

Thresholds for access to services for children and families in Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland

Local Safeguarding Children Boards are required to publish a thresholds document under statutory guidance (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015).

This document includes:

- the process for the early help assessment and the type and level of early help services to be provided; and
- the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services under:
 - section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need);
 - section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (reasonable cause to suspect children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm);
 - section 31 (care orders); and
 - section 20 (duty to accommodate a child) of the Children Act 1989

Relevant to: Practitioners and Managers in agencies and organisations providing services to children and families in Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland

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Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) play an important role in challenging safeguarding practice and assessing the effectiveness of safeguarding services in their area. Each local authority is required to set up an LSCB to bring key agencies such as police, probation, youth justice, health, education and social care together to make sure local safeguarding of children is effective. In addition to coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of what is done by each agency to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, LSCBs also have a number of key things they must do which are set out in legislation.

These include agreeing local safeguarding policies and procedures for how the different agencies work together, contributing to local plans, communicating to local organisations and the community, ensuring safeguarding training is provided, and monitoring what the LSCB members do and how effective local safeguarding is. LSCBs are also required to:

- undertake a serious case review (SCR) where a child has been killed or seriously harmed, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected;
- review the deaths of all children who are normally resident in their area; and
- produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area.

This publication is available at:

<http://lrsb.org.uk/uploads/view-the-lr-lscb-thresholds-for-access-to-services-for-children-and-families-in-leicester-leicestershire-rutland.pdf>

Leicester Safeguarding Children Board

Bosworth House
9-15 Princess Road West
Leicester LE1 6TH

T: 0116 454 6520

E: lcitylscb@leicester.gov.uk

W: www.lcitylscb.org/

Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Board

Leicestershire County Council,
Room 100, County Hall, Glenfield,
LE3 8RA

T: 0116 305 7130

E: sbbo@leics.gov.uk

W: <http://lrsb.org.uk/>

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Foreword by the Independent Chairs of the Boards

Developing local threshold criteria is one of a Local Safeguarding Children Board's core functions. This document brings together, for the first time, the threshold criteria across the three local authorities of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland under the responsibilities of the Leicester Safeguarding Children Board and the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board.

The revised statutory guidance Working Together (DfE, 2015) sets out the LSCBs' role in developing thresholds, policies and procedures for work under Section 17 and Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, and with children with additional needs.

The needs of some children and families can be straightforward and the majority of these needs can be met by some kind of universal provision. The needs of other children and families can be more complex and may require the intervention by multiple agencies to provide support.

As Working Together states: "It is important that there are clear criteria for taking action and providing help across this full continuum. Having clear thresholds for action which are understood by all professionals, and applied consistently, should ensure that services are commissioned effectively and that the right help is given to the child at the right time" (para. 16).

The intent of this document is to provide that clarity and consistency. It has required widespread consultation with the local authorities and their partners.

It is our shared hope that clear thresholds and processes, together with a common understanding of them across local partners, will help to ensure that appropriate referrals for support are made. Such a common understanding can only improve the effectiveness of joint work, leading to improved outcomes for children and families.



Paul Burnett
Independent Chair
Leicestershire and Rutland



Jenny Myers
Independent Chair
Leicester City

Introduction

1. This document is intended to assist professionals within the children's workforce to identify suitable responses to needs and issues that they encounter amongst the children, young people and families they are working with.
2. The needs of children and young people and their families need to be considered on a case by case basis. Responses should be based on robust assessment, sound professional judgment and where appropriate statutory guidance. It is also incumbent on practitioners to take account of the available resources, local priorities and policy guidance.
3. The document is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive – such a document could never exist in this context. Nor is it meant as a means by which a gateway to a particular service or services can be opened or closed.
4. This document applies to Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland which have a differing Early Help offer, see [Appendix B for Leicester City](#); [Appendix C for Leicestershire](#) and [Appendix D for Rutland](#).
5. Responsibility for the review and evaluation of this document is held by the Procedures and Development Group, which is a subgroup of both the Leicester Safeguarding Children Board and the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Board.

Principles underlying this document

It's good to talk

6. Early identification of difficulties and improved outcomes for children and young people are aided by close collaboration between individual workers and agencies.
7. The needs of children and young people are the concern and responsibility of all agencies and practitioners in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland that work with children.

Proportionate intervention

8. Children's needs should be determined by a robust assessment which should inform the proportionate service response. This threshold document seeks to enable practitioners to identify the right support for the right child at the right time.

Avoid duplication

9. In complex cases, a range of specialist meetings associated with different processes may be required. The aim(s) of some of these meetings may be complementary. It is important to try to achieve the most for the child(ren) and family with the minimum amount of professionals' meetings necessary.

Working in partnership with the family

10. Parents should be involved at the earliest opportunity unless to do so would prejudice the safety of the child.

Different types of assessed need

Specialist

Specialist and high level additional unmet needs, requiring a statutory service; intensive support. The needs are likely to require longer term intervention from specialist services such as Youth Offending Services, specialist CAMHS.

This in particular includes the threshold for a child in need (section 17) and child protection (section 47) which will require Children's Social Care intervention.

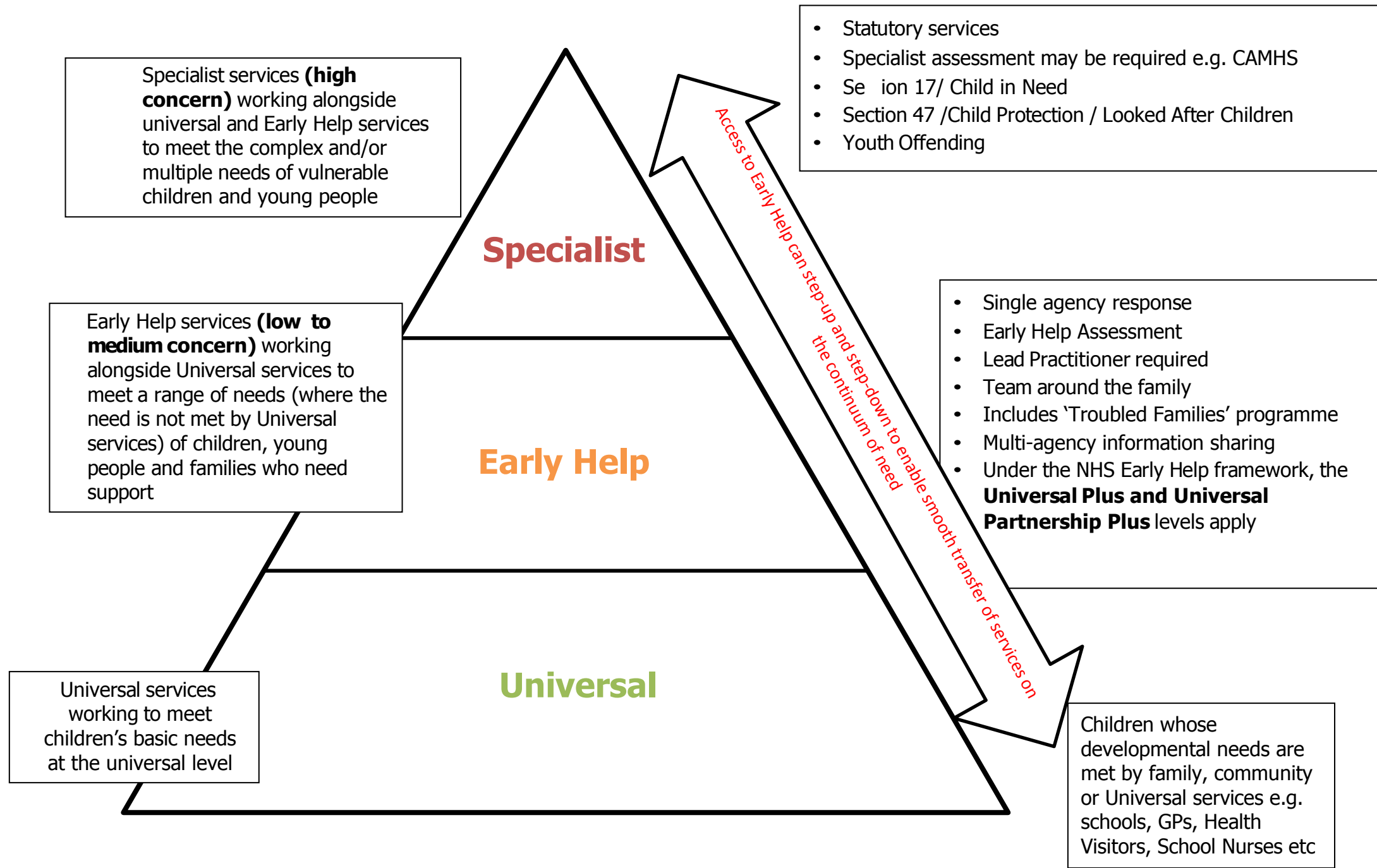
Early Help

Early Help is the phrase used to describe services provided for children, young people and families with a very broad spectrum of needs, i.e. from emerging difficulties through to families who may be on the cusp of statutory or specialist services. Early Help services are provided by a range of organisations and teams and include single service responses through to multi-agency approaches. Agencies involved in delivering Early Help include health, education, local authorities, voluntary and community sector. For families with multiple issues and complex needs, Early Help will include an assessment of need and a multi-agency Team around the Family process to support a coordinated response, with a lead practitioner identified. Early Help services may work alongside universal and specialist services to ensure individuals and families receive the best response to the identified needs.

Universal

A need that can be met by a universal service without the need for additional services.

These types of need are represented in the diagram on the following page and explained in greater detail in Appendix A.



Different types of assessed need (continued)

11. The continuum (Appendix A) identifies a set of example indicators which establish the variances between the different types of need and establishes a consistent approach for:
 - Service intervention that corresponds to the assessed level of need; and
 - Beginning the Early Help Assessment process
12. To ensure a range of service provision is available to meet the range of need of children in the community, the following considerations may apply:
 - Children can and do move from one type of need to another, sometimes very quickly
 - Children with Early Help and specialist needs also need and use universal services
 - Repeated assessments are not necessary to move children from one type of need to another
 - Children's histories follow them as they progress through service provision
 - There will be some children – for example, those with complex needs – who should be enabled to move quickly and effortlessly to the required service response without necessarily going up through each tier of need
 - For most children, the service aspiration is to secure them as low down the pyramid of need as possible.
13. When using Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland's Threshold of Need indicators it will be clear where some children/young people are on the continuum.
14. For other children/young people a practitioner may need to use the example indicators in Appendix A to decide whether or not the child/young person has additional needs and whether an Early Help Assessment would be appropriate, and to help further clarify need and appropriate response.
15. Assessment is an ongoing process, not a single event; children and young people's needs often change over time and may cross different types of need – i.e. high in some areas and low in others. The age of the child/young person and protective factors that may enhance resilience are also important contributory factors.
16. Of central importance, in understanding where a child's needs might lie on this continuum, is an understanding, respect for and appreciation of the child's lived experience, views of those children and young people and their parents and carers, whose co-operation and engagement in the first instance is vital to most early support and intervention.

17. The continuum does not guarantee service provision by particular agencies at each type of need. There may be restricting factors such as:
 - Specific threshold criteria related to the agency's specialist area of work
 - Previous interventions
 - Geographical location
 - Age limits; and
 - Time limited provision (e.g. only available during the school term).

Responding to need

18. **Specialist:** A relatively small number of children and young people, at risk of harm or significant harm and impairment to health or development, require specialist support, usually led by Children's Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), SEND services or the Youth Offending Teams (YOT).
19. **Early Help:** The majority of vulnerable children will have their needs assessed and met within services who provide additional support to families (these may not be LA services) or through the use of an Early Help Assessment with a Lead Practitioner and a multi-agency Team around the Family (TAF) approach. Those with additional needs may also have involvement by a specialist service such as CAMHS, Special Education Needs and Disability services, Health and Youth Offending.
20. **Universal:** Most children and young people's needs will be met by their parents and carers, family and communities with support from universal services – for example, schools, generic youth services, GP surgeries and health visitors.
21. When responding to need, the following principles apply:
 - Delivering services to meet needs is a shared responsibility, which falls on all local authority departments, health authorities and other services in partnership with the council, represented by the Leicester Children's Trust, Leicestershire's Children & Young People's Commissioning Board and Rutland's Children's Trust.
 - This document cannot be all things to all professions involved with children and families. Inevitably some of its content will be a matter of judgement and interpretation. The issuing of this document for reference is not meant to inhibit direct contact and conversations between relevant parties.

- If clarification on thresholds is required, then seek it. A shared understanding from different agencies' perspectives is essential to provide the appropriate support for families.
 - Workers should be proactive and engaged in work with children and families; debate about responding to need should be kept to a minimum.
 - Services should be provided with the explicit agreement of the child/parent (depending on age and understanding of the child), unless the child is at risk of significant harm.
22. ■ For information about Child Sexual Exploitation see [Child Sexual Exploitation](#)
- For information about Female Genital Mutilation see [FGM](#)

Early Help

What is Early Help

23. Early Help is about how different agencies work together to help children, young people and their families at any point in their lives to prevent or reduce difficulties.
24. The concept of Early Help reflects the widespread understanding that it is better to identify and deal with problems early rather than to respond when difficulties have become acute and require action by more intensive services.
25. The purpose of Early Help is to improve outcomes for children and young people at all stages of their development – from pre-birth, through the early years stage, throughout their school careers and on into their transition to adulthood. Difficulties may emerge at any point throughout childhood and adolescence.
26. Early Help is about how Universal and Early Help services are coordinated to identify, reduce and prevent specific problems from getting worse or becoming entrenched. Early Help gives families the opportunity to address their problems, ensuring children stay safe and achieve their full potential.

Principles underpinning Early Help services

- Consent and participation are fundamental to Early Help and prevention services.
- Children and young people's needs are best met when addressed in the context of the whole family.
- Children and young people who need extra help often succeed best if that help is offered in a universal setting.
- Activities and services offered to children and young people should help to build and strengthen their resilience.

- Intervening earlier prevents longer term, more costly and damaging problems occurring later.
- Parents have primary responsibility for, and are the main influence on, their children. Our role is therefore to strengthen parenting capacity, whilst remaining clear about our duty to safeguard vulnerable children and young people.
- Encouraging and enabling children, young people and families to take up activities, and to access support and services when they are at an early point of experiencing difficulties is vital.
- Investment to engage those families who most need support into the right activities and services is key to enabling them to take up the support being offered and to build skills and resilience.
- It is also important for both individual staff and services to understand what the barriers are for children, young people and families to take up the offer of Early Help and prevention, and to actively work to remove those barriers.

Objectives of Early Help

- Build the capacity of vulnerable families to support their children effectively in achieving positive outcomes.
- Reduce the number of children requiring intervention from statutory services.
- Address the impact of child poverty and worklessness on vulnerable families.
- Target resources effectively so they reach children, young people and their families who require extra help and support at the right time.

Vulnerability factors

27. The wellbeing of families, young people and children may be affected by individual, parental or family circumstances. These vulnerability factors can mean that something about the child, parent or family is creating a risk of poor physical or mental health and development, which could impact on children's outcomes. Examples of factors that may lead to vulnerability are poverty, single parenting, unemployment, caring responsibilities, relationship problems, depression, drug and alcohol use, disability and social isolation.
28. Simply having a characteristic of vulnerability does not mean that children's health or development will suffer. A robust multi-agency assessment should put that characteristic in a broader view of the child to determine need or risk.

Key activities that make up the Early Help Offer

29. The types of available services that make up the Early Help offer in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are summarised in the Appendices to this document. This is not a definitive list and will be subject to change over time.
30. The example indicators outlined in Appendix A are structured along a continuum spanning all children and young people aged 0-18 (including unborn children and those aged up to 25 if they have a Special Educational Need or are disabled), covering Universal, Early Help and Specialist provision. The continuum of support reflects the range of activities available for families depending on their level of need with the aim of providing a seamless service for families.
31. Alongside, and contributing to, the activities listed, there will be a range of other services and activities delivered by the voluntary and community sector that can also be classed as Early Help.
32. There are different coordination points running along the continuum. Coordination points are meetings, processes or services that play a key role in identifying and coordinating need, activities and services. They all play a pivotal role in coordinating the Early Help offer for children, young people and families in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Information Sharing

33. Information sharing is essential to enable early intervention and preventative work for safeguarding and promoting welfare and for wider public protection. Information sharing is a vital element in improving outcomes for all.
34. It is important that practitioners can share information appropriately as part of their day-to-day practice and do so confidently.
35. It is important to remember there can be significant consequences to not sharing information as there can be to sharing information. You must use your professional judgement to decide whether to share or not, and what information is appropriate to share.
36. Data protection law reinforces common sense rules of information handling. It is there to ensure personal information is managed in a sensible way.
37. It helps agencies and organisations to strike a balance between the many benefits of public organisations sharing information, and maintaining and strengthening safeguards and privacy of the individual.
38. It also helps agencies and organisations to balance the need to preserve a trusted relationship between practitioner and client with the need to share information to benefit and improve the life chances of the client or protect the public.

For the seven golden rules for information sharing, follow this link to the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland LSCBs Procedures website:
http://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_info_shar_confid.html

Problem resolution

39. The joint procedures of both Safeguarding Children Boards contain details on the resolution processes appropriate in circumstances where differences exist between the agencies regarding the handling of a case. The Board's procedures can be found at:
http://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_res_profdisag.html

Further information

Relevant guidance for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland

Appendix A: Practice examples of the different types of need

Leicester-specific information

Appendix B: The Early Help Assessment relevant to Leicester City

Leicestershire-specific information

Appendix C: The Early Help offer in Leicestershire

Rutland-specific information

Appendix D: Rutland's Early Help Strategy

Assessment Framework

For more information about assessment see the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland LSCB procedures, [1.1.2 Principles of Assessment](#)

and

[Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families \(DoH, 2000\)](#)

Appendix A: Practice examples of the different types of need

UNIVERSAL SERVICES WORKING TO MEET CHILDREN’S BASIC NEEDS AT THE UNIVERSAL LEVEL

UNIVERSAL(NO CONCERNS) EXAMPLE INDICATORS

| Developmental Needs | Family and Environmental Factors | Parents and Carers | Key Services That May Provide Support At This Level |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Learning / Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieving key stages Good attendance at school/college/training No barriers to learning Planned progression beyond statutory school age <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good physical health with age appropriate developmental milestones including speech and language Female babies born to mothers subjected to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) where no risk identified <p>Social, Emotional, Behavioural Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good mental health and psychological well-being Good quality early attachments, confident in social situations. Knowledgeable about the effects of crime and antisocial behaviour Knowledgeable about sex and relationships and consistent use of contraception if sexually active Cultural and Racial identity and language are taken into account <p>Family and Social Relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stable families where parents are able to meet the child's needs <p>Self-Care and Independence</p> | <p>Family History and Well-Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive family relationships <p>Housing, Employment and Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child fully supported financially Good quality stable housing <p>Social and Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good social and friendship networks exist. Safe and secure environment Access to consistent and positive activities | <p>Basic Care, Safety and Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents able to provide care for child's needs <p>Emotional Warmth and Stability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents provide secure and caring parenting <p>Guidance, Boundaries and Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents provide appropriate guidance and boundaries to help child develop appropriate values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Early Years Children & Young people Centres (Leicester City) Health visiting service School nursing GP Youth Services Integrated Youth Support Services (Leicester City) Police Housing agencies – local authority, private, associations, charities etc. Voluntary & community sector Domestic Violence Services |

FEATURES: Children with no additional needs
Children whose developmental needs are met by family, community and universal services. This section also applies to unborn children.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS: No assessment is required. Children should access universal services in a normal way.

N.B. Agencies to work to a 'whole family approach' and work with adult/children services appropriately.

N.B. Diversity issues, including linguistic difficulties should be considered.

For Information about Child Sexual Exploitation, see [Child Sexual Exploitation "Could you spot the signs?" Thresholds and Risk Assessment Tool](#)

EARLY HELP SERVICES WORKING ALONGSIDE UNIVERSAL SERVICES TO MEET A RANGE OF NEEDS (WHERE THE NEED IS NOT MET BY UNIVERSAL SERVICES) OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES WHO NEED SUPPORT

EARLY HELP (LOW TO MEDIUM CONCERN) – EXAMPLE INDICATORS

| Developmental Needs | Family and Environmental Factors | Parents and Carers | Key Services That May Provide Support At This Level |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Learning / Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional truanting or non-attendance Identified language and communication difficulties Few or no qualifications / NEET Short term exclusions or at risk of permanent exclusion, persistent truanting Education Health Care Plan No (or reduced) access to books, toys or educational materials <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not attaining developmental milestones including for speech and language Absence of medical explanation for poor growth trajectory Missed appointments – routine and non-routine Minor health problems which can be maintained in a mainstream school Disability requiring specialist support to be maintained in mainstream setting Physical and emotional development raising significant concerns Unmanaged chronic/recurring health problems Wetting and soiling issues unrelated to toilet training Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – see below <p>Social, Emotional, Behavioural, Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health or emotional issues not requiring specialist intervention Prone to offending behaviour and attitudes Early onset of offending behaviour or activity Coming to notice of police through low level offending Current or historical substance misuse Expressing wish to become pregnant at young age Sexually active with inconsistent use of contraception/pregnancy Early onset of sexual activity or at risk of sexual exploitation Poor self-esteem Demonstrates adult like sexual behaviour or knowledge Coming to notice of police on a regular basis but not progressed Fascination with fire or fire starter Received fixed penalty notice, reprimand, final warning or triage of diversionary intervention Evidence of regular/frequent drug use which may be combined with other risk factors | <p>Family and Social Relationships and Family Well- Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents/carers have relationship difficulties which may affect the child. To include issues around family complexity and role of fathers Parents/carers request advice to manage their child's behaviour Children affected by difficult family relationships or bullying Parent/carer is unable to meet child's needs without support Severity and history and/ or a current incident of domestic violence Risk of relationship breakdown with parent or carer and the child Low warmth high criticism Young carers, children of prisoners, periods of LAC Child appears to have undifferentiated attachments Transient lifestyle <p>Housing, Employment and Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcrowding Families affected by low income or unemployment. Young people at risk of homelessness Severe overcrowding, temporary accommodation, homeless, unemployment Transient lifestyle <p>Social and Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient facilities to meet needs e.g. transport or access issues Family require advice regarding social exclusion e.g. hate crimes, associating with anti-social or criminally active peers Limited access to contraceptive and sexual health advice, information and services | <p>Basic Care, Safety and Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent care e.g. inappropriate child care arrangements or young inexperienced parent Inconsistent care e.g. inappropriate child care arrangements or young inexperienced parent Parental learning disability, parental substance misuse or mental health impacting on parent's ability to meet the needs of the child Parental non-compliance with Early Help <p>Emotional Warmth and Stability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent parenting, but development not significantly impaired Concerns about parent/carer attachment <p>Guidance, Boundaries and Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of response to concerns raised regarding child Parent provides inconsistent boundaries or responses. Child exposed to adult sexual material | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal and targeted Youth crime prevention services. Targeted drug and alcohol information, advice and education, including harm reduction advice to support informed choices Health Education (FE, Early Years, Schools and Academies) Children's Centres & Early Years Educational psychology Education Welfare services Integrated Youth Support Services Voluntary & community services Family support services Midwifery services Housing agencies – local authority, private, associations, charities etc. Community Safety SEN services Specialist health or disability services YISP Youth Offending Team. Targeted drug and Alcohol |

- Significant low self-esteem
- Under 18 and pregnant
- Victim of crime including discrimination

- Family require support services as a result of social exclusion
- Parents socially excluded, no access to local facilities

services CAMHS

Self-Care and Independence

- Lack of age appropriate behaviour and independent living skills that increase vulnerability to social exclusion
- Lack of age appropriate behaviour and independent living skills, likely to impair development

- Family support services
- Voluntary & Community services
- Services at Universal Level
- Police
- Domestic Violence Services

FEATURES: Vulnerability – these children are of low to medium concern. Early Help services work alongside universal services to meet a range of needs (where the need is not met by universal services) of children, young people and families who need support. This section also applies to unborn children and children with additional needs.

Early Help services may work in partnership with statutory services to deliver a child's safety plan, e.g. Child In need Plan. Early Help services are delivered with the consent of families.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS: An Early Help assessment should be completed with the child to identify their strengths & needs and to gain specialist support where there is specialist single agency involvement. i.e.) YISP, YOS. This assessment will suffice for a standalone piece of work or become part of the overall EHA.

Depending on the level of concern, assessment / Early Help services are likely to be the most appropriate first step and may be used as supporting evidence to gain Early Help / specialist support. The Early Help assessment may also be completed to support child moving out of complex needs.

FGM: i) Health professionals – completed DoH FGM Risk Assessment indicates significant or immediate risk; ii) Other practitioners – seek advice from their agency's safeguarding advice line or relevant safeguarding lead

N.B. Agencies to work to a 'whole family approach' and work with adult/children services appropriately.

N.B. Diversity issues, including linguistic difficulties should be considered.

For Information about Child Sexual Exploitation, see [Child Sexual Exploitation "Could you spot the signs?" Thresholds and Risk Assessment Tool](#)

SPECIALIST SERVICES WORKING ALONGSIDE UNIVERSAL AND EARLY HELP SERVICES TO MEET THE COMPLEX AND/OR MULTIPLE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

SPECIALIST (HIGH CONCERN) – EXAMPLE INDICATORS

| Developmental Needs | Family and Environmental Factors | Parents and Carers | Key Services That May Provide Support At This Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Learning / Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronic non-attendance, truanting No parental support for education Permanently excluded, frequent exclusions or no education provision Home education where there are concerns/risks identified Additional risk factors present <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level disability which cannot be maintained in a mainstream setting Injury and bruising in babies and children who are not independently mobile Injury and bruising to immobile older children with disabilities Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – see below Serious physical and emotional health problems Escalation of self-harm Absence of medical diagnosis for persistent or recurring pain during urination and bowel movements Wetting and soiling accidents unrelated to toilet training; pain, discoloration bleeding or discharges in genitals, anus or mouth Physical and emotional development raising significant concerns Chronic/recurring health problems where needs are not being managed Breast ironing <p>Social, Emotional, Behavioural, Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging behaviour resulting in serious risk to the child and others. Failure or rejection to address serious (re) offending behaviour Known to be part of gang or neighbourhood group engaged in antisocial behavior Complex mental health issues requiring specialist interventions In sexually exploitative relationship Teenage parent under 16 Under 13 engaged in sexual activity Distorted self-image Significant concern re parental behaviour and risk factors where there is an unborn child Frequently go missing from home for long periods | <p>Family and Social Relationships and Family Well-Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspicion of physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect History and/ or a serious incident of domestic violence Domestic violence that put the child at risk of significant harm Parents or other family members are unable to care for the child Children who need to be looked after outside of their own family History and/ or a current incident of domestic violence Young carers, Privately fostered, children of prisoners, periods of LAC Chaotic and transient lifestyles <p>Housing, Employment and Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fixed abode or homeless. Extreme poverty Social and Community Resources. Child or family need immediate support and protection due to harassment/discrimination and no access to community resources | <p>Family and Social Relationships and Family Well-Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspicion of physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect Severity and history and/ or a serious incident of domestic violence Domestic violence that put the child at risk of significant harm Parents or other family members are unable to care for the child Children who need to be looked after outside of their own family History and/ or a current incident of domestic violence Young carers, Privately fostered, children of prisoners, periods of LAC Trilogy of Risk (Toxic Trio) <p>Housing, Employment and Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fixed abode or homeless. Extreme poverty <p>Social and Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child or family need immediate support and protection due to harassment /discrimination and no access to community resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Authority Children's Social Care Specialist health or disability services. Youth Offending Team CAMHS Supported by services operated at universal and Early Help levels Adult Mental Health services Education Welfare Housing agencies – local authority, private, associations, charities etc. Police Domestic Violence Services |

- Evidence of changing attitudes and more disregard to risk
- Young people experiencing harm through their use of substances
- Demonstrates adult like sexual behaviour or knowledge
- Mental health issues requiring specialist intervention in the community

Self-Care and Independence

- Severe lack of age appropriate behaviour and independent living skills likely to result in significant harm – e.g. bullying, isolation

FEATURES: Specialist services working alongside universal and Early Help services to meet the complex and/or multiple needs of vulnerable children and young people. Statutory services intervention such as specialist assessments (eg. CAMHS), Section 17 (Children in Need), Section 47/Child Protection/Look After Children, Youth offending. This section also applies to unborn children.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS: Statutory or specialist services assessment (NB an Early Help assessment must NOT replace a specialist assessment). The Early Help assessment can be used as supporting evidence to gain specialist / Early Help support. This will include specialist assessment for children and young people with complex needs that suffice such as MST, YOS, CAMHS.

FGM: i) Health professionals – completed DoH FGM Risk Assessment indicates significant or immediate risk; ii) Other practitioners – seek advice from their agency's safeguarding advice line or relevant safeguarding lead

N.B. Agencies to work to a 'whole family approach' and work with adult/children services appropriately.

N.B. Diversity issues, including linguistic difficulties should be considered.

For Information about Child Sexual Exploitation, see [Child Sexual Exploitation "Could you spot the signs?" Thresholds and Risk Assessment Tool](#)

Appendix B: The Early Help Assessment relevant to Leicester City

We have brought together our existing Early Help and prevention services into a consolidated 'Early Help Targeted and Specialist Services' offer.

Early Help services in Leicester are for children, young people and families whose needs are not being met by universal services but who do not need the majority of specialist services. They are for children of all ages and not just the very young. Early Help is not a new concept and, although the Council will continue to lead the Early Help offer, there is now a greater emphasis on staff in any agency working with children to provide direct support, signposting and co-ordination of agencies working with the family.

Definitions

Single Agency Response

Two or less unmet needs that can be met with a single agency response working alongside universal services (refer to Leicester City Council's single agency model for Early Help support at Appendix A).

Early Help Assessment

A co-ordinated multi-agency response led by an identified practitioner working with the family using a team around the family (TAF) approach (refer to Leicester City Council's Early Help Assessment model at Appendix B).

Eligibly Criteria for an Early Help Assessment

The eligibility criteria for an Early Help Assessment are defined as:

- A family has 3 or more needs that are likely to impact on outcomes for children and young people
- These needs are complex and are beyond the remit and capacity of a single agency response
- A co-ordinated multi-agency response is required working alongside universal services.

The Early Help Assessment (EHA)

The EHA is a shared assessment and planning framework, endorsed by Leicester Children's Trust partnerships as the baseline assessment to use across the trust workforce. It aims to help the early identification of children and young people's additional needs and promote coordinated service provision to meet them.

Request for targeted Early Help support

Targeted Early Help support from the Council can be delivered in two ways depending on the eligibility criteria met by the needs presented.

Single agency response

Cluster based child learning, family support or targeted youth support teams deliver Early Help targeted work with children, young people and families where there are two or less presenting needs requiring short term support and no multi-agency team around the family approach.

Who is the EHA for?

The EHA is aimed at children, young people and families with 3 or more complex needs that are not being met by their current service provision.

Why have an EHA?

Many practitioners will be working with families where they are already in a Lead Practitioner role supporting them with a range of issues liaising with a range of services but without a formalised process.

Whilst this can work well, the most effective way of supporting a family where there are multiple issues with more than one service involved is to coordinate those agencies to meet on a regular basis with the family included to develop an action plan with outcomes.

This approach enables the family to still have that one Lead Practitioner with everyone being clear on what their responsibilities are and a process in place to ensure plans are monitored with progress being made and outcomes achieved in a timely way.

How does the EHA operate?

There are four main stages in completing a common assessment: identifying needs early, assessing those needs, delivering integrated services and reviewing progress.

Which children, young people and families is EHA aimed at?

The EHA is aimed at children and young people with complex needs:

- Including unborn babies
- Generally up to the age of 18, but extended beyond 18 where it is appropriate to enable the young person to have a smooth transition to adult services (e.g. for young people with learning difficulties or disabilities, assessments can be carried out up to the age of 25)
- Who have needs that are not being met by their current provision
- Who would benefit from an assessment to help a practitioner understand their needs, determine whether other services should be involved in providing support and engage further services
- Who are particularly vulnerable (e.g. persistent truants, excluded pupils, sexually exploited children, victims of crime and young runaways)

The EHA is not appropriate for:

- The majority of children and young people who are progressing satisfactorily towards successful outcomes within universal services
- Situations where an immediate statutory or specialist assessment is needed or is the most appropriate way to determine support required
- A child or young person about whom there is concern that they may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering, harm. In such instances, Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Safeguarding Children Board procedures should be followed without delay:

<http://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

Consent

The request for targeted Early Help support is a voluntary assessment process and, as such, a child or young person and/or their parent/carer must give consent at the start of the process for the assessment to take place in the full knowledge of what will happen to this information (e.g. how it will be stored, who will have access to it).

Similarly, in instances where there is no targeted Early Help in place, but a referral to a specialist service is being considered, consent should always be sought from the child or young person and/or their parent/carer unless to do so would place the child at increased risk of significant harm.

Practitioners should be tenacious in their attempts to persuade parents/carers to give consent. The benefits and advantages should be explained clearly, as should the purpose of an EHA (i.e. it is a process to determine the most appropriate type of support required for a child/young person).

Early Help Response

This team are located with (statutory) Duty and Advice and are staffed by Family Support Workers. The purpose of the team is to ensure the seamless continuity of services/support to families and provide the bridge between statutory and support services.

Their role includes:

- Screening all EHA referrals and ensuring co-ordination and distribution of work to be passed out to locality/ cluster areas.
- Enabling appropriate advice to families in a crisis that are deemed to be below the threshold of social care and if required undertaking a short piece of work.
- Facilitating appropriate step down of cases.
- Ensuring that return interviews are completed for those young people reported missing from home.

- Ensuring information sharing with appropriate agencies.

In addition there are a range of additional mechanisms that offer Early Help support through the Early Help and Prevention Protocol as follows:

- Dedicated support for the completion and administration of Early Help Assessments
- Advice points based in cluster areas providing low level advice, short term non casework (2/3 sessions) and signposting
- Partnership Clinical Forums reviewing children and young people identified as vulnerable.
- Partnership MASP (Multi-Agency Support Panel) providing management oversight and decision making for cases across Early Help and Social Care that are stuck, high cost or need escalation.
- Governance arrangements with 6 x cluster based 0-19 Early Help Locality Partnerships accountable to the Citywide Early Help Strategic Partnership Board.

To seek advice, signposting or low level and short term support without having to undertake a request for targeted Early Help assessment:

| Locality Advice Points | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--------|---------------|
| NORTH WEST: | 0116 373 7350 | NORTH: | 0116 292 4580 |
| WEST: | 0116 373 7150 | EAST: | 0116 292 4547 |
| CENTRAL: | 0116 373 7144 | SOUTH: | 0116 225 220 |

If you do not know the cluster area that the family resides in, you can contact any Advice Point. Leicester City is exploring developing a more streamlined response by developing a one contact number approach.

To make a request for targeted Early Help support, which includes an Early Help Assessment:

For support with Lead Practitioner Role:

| Early Help Response Team |
|---|
| Tel: 0116 4545899/4545877 |
| Email: Early-Help@leicester.gov.uk |

| Lead Practitioner Support |
|---|
| Tel: 0116 4541694 |
| Email: EHA@leicester.gov.uk |

More information can be found at:

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/support-for-children-and-young-people/early-help/>

Appendix C: The Early Help Offer in Leicestershire – relevant to Leicestershire practitioners

What is Early Help?

'Early Help' is an umbrella term that describes the work of many universal services/ single agencies engaged with children and families (examples include NHS, Education, Housing, Libraries, Leisure and Voluntary sector services).

In Leicestershire all of these agencies recognise that **prevention and earlier intervention** is more cost effective and successful than later or more formal interventions. All are engaged in work that seeks to avert problem development, prevents the escalation of difficulties or the deterioration of circumstances which could adversely affect children, young people and families.

Preventative work in this way may be with an individual, with a family or can take a whole population approach. We often refer to 'universal' or 'open access' services which are available to all and can provide advice, guidance and support to families when they need it. There is usually no referral route or detailed collection of outcomes. For the vast majority of families this is the only help they will need. Examples of 'universal' services include:

- Childcare and education settings – so children can develop their intellectual and social skills
- Parks, playgrounds, sport and leisure activities – so children have a chance to exercise, socialise and have fun as they grow up
- General Practitioners (GPs), school nurses and health visitors – to promote health and well-being for everyone
- Police, Fire & Rescue services – educating families about keeping children safe
- Housing – so children and families can live in homes that are supportive of family life.

What is Leicestershire County Council's Early Help offer?

We have brought together our existing early help and prevention services into a consolidated 'Early Help and Family Support Service'. We are no longer using the language of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and have developed Early Help systems and processes.

The Early Help & Family Support service has a two-fold approach:

- Commitment to proactively working with all of our partners, including local communities, to support them in our shared goal to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families
- In addition, it will provide **targeted early intervention and support** to

those children, young people and families who are struggling with a range of additional needs and are more vulnerable to poor outcomes.

How do people access Leicestershire Early Help & Prevention services?

In Leicestershire access is via First Response Children's Duty. A simple 'request for service' form is available which practitioners and families can use. It is on the County Council website which then passes securely to First Response (our central front door).

You can find the form using this link:

<http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/social-care-and-supporting-families>

The key information needed includes a description of the circumstances causing the concern, likely outcome if nothing changes, and importantly what more needs to happen to improve the situation. You must have permission from the family and young person to refer. The First Response Children's Duty triage process will identify if the needs are most likely to require a coordinated multi-agency response, in which case the request will be considered as part of the multi-agency Locality Hub arrangements, otherwise the request will be sent directly to the appropriate single Early Help service whether this is within LCC or with a partner agency. The Locality Hubs are multi-agency meetings which happen on a regular (every 2 weeks) basis in each of the District/Borough Council areas. The purpose of these meetings is to consider the best response to families whose needs may be complex and multiple, and are likely to require some coordination.

Where professionals only require advice about a child's needs, **the First Response Children's Duty provides a professional advice phone number: 0116 305 5500.**

The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Board (LRLSCB) Multi-Agency secure Referral form (accessed here: <http://lrsb.org.uk/childreport>) must still be used for safeguarding concerns – in situations of risk and concern where you believe a social worker is required. These are situations where children are not at risk of immediate harm but are assessed as requiring specialist or targeted services.

Should a professional believe a child is at risk of **immediate harm and is suffering abuse**, you must not delay. Immediate contact must be made with either the allocated social worker or First Response on **0116 305 0005 for Leicester and Children's Duty on 01572 758407 for Rutland.**

In Summary:

- **First Response Children's Duty** is the central "front door" for social care and Early Help & family support services – for services requiring an Early Help, targeted or specialist response
- In the majority of cases, families only need some advice or a little extra support. At these times the professionals who know the family best, such as health professionals, community and voluntary sector professionals and school

staff, are the most appropriate people to offer advice and support to families and young people. Early Help and Family Support Services will support such professionals to strengthen their response

- Children and their families with more complex needs (requiring targeted services) can be referred to Leicestershire County Council services and for those who live in Rutland to the Rutland County Council Services, **with parental/carer consent**, using the Request for Services form
- Where there is a **safeguarding concern** which requires targeted or specialist services, but you do not feel the child is at risk of immediate harm, please make a formal referral for social work intervention through First Response, Children's Duty using the LSCB referral form
- Where you feel a child is **at risk of immediate harm**, do not delay. Call First Response on **0116 305 0005 for Leicestershire and 01572 758407 for Rutland Children's Duty**.

Appendix D: Rutland Early Help Strategy – relevant to Rutland practitioners

Rutland Early Help Strategy

Rutland County Council and its partners have agreed an Early Help Strategy which sets out Rutland's 'Early Help Offer' and informs the approach it is taking in working with children and families and the design of future services. Early intervention is crucial to ensure children, young people and families in Rutland have the chance to make the most of their lives. This is a critical role for children's services across the Children's Trust and the geographical area of Rutland and is a theme behind Rutland County Council's strategic commitment to building individual, community and economic resilience.

Whilst the Early Intervention Service in the People's Directorate of the Council has a key role in the provision of Early Help services – taking a lead in the delivery and commissioning of services - it also has a role as a partner working collaboratively and co-operatively within a system of services from the statutory, voluntary and community sector. It is also a facilitator – helping to strengthen the partnership and build capacity and confidence across the partnerships.

This Early Help Strategy in Rutland draws on existing best practice locally and nationally and a vision, shared by the partners of Rutland's Children's Trust, to improve outcomes for our children and young people.

Early Help or Early Intervention in Rutland means:

preventing the problems occurring – providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the early years through to teenage years:

preventing problems escalating – providing targeted Early Help before any social care intervention or adding value and collaboration to a social care intervention:

reducing the severity of problems – 'step down' from social care where the aim is to prevent re-escalation and further statutory intervention:

This Early Intervention Practice Manual and Early Help Assessment Guidance has been produced for all those working in children's services across Rutland, including those working in schools, early years, health, police, housing, inclusion, youth work and social care. It sets out our approach to supporting families across the levels of need and supports staff to understand:

- (a) The service model in which we work with children, young people and families.
- (b) The role of universal, targeted and specialist teams.
- (c) The range of services and interventions provided both directly and commissioned, to support children and families requiring Early Help.
- (d) The services and support provided in relation to Early Years funded education and childcare.
- (e) The systems and processes used within the services and for broader partnership activities.

(f) The partnerships vital to the Early Intervention service to support delivery.

The Early Help Assessment is the tool which will identify unmet need and the guide includes a comprehensive explanation of how and when to use it.

The aim of these documents listed above is to provide concise and clear guidance to enable consistency of practice across the workforce.

Rutland Children's Trust continues to prioritise its prevention and early support model to enable early identification and response to issues that arise in the lives of children and young people. Training is delivered to ensure that practitioners are able to use the process effectively and outcomes will be reviewed and evaluated to inform the development of the process. The documents and relevant forms are available by emailing the secure Early Help inbox – EarlyHelp@rutland.gcsx.gov.uk – and will soon be available for download on the Rutland County Council website.

Support and professional advice will be provided to help with practice issues by Rutland County Council's Early Help Co-ordinators in the Children's Services Duty and Assessment desk: childrensduty@rutland.gcsx.gov.uk, Telephone 01572 722577 ext 8407 and via the secure Early Help inbox: EarlyHelp@rutland.gcsx.gov.uk