

Appendix 1: Early Help in Herefordshire

Whilst parents and carers have primary care for their children, local authorities, working with partner organisations and agencies, have specific duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. *'Working Together to Safeguard Children'*¹ was published by the government in July 2018 to provide a guide for inter-agency working with the intention of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This national guide provides a definition of Early help:

'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. Early help can also prevent further problems arising; for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child is returned home to their family from care, or in families where there are emerging parental mental health issues or drug and alcohol misuse.'

Working Together (2018) also states 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..... Early help can also prevent further problems arising".

"Effective early help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to:

- identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- undertake an assessment of the need for early help
- provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child".

Practitioners should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves

- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child

Early Help in Herefordshire

In Herefordshire Early Help means providing the Right Help at the Right Time to meet a family's needs, to develop the families own skills to determine their future, reducing poor outcomes and inequalities, with the child at the centre.

Early help is recognised as everyone's responsibility and key partners include:

Primary and Secondary Schools, Health Visitors, School Nurses, Midwives, General practitioners and other health practitioners, Mental Health partners CAMHS and Adult Services, Early Years providers, Police, Department of Work & Pensions, Housing Associations, Voluntary and Charitable organisations, HVOSS, Youth Offending Service and Probation.

The Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership vision is "Children are safely cared for by their family. Where needed services will work well together with them to achieve this".

The board recognized that this can only be successfully achieved by supporting the right children and their families, at the right time, in the right place for as long as is needed.

Services need to:

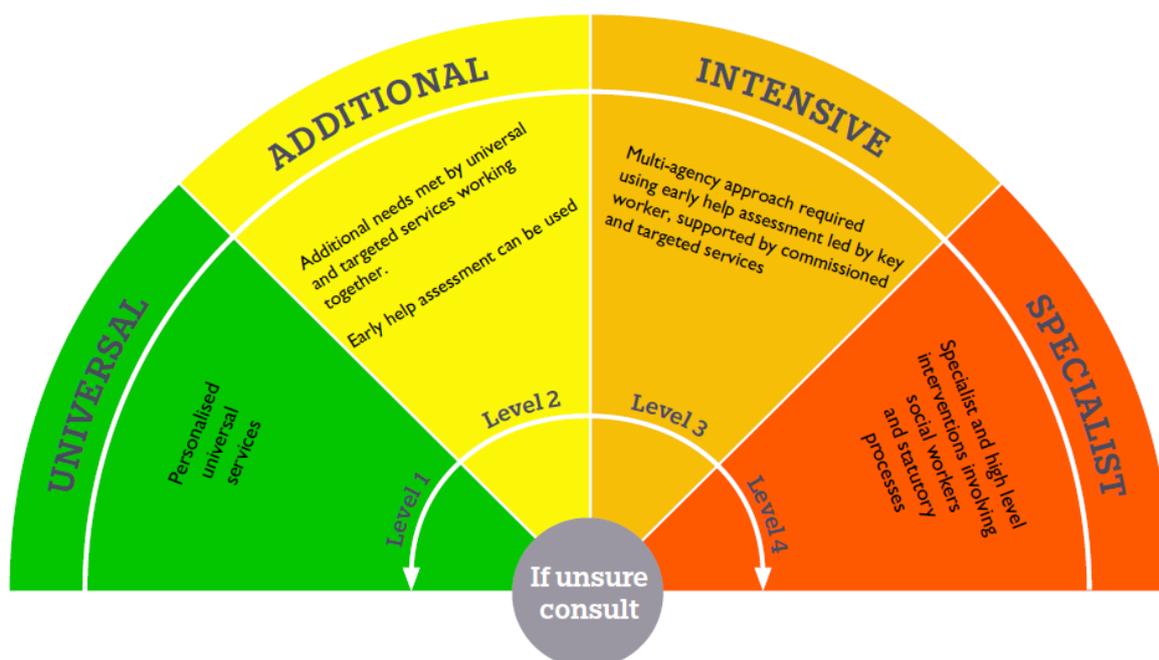
- Support children and families when they first need help
- Build strong relationships with children, parents, extended family and local communities so children are safe
- Listen to children and parents to understand their strengths and needs and offer support that they know can make a difference
- Provide support so change happens, and children can be cared for by their parents/family

Partner agencies deliver a range of services to support children and families and recognise the need for collaboration with children and families and each other when so doing.

Early Help Assessments

For children and families with more complex needs, Herefordshire partners have developed the Early Help Assessment to assess the needs of the whole family and offer the right support at the right time. Multi-agency services will work collaboratively to support families before their difficulties escalate. Most children and families supported by an early help assessment do not need council or more specialist services to achieve positive change.

The diagram below sets out the 4 levels of need that services and professionals will use to ensure the right help is provided at the right time to the right children and families.



The below table provides information about when an Early Help Assessment is required, who provides support to the family and how to access support and advice when completing an assessment.

Levels and Referral Routes	Needs	Services (examples)	Outcome
Level 1 Universal Open access to provision	All children and families who live in the area have core needs such as parenting, health and education	Early years, education, primary health care, maternity services, housing, community health care, children centre services Let's Play & Baby Let's Play and leisure services. Children are supported by their family and in universal services to meet all of their needs. WISH – Wellbeing, Information & Signposting Herefordshire website	Children and young people make good progress in all/most areas of development

<p>Level 2 Additional</p> <p>Two or three services work together to meet child and family needs, co-ordinated by a service and/or people who know the child/family best</p> <p>It may be helpful for these professionals to complete an Early Help Assessment but not essential at level 2. If no EHA a plan of actions with a review timeline to make sure that the help on offer is making a difference. This would</p> <p>be a plan established and managed by the leading agency</p>	<p>Children and families with additional needs who would benefit from or who require extra help to improve education, parenting and/or behaviour, or to meet specific health or emotional needs or to improve their material situation</p>	<p>Parenting programmes</p> <p>School holiday and short breaks provision for disabled children</p> <p>Extra health support for family members; behavioural support</p> <p>Housing support</p> <p>Additional learning support</p> <p>CAMHS tier 2 support to schools (SEN support and help to find education and employment</p> <p>Speech and language therapy</p> <p>Children's centre services</p> <p>Services provided on a voluntary basis to families (these may be offered by volunteers and/or commissioned through a voluntary organisation)</p>	<p>The life chances of children and families will be improved by offering additional support</p>
<p>Level 3 Intensive</p> <p>An Early Help assessment to be completed by the agency which knows the family best or who the family trust with an outcome based support plan agreed by the family. There will be an identified Key Worker who will be the main link for the family and hold all the agencies involved to account to deliver their agreed support.</p> <p>Support from the special educational needs and disability service</p>	<p>Vulnerable children and their families with multiple needs or whose needs are more complex, such as children and families who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a disability resulting in complex needs • exhibit anti-social or challenging behaviour, including the expression of radicalised thoughts or intentions. • suffer some neglect or poor family relationships • have poor engagement with key services such as school and health • are not in education or work long- term 	<p>Due to the complexity of needs, especially around behaviour and parenting, a shared professional and co-ordinated plan is developed with the family. The assessment and plan is led by a Key Worker and the service is provided ONLY with the consent of the parents/carers</p> <p>A wide range of services might be involved in meeting the family's needs, eg CAMHS tier 3, adult mental health or drug/alcohol team</p> <p>Families needing substantial support to care for a disabled child, usually with the help of a social worker from the children with disability service</p>	<p>Life chances will be significantly impaired without co-ordinated multi-agency support</p>

<p>Level 4 Specialist Access requires a MARF</p> <p>Children's social care Child protection Care proceedings Children in need</p> <p>Youth treatment orders/ custody</p> <p>Tier 4 CAMHS</p> <p>Hospital or hospice in-patient</p>	<p>Children and young people who have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>This will include victims of child exploitation and also those at high risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)</p> <p>Children with significant impairment of function/learning and/or life limiting illness</p> <p>Children whose parents and wider family are unable to care for them</p> <p>Families involved in crime/misuse of drugs at a significant level</p> <p>Families with significant mental or physical health needs</p>	<p>Children's social care, youth offending service</p> <p>Criminal justice system, tier 3 and 4</p> <p>CAMHS In-patient and continuing health care Fostering and residential care</p> <p>Health care for children with life limiting illness</p> <p>Services for children with profound and enduring disability</p> <p>Referrals have to be made to services with the power to undertake statutory non- voluntary intervention and services with specialist skills</p>	<p>Children and /or family members are likely to suffer significant harm/ removal from home/ serious and lasting impairment without the intervention of specialist services, very often using their statutory powers</p>
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For more information please use the link below:

<https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/herefordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/for-professionals/right-help-right-time-levels-of-need/>

The Early Help Hub in Herefordshire has been developed to promote children and their families get the right help at the right time. The Early Help Hub sits alongside the Multiagency Safeguarding Hub and is responsible for contacts which come into the local authority at level 3 or below and for contacts that MASH have assessed as not needing level 4 intervention. The Early Help Hub proactively works with families and referrers to ensure the right support is offered, including signposting, offering advice and guidance and facilitating the completion of an Early Help Assessment, where appropriate, with those families whose needs meet level 3 or high level 2 and who give their consent.