



Stronger Families
and
Resilient Children

Derby Children's Safeguarding and Early Help Services

Derby City Early Help Strategy



Derby's Early Help Vision is:

Building stronger families and resilient children of Derby

Introduction

Our Local Authority Early Help services provide a targeted whole family approach when needs are emerging so that the right service is provided at the right point and for the right amount of time.

(Early Help services aim to provide advice and support and/or intervene where there is evidence of emerging needs with the objective of preventing escalation into care, child protection plans or entry into the criminal justice system, which have profound costs financially and socially.)

We work with families using Strengths Based approaches to empower them to achieve the best outcomes they can. We match services to needs and our range of interventions are informed by evidence-based research which drives the quality of our practice.

We listen to parents, children and young people and use their voice to shape our service provision.

Our offer is creative and diverse and includes the following:

- Casework with individual families Lead Professional.
- Direct work with children and young people.
- Team Around the Family, solution focused family change.
- Work with schools, group work and Team around the school and community.
- Evidence based Interventions and training.
- Supporting placed Based Risk (contextual safeguarding).
- Joint/co work cases with social care and health colleagues.
- School readiness programmes SLC and Health programmes in children's centres.



- An offer for children and young people with SEND pre and post diagnosis 0-25.
- Staying Together Targeted work for children and young people who may come into the care system.

Early Help is responsible for several statutory services which include:

Education Welfare Services: The Education Welfare Service (EWS) carry out statutory duties to ensure regular school attendance. Advice and support are offered to schools and families who are attending a school within Derby City, focussing on the following:

- welfare issues.
- children working in entertainment.
- child employment.
- Children Missing Education (CME) (in line with CME guidelines).
- Exclusions.
- domestic abuse link for schools.

The service provides advice and support to schools regarding strategies and initiatives to promote good attendance, and where necessary, will issue penalty notices and instigate legal action where irregular attendance occurs. The service also carries out Derby City's statutory requirement in issuing and regulating performance licences for 'children in entertainment' and children in part-time employment.

NEET

As a Local Authority we have a duty to:

- Promote the effective participation in education and training of 16- and 17-year-olds in their area with a view to ensuring that those persons fulfil the duty



to participate in education or training.

- Make arrangements to identify 16- and 17-year-olds who are NEET.
- Develop a local offer setting out what services they expect to be available for local children and young people with SEND up to age 25. (The Children and Families Act 2014).
- Secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19 or aged 19 to 25 and for whom an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is maintained. This is a duty under the Education Act 1996. To fulfil this, LA's need to have a strategic overview of the provision available in their area and to identify and resolve gaps in provision.
- Collect information about young people so those who are NEET, can be identified and given support to re-engage.

Young Carers

The service aims: to offer young people who are identified as young carers appropriate support that is targeted to their needs, to reduce level of inappropriate and harmful caring a child may need to complete and to offer some targeted and respite activities and access to appropriate therapeutic Support.

Children and Young People who go Missing:

The Statutory Guidance on Children who Run Away or go Missing from Home or Care (2014) is adhered to, which ensures that every time a child is reported missing should attract an appropriate and proportionate response from the professionals involved, who must collaborate to ensure a consistent response is given to find the child and on his / her return. This is achieved by providing effective support and interventions, including an opportunity to have a return interview within 72hrs of being found, for there to be good information sharing, when appropriate a multi-agency assessment and planning and performance management.



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No Recourse to Public Funds

People who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF) are those who have no legal entitlement to financial support or assistance from the state because of restrictions to their immigration status in the UK. They may self-refer for support or are referred from other agencies. All local authorities in the UK have a duty to advise people who have NRPF on their personal circumstances, and this is undertaken by the Early Help Service with support from our legal department on behalf on Derby City Council.

For all aspects of both statutory and voluntary engagement Early Help engagement. We have a set of principles we follow that allow us to deliver the Right Service to the Right People at the Right time in the Right place.

1. Early Help tackles emerging need at the earliest possible time to target support to enable families staying together.
2. Early Help is proportionate, timely and secures long term outcomes.
3. A strengths-based model is in place and appropriate evidence-based Interventions will be used.
4. Services are based and operational in the communities where children, young people and families live.
5. Children and Young people have a voice via consultation and Voice of the child tools.
6. Seamless links with our Partners and social care colleagues are in place to escalate and de-escalate cases.
7. Information is shared safely and effectively to support a family need of Early Help.
8. Processes and Practices are outcome focused in everything we do.
9. Performance and data inform all aspects of our work.
10. We Work as part of a larger team and community with a view to supporting community cohesion and placed based risk.

We know our Early Help services work because PEER Reviews, Inspections and parents tell us that Early Help services have been effective in helping families remain together and needs are met early, appropriately and in the right way.



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The landscape for Early Help continues to change and the demand for children's services has increased year on year. We use regular data and intelligence to help us plan and respond to need. We know there has been a rise in the number of older children 10+ on the edge of care and that means our work with children between 8-13 needs to focus on ensuring they have aspiration and good emotional well-being, and families are supported to “**stay together**”.

We have altered our structure to reflect this need and have developed a service focused on those children and young people where safe to do so remain within their family with additional support.

The Overall Working Aims of the Staying Together Team are:

- To manage the risk(s) associated and build on family's strengths to keep children and young people within their families and communities.
- To support families in providing stability when children and young people are in difficulty and deemed “on the edge of care” to prevent them becoming Looked After by the Local Authority.
- To support reunification of children/ young people back into the family home.
- To offer a tailored package of support within a strength-based model through using evidence-based interventions.

This service is offered to support our social care colleagues and, in most cases, joint work to offer focused piece of intervention.

Early Help Delivery

Early Help prides itself on integrated working and co- location with Social Care. Over the past ten years we have developed mature and effective relationships with health, education, youth offending schools and many other services.

We operate a city-wide offer and have Multi Agency 8-18 Teams that drive forward the Early Help agenda with partners and communities.



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The authority holds strategic responsibility to provide local sufficient **Children's centres** which are core to the delivery of our Early Help Strategy and operate in clusters within each locality. Managers are part of Early Help management teams alongside 8-18 Early Help Managers and Social Care Managers.

Our children's centre core purpose provides quality services targeted at those most vulnerable under 8's and their families delivering activity and outreach support to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities. We have a particular focus on supporting families in greatest need and targeting those children are most vulnerable, this includes those children who are in need, on child protection plans or are in care and children under eight years old, or children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) We support in the key areas to improve:

- parenting capacity.
- health and wellbeing.
- child development and school readiness.

Our Children Centre venues are an integral part of the community and are used flexibly. For example, supervised court ordered Family Time, parenting assessments, direct work with children and young people with Social Workers and services for SEND flexibly across a week.

We offer support to families to find childcare for vulnerable children who are under 8 years old. There is independent childcare operating in four of our centres.

Many centres are a base for both health visitors, Speech and Language Therapy and midwifery services making them the hub of their community

Early Help and Children's Social Care lead on the delivery of the Supporting Vulnerable Families (Troubled Families) initiative in the city. Children's centres and 8-18 teams have identified workers who focus on those most at risk of high tariff services to ensure sustained engagement and support is offered to make sustainable change.

In addition, we support community hubs and local area co-ordination to ensure families have access to support and advice within their communities including advice and support around housing issues, access to foodbanks and building community resilience as necessary.



Support and Delivery

We measure the progress of all our children and families towards their goals and aspirations and we capture their achievements.

Our Early Help staff are skilled in delivering direct work with children and families, and in the use of evidence-based programmes and tools. Programmes and work are adapted where young people have an identified additional need. All teams have identified champions for SEND that have had appropriate training to support Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. They also support the creation of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and work to the Graduated Response, which is the early help pathway before considering the need for an EHCP.

Our Evidenced based programmes include:

- Family Systemic Interventions.
- Non-Violent Resistance.
- IAPT CBT.
- Incredible Years.
- Reducing Parental Conflict.
- Elklan Language Training.
- Freedom.

Additional programmes offered include:

- Escape the Trap.
- Freedom for children.
- PEEP.
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In addition, there are several locally designed programmes and group work that are tailored and delivered to groups across Children's Centres and Schools.

During COVID there have been several virtual new programmes developed to support families and long term they will continue to be part of our Core offer.



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We now have an identified Manager within our structure who focuses on delivering Systemic Interventions training and offering, Consultation, individual and group reflective supervision for both systemic work and NVR. We have developed a pathway that helps professionals identify through a short assessment the right delivery format of interventions in systemic and NVR and other evidence-based programmes.

Voice of the Child

In all aspects of our work, we ensure the Voice of the Child is at the forefront. We use a library of tools and techniques that enable us throughout our case work and group work to demonstrate that we have listened to the child/young person.

Allocation of a piece of work to an Early Help Team or a Children's Centre follows clear process and guidance to ensure impact of work is realised.

Following allocation for Early Help the intervention/support follows the TAF (Team Around the Family) process. Contracts are in place and families have SMART plans with clear timescales and use a variety of progression tools and Voice of the Child tools to deliver solution focused change for children, young people, and families.

During an initial 6-week period, all cases referred for children over the age of 10 are screened for any Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) risks using the CSE Risk Assessment Toolkit and take any subsequent actions following the Derby Safeguarding Children's Board CSE/CRE procedures. If a young person is subject to a CSE strategy approach and meetings, then these may replace the need for TAF meetings, although work between meetings must follow the same principles and approaches.

Allocation for either IAPT(CBT) or systemic work requires ARCADS or Score 15 assessment prior to a case being worked and staff can access reflective supervision by a trained expert as well as regular supervision with their Line Manager.

We use progression of change tools (these include spider-graphs, change balloon and Graded-Care Profile (where neglect/poor care is a case feature), in all cases. These show an individual child or young person or family's improvement journey and enables the service to demonstrate a response to that vital "so what" question on



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impact of the intervention. The use of the tool at the start of an intervention enables both our workers and families to track their progress.

Progression of change tools are then reviewed before each TAF meeting by the allocated Early Help practitioner so this can be used as a basis for discussion on progress made. The new Staying Together Team use the same guidance and tools. This also forms the basis for case duration and closure at the right time.

For working with families Early Help practitioners will ensure sessions are focused and are based on goals in TAF plan/s and methods such as the PARA model can be used to record:

- Purpose.
- Action.
- Reflection.
- Analysis.

All families are surveyed during our intervention and at the end of it using a locally devised tool 'How Was It for You?' enabling us to review actions and performance reflecting on feedback and further developing our services.

It is our intention to limit the time worked with families and make every effort to complete work within 6-9 months. Any cases remaining open for more than 12 months require sign off from a Senior Manager. There will be circumstances where cases may need to remain open longer than 12 months due to statutory duties, or the exceptional circumstances of the case, i.e., homeless 16- and 17-year-olds who are classified as Children in Need under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 or families with no recourse to public funds and Children and young people who are privately fostered.

We know that particular cohorts of children and young people are less likely to achieve their potential when compared to their peers. We consider Working Together 2018 and encourage professionals to be particularly alert to families who are struggling with family and children and young people's issues. Early help can be particularly pertinent for Children and young People who are classed as vulnerable with emerging needs and require some level of intervention to support reaching their potential.



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The changing nature of the needs of children or parents often means the level of support required is likely to vary. Early Help is intended to provide and address any emerging needs and consists of co-ordinated support from universal and targeted services.

Access to the Local Authority Targeted Early Help Services in Derby is via **Early Help Assessment** for a targeted Intervention, we use the Early Help Pre-assessment Checklist and Request for Support Form to help identify low level or emerging needs through the Early Help schools offer.

Partners and workers are asked to consider the circumstances that increase a child's and family's vulnerability and use our Safeguarding Boards threshold document. Where a child has more complex needs or is at risk of harm, an on-line referral should be made to Children's Social Care.

Different assessment tools should be used at each different part of the system:

- An Early Help Pre-Assessment Checklist and Referral form for low level needs such as work in schools.
- An Early Help Assessment for emerging needs or Targeted Needs.
- Single Assessment for complex and/or child protection concerns.

Both partners and practitioners and our front door into social care service are trained to advise and support completion of EHAs (Early Help Assessments) and there is an ongoing training plan to ensure new starters in all agencies are enabled to use this. Completion of early help assessments is supported by early help advisors available in each locality and our front door services to guide parents and professionals through the assessment process.

Parents, carers, children, and young people may recognise that they require support, the service maintains open dialogue with them to either signpost to an appropriate service or to follow a clear process for Multi Agency Early Help teams to offer a service.

The Early Help Assessment (document set available from www.derbyscb.org.uk) must be completed for all cases where an agency is requesting an Early Help practitioner to act as a Lead Professional and co-ordinate a multi-agency intervention to meet the multiple needs of a child/family. The assessment is presented at the local



authorities Vulnerable Children's panel. This is the route to access LA Targeted Early Help Services in the City.

Vulnerable Children's Meetings (VCM) occur in all three localities within the city on a weekly basis, at a set day and time. This is a forum in which a group of multi-agency partners and professionals work to clear Terms of Reference to consider all assessments.

The meetings follow a consistent process which includes:

- Formal Chair and minute taking.
- Discussion and review of assessments that are sent to a locality team and consideration and agreement as to the threshold met is agreed. This discussion may lead to agreeing that services may be met by Early help or that there is a safeguarding threshold, and a judgement is made to which service will best meet the needs of the family.
- If the assessment does not meet the criteria professionals are signposted to other services and resources.
- Provide advice back to agencies who are concerned about cases where they are the Lead Professionals and are concerned that their intervention is not achieving the desired outcomes, or concerns are escalating.

Governance

The Early Help Service sits within the Peoples Directorate of the Local Authority. It is part of Early Help and Childrens Social Care.

Reporting on delivery performance and success is via a combination of routes, including departmental management team, the Practice and Development Board, Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny and the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Board.

Performance is measured through our Business plan using the Flourish model and a variety of strategic plans for statutory services. In addition, quarterly data is



monitored through the Local authorities DORIS data system. Annually we produce a performance report that tell the Early Help story supported by data and narrative.

Early Help Performance Framework

Our Early Help performance framework aims to demonstrate a coordinated approach to Early Help activity and demonstrate the impact that it is having on families and associated services/measures (i.e., number of referrals to social care and the total number of looked after children).

We have established baselines for each of the measures and data is entered on to our DORIS system (Derby City Council performance framework) on a quarterly basis to capture key outputs and outcomes within the service.

Measures include:

- Number of open cases.
- Number of Early Help Assessments completed.
- Number of progression tools such as spider graphs with an improving direction of travel.
- Number of cases escalated to Social Care.
- Number of families reporting they were helped with identified issues.

These performance measures along with feedback from case audits (co-ordinated by the quality assurance team within DCC) on various aspects of Early Help practice help us to develop an overall annual picture of practice and performance in our service, which then forms the basis of an annual report and accompanying action plan, which is presented to the DDSCSB for scrutiny.

The annual Early Help action plan contains actions to help aid continuous improvement and is delivered and driven by the Early Help and Children's Social Care service.