available to mitigate against their effects and to improve well-being.

As such it is important we invest in our children and young people. Thus, Public Health have facilitated a group of our Early Help practitioners to deliver the Healing Together programmes that support children and young people affected by domestic abuse and angry feelings, whilst continuing to support our initial partners with their delivery.

One of the key benefits of the Healing Together programme from my perspective is that it is delivered through a lens of trauma informed practice and the frontline practitioners feel confident to deliver evidence-based trauma informed interventions. All activity ensures safety, is culturally competent, provides choice and collaboration and prioritises relationships.

By delivering the programme, access to Early Help is improving in the face of increased demand on services. We are ensuring that the views and voices of our children and young people are heard and are starting to address their trauma.



Learn more about the Healing Together Programmes

[Book a Meeting with Deb](#)