



CHILDREN  
& FAMILY  
SUPPORT

# Warwickshire's Early Help Toolkit for Practitioners



For more information visit  
[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies)



Warwickshire  
County Council

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## Resources available

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- a. Poster for practitioners
  - b. Leaflet for parents
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# 1. What is Early Help?

Early Help is the term used in Warwickshire to describe all support offered to potentially vulnerable children, young people and their families. The purpose of early help is to put in the right support at the right time so that problems are less likely to escalate to a point where the child becomes vulnerable or in need. Early Help is sustainable so that problems are less likely to recur.

Early Help does not always mean early years. Although research shows that most impact can be made in those crucial first few years of a child's life, early help can be needed and put in place at any time and at any age.

All children, young people and families in Warwickshire are entitled to receive early help. This includes any signposting, guidance, support or service is offered as soon as a problem emerges or is likely to emerge.

This is not additional responsibility for practitioners but an essential part of the 'day job' for all people working with Children and Families.

## The responsibility for Early Help sits with all agencies

### Early Help is like an Ecosystem



We focus on the continuous development and improvement of our Early Help Ecosystem to align our offer with partners from Schools, Health, Police and the community and voluntary sector.

**The Key Principles of Warwickshire's Early Help strategy are outlined below:**

The Key Principles of Warwickshire's Early Help strategy are outlined below:

### Early help in Warwickshire means the right support at the right time



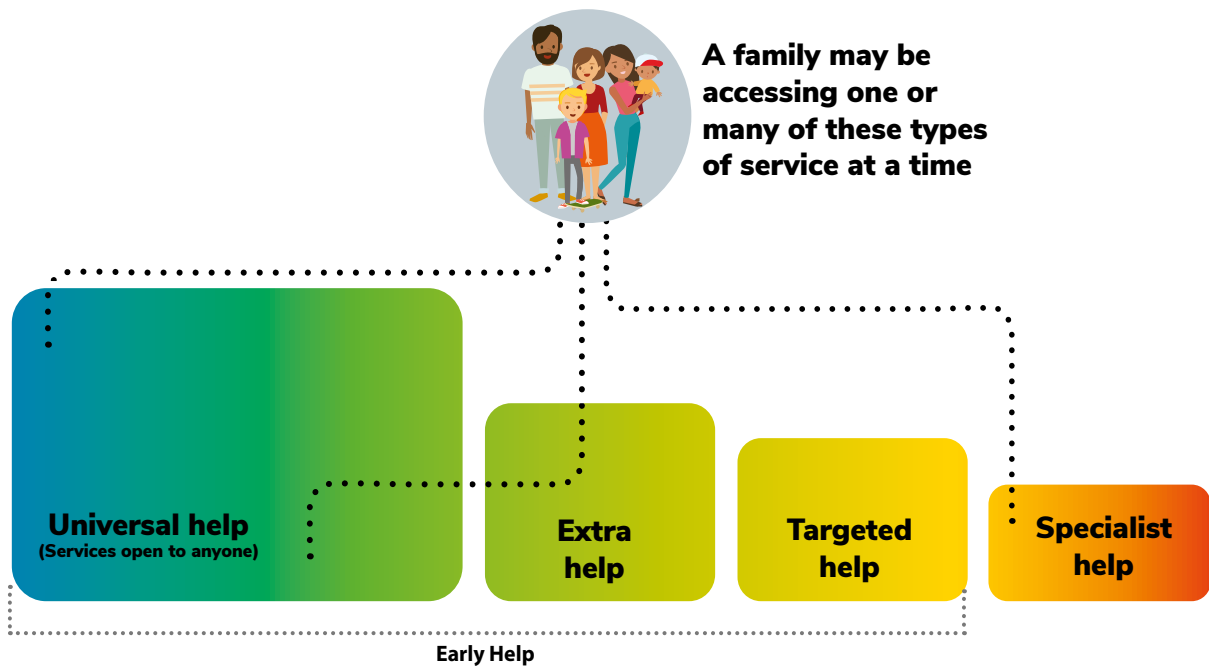
**In Warwickshire, Early Help for families is supported through universal access to services, for example:**

- Midwives
- Health Visitors
- Nursery and early years workers
- School staff & colleges
- School health and wellbeing
- Family support work drop ins
- Family Information Services
- Helplines
- Online resources
- Parenting programmes
- GPs and pharmacies

- There is also support through more targeted intervention, for example:
- Family Information Service brokerage
  - 1 to 1 work
  - Targeted Help Officers
  - RISE
  - Early help assessment: Pathway to change planning tool

Early Help is a **spectrum of support**, which means the help offered to a family can range from signposting to an informative website, right through to working with the family to complete a targeted assessment called Early Help Pathway to Change Plan. What is delivered is what is necessary to ensure that the family receive the right service at the right time. There are times that Early Help services will be accessed by families who are also involved in formal intervention. For example, a parent involved in formal intervention may also take part in a parenting programme which is an Early Help service.

Examples of the spectrum of support (stepped approach)



## 2. Children and Family Centres

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By offering accessible support through our Children and Family Centres we aim to prevent the needs of a family from escalating and becoming more complicated.

Children's & Family Centres deliver a range of early years services both in the centres and as outreach provision as commissioned by Barnardos, who run 13 of the 14 sites.

In the Children and Family Centre, there will be the opportunity to book a consultation with a practitioner which will best support the family's or practitioners needs. This could involve advice on levels of need, having difficult conversations or how to coordinate and manage a Family Support Meeting.

**There are 14 children and Families Centres in:**

- North Warwickshire: Atherstone,
- Nuneaton & Bedworth: Camp Hill, Stockingford, Riversely, St Michaels
- Rugby: Claremont, Boughton Leigh, Long Lawford
- Leamington & Warwick: Kingsway, Lillington, Westgate
- Stratford: Stratford, Lighthorne Heath, Alcester

Find your nearest Children and Family Centre here -  
[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies)

# 3. Family Information Service

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Warwickshire Family Information Service (FIS) has a pivotal role in the WCC Early Help strategy by providing easy access to information and universal access to direct advice and guidance.

FIS provides information, advice and guidance for families with children and young people aged from 0 - 25 who reside in Warwickshire.

A wide range of information is available via the FIS website, social media, outreach and by telephone helpline/email Monday - Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm.

FIS brokerage officers work with families on short term basis (one or two visits), supporting parents and carers to access services where there are barriers such as mental health, disability, language or complex needs. This is practical Early Help support typically around housing, finance and accessing available services.

**For further information contact Family Information Service (FIS):**

**Phone:** 01926 742274

**Email:** [fis@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:fis@warwickshire.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis)

**Twitter:** @WarksFIS

**Facebook:** Warwickshire Family Information Service

# 4. FIS Case Study

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## Situation:

- MASH referral to FIS helpline to offer housing support to a parent

## Challenge(s):

- The council had applied for a possession order; therefore the family were at risk of eviction.
- The parent had attended court and had been given a 14 day adjournment, which was coming to a close.

## Action(s):

- The telephone number we had been provided for the parent did not connect; FIS posted a letter asking the parent to contact FIS
- Two days later the parent emailed FIS to request support after receiving the letter, explaining the calls were not connecting as their phone had broken
- The parent explained they had planned to pay the outstanding rent arrears in the next two weeks, they were hoping the next court date would be after this time frame
- The council were not aware of the parent's plan; the parent said they had struggled to contact the council to explain this. With the parents' permission, FIS contacted the council to explain the parents plan.

## Result(s):

- The council explained as the parent was now engaging there would be no imminent court action. The council booked an appointment with the parent and a Financial Inclusion Support Officer to confirm the payment plan.
- Eviction prevented

### Customer feedback:

*"Thank you so much for your help, really look forward to hopefully resolving this issue and stopping any court action and hopefully making some agreement with the council going forward"*

# 5. Your responsibility as a practitioner and next steps

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## Speak, Do, Review

### Speak

- To the family – have a conversation with them
- To professionals in your network – e.g. Duty Family Support Worker

### Do

- Use available online resources and signpost to services
- Complete a Pathway to Change Plan with the family, if necessary
- Signpost the family to the local Family Support Worker / Children and Family Centre / Family Information Service
- Refer a family to MASH only if there is an immediate safeguarding concern

All of the information above is available on the website here - [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies)

### Review

- The next steps with the family
- The outcomes – Has the family made positive improvement?
- Whether further action needs to be taken

# 6. Completing the pathway to change planning tool

As a practitioner, if you have identified that a multi-agency action plan is needed for a family, you should seek consent from the family to complete an Early Help Assessment Pathway to change planning tool. This replaces the Early Help Single Assessment. From a direct conversation with the family, information is gathered in a whole family approach.

The Pathway to Change plan is built upon Restorative Practice principles and therefore the assessment is conducted alongside the family rather than on behalf of them.

Plans should identify strengths as well as needs and demonstrate that children, young people and their families have been part of the process:

Pathway to change \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Situation	Understanding	Actions
<p><b>What happened in the past?</b></p> <p><b>What triggers this now?</b></p> <p><b>Who is affected and how?</b></p>	<p><b>What is happening now?</b></p> <p><b>What keeps the issue going?</b></p> <p><b>What could happen if things don't change?</b></p> <p><i>How likely is this? 0-10 How serious is this? 0-10 (0 = not likely/serious at all - 10 extremely likely/serious)</i></p>	<p><b>What changes need to happen?</b></p> <p><b>How will we do it?</b></p> <p><b>What will it look like when it has changed?</b></p>

Conversations should involve shared decision making and outcomes of conversations should be clearly communicated to relevant practitioners to avoid anyone working in isolation.

Someone working with the family should act as the Lead Professional. They will lead on making sure the plan works, invite others back to review the plan as required and ensure responsibilities are clarified. Once improvement is made and sustained for an agreed period of time, services will reduce or end their involvement in order to maintain a family's independence.

## How to use the pathway to change



The blue boxes in the model record information about what is happening currently and what has happened in the recent and more distant past. There is a specific box to capture strengths and positive features of the situation.

When you are meeting with families and other professionals to gather information, it will not necessarily be helpful to work through the boxes in order; you will probably want to work backwards and forwards between them as the stories unfold. Remember to capture information about the context for the family, for example housing or low income.

Reflecting - recognise how we feel about something is essential in restorative practice. In this model it is structured by asking the questions who has been affected and how. It is important to recognise how you as a professional feel about the situation, although you will need to think carefully about what is helpful to include in the family's assessment. You may want to discuss this with your supervisor.

The orange boxes in the middle, described as 'understanding' correspond to functioning in Kolb's model. These are used to explore what is maintaining the current situation that we are worried about or want to change, and what harmful things could happen in the future, if risk, if change doesn't happen.

The final green boxes record the plan, and what we want the plan to achieve. Putting the plan into practice corresponds to the 4th stage in Kolb's model (active experimentation), when we review the plan, the cycle begins again.

We often talk about assessment as a continuous process. What this means is that if something about the situation changes, we need to identify who has been affected by the change, what our understanding is, and consider whether to revise the plan.

Pathway to Change is a model to support assessments which are restorative and rigorous. It builds on the practice of holding restorative conversations with families about what has happened, who has been affected and what needs to happen now. It enables us to think carefully about what is happening at the moment; that needs to change, what is preventing that change from happening, and what harm might happen in the future that we want to prevent (risk).



Pathway to change \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Situation	Understanding	Actions
<p><b>What happened in the past?</b></p> <p><b>What triggers this now?</b></p> <p><b>Who is affected and how?</b></p>	<p><b>What is happening now?</b></p> <p><b>What keeps the issue going?</b></p> <p><b>What could happen if things don't change?</b></p> <p><b>What positives and strengths are there?</b></p> <p><i>How likely is this? 0-10 How serious is this? 0-10 (0 = not likely/serious at all - 10 extremely likely/serious)</i></p>	<p><b>What changes need to happen?</b></p> <p><b>How will we do it?</b></p> <p><b>What will it look like when it has changed?</b></p>

# 7. Extra help

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Once a Pathway to Change Plan has been completed, there are many other ways that you can get further support:

**Extra support available in localities for professionals. There are many ways to get support once a EH:PTC has been completed.**

## Family Support Worker Network Meetings

- These monthly run locality family support worker network meetings aim to share best practices, skills, knowledge and support across the locality area from a variety of organisations. Run by the Early Help Family Support Team Managers, they will include restorative problem solving circles.

## Targeted Support Officers

Based in Children and Family Centres, the Targeted Support Officers will be available in their localities to attend complex (Orange level) family support meetings, and will offer advice, support or consultations on the completion and facilitation of Early Help: Pathway to Change action plans. They will also be responsible for the delivery of;

- Designated Safeguarding Lead Initial and Refresher training
- Early Help Training
- Other training that supports the network
- Targeted Help clinics in schools
- Locality network events for all Early Help practitioners

## Locality Early Action Partnership (LEAPS)

Facilitated by the Early Help Operations Manager, these quarterly, multi-agency locality groups will bring designated managers and practitioners together to:

- Focus upon solutions and support from LEAP members in relation to complex local situations
- Identify locality-based issues and, using data and analytics as evidence, implement appropriate actions
- The 5 borough/district groups (Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby, North Warwickshire, Warwick and Stratford) will report into a strategic group who will review progress on assigned actions around locality issues.

### Headteacher Forums

Delivered by the Service Manager for Early Help & Targeted Support; these monthly, 1-hour forums, share updates and news with Headteachers in their district areas regarding developments in children and families. In addition, speakers are organised from a variety of organisations to share best knowledge and update on practice development.

### Headteacher Coaches

Research conducted with Warwickshire DSLs identified the need to provide additional support to increase capability, capacity and confidence in DSLs across the county. The role will help schools to develop and embed an Early Help and Safeguarding infrastructure that links to the locality context and connect them to their locality partnership of practitioners. The headteacher coaches will also be able to support access 121 support as described below.

### 121 Support for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

- DSLs in schools and colleges who have experienced a challenging situation when supporting a child, young person or their family may be eligible to access counselling, coaching, group or reflective supervision through the new pilot offered through Early Help.
- Support to build confidence in Early Help processes and direct 121 support may be offered for identified DSLs to deal with issues such as trauma
- Local Team Managers from the Early Help will be a named contact for local DSLs and will support the development of strong locality partnerships.
- Headteacher Coaches are the points of contact to access this opportunity

### DSL training

A strong partnership has been developed between Education Services and Children and Families which has led to the integration of activities.

The Targeted Support Officer Team now deliver the updated DSL training, which has a fresh, and positive approach to the DSL role. The training gives DSLs the essential information they need to be successful in their role as it encompasses essential information in relation to the locality context not found elsewhere.

In addition to the DSL training, colleagues in Early Years settings, Schools and FE colleagues can access a variety of other training which has been formulated into a new Integrated Safeguarding Training Offer to enhance their ability to safeguard children and young people.

For more details the integrated training offer can be at Warwickshire Safeguarding webpages.

## Children's Social Care Services - Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- The MASH is there to ensure that “People in Warwickshire are safeguarded from harm, receiving the services they need, at the right time, effectively and efficiently”
- The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a partnership between Warwickshire County Council, Warwickshire Police, Warwickshire NHS health services and other key partner agencies working together to safeguard children and young people.
- When a professional, family member or member of the public is concerned about a child or young person is at risk of significant harm they can report it by completing a Multi-Agency Contact form (MAC).
- Practitioners who are worried about a child or family can access a consultation with a child and family practitioner in several ways to discuss their concerns.
- Depending on the severity of the concerns, this can happen with Family Support Worker, Targeted Support Officer, or for cases where there is a concern regarding significant harm, a social worker in the MASH.
- Schools have a dedicated worker located in the MASH to support them called the MASH Education Lead. This role enables schools to get advice and guidance on complex situations and can be contacted by telephoning 01926 418 608 or emailing [MASHeducationlead@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:MASHeducationlead@warwickshire.gov.uk)



# 8. Support for parents

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Parenting Support can be accessed **EASILY** and **RAPIDLY** through a variety of mediums, including outreach:

Parents can access support for their families easily in a range of ways. Parenting support, advice and guidance can be accessed through:

- **Online parenting support information** (via Family Information Service Website) and access to free online information or parenting courses such as Understanding Behaviour, Understanding Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences
- **The Family Support telephone line.** In each district all week (between 9-4pm), experienced Family Support Workers will be available in their localities to provide information, advice and support if not immediately, on a same day same day telephone consultation basis. This will enable a family or practitioner to have support straight away. **01926 412412**
- **Drops-ins** (no appointment necessary): Delivered in a range of community venues (approx. 2 drops ins where delivered in each locality every week) in addition to the Children & Family Centres, these short consultations can build upon the support offered in the Telephone consultations. (During the COVID 19, we have been delivering this support via the Family Support Line)
- **Online booking** for short courses and parenting programmes to enable easy accessibility at a range of times to suit
- **Short courses** - the ability to book onto short 1-hour courses to hear essential information about a range of subjects such as sleep, routines and boundaries and challenging behaviour
- **Parenting programmes:** More in-depth support delivered through a variety of parenting groups available to meet a variety of needs, including Special Education Needs and Disabilities
- **121 direct work:** available for short pieces of targeted work (such as sleep advice) and also available for more in depth support via an Early Help Pathway to Change plan

**Additional Information can be accessed on the Children and Families page.**

Parents can approach anyone working with them who will respond with help. They will do so by starting a conversation with a practitioner who should then be able to help identify what help should be provided.

### **Other emotional well-being and Mental Health support for parents:**

- Speak to your **midwife, health visitor** or **GP**. They can suggest support and treatments.  
Find your local GP
- **Perinatal Positivity** – “it can happen to dads and it can happen to mums” – a video using the real voices and experiences of women and men who have experienced mental health difficulties around the time of pregnancy, childbirth and beyond. The website also offers support and advice to parents, carers and professionals
- **Parents in Mind** – individual and group peer support for mums experiencing emotional mental health difficulties in pregnancy and the first year after birth. Note this operates in Kenilworth, Leamington Spa, Warwick and surrounding villages only.
- **Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT)** offers talking therapies for people experiencing depression or anxiety. You can self-refer.
- **Wellbeing for Warwickshire** – support services for aged 16 years and older.
- **Big White Wall** – free online support for all Warwickshire residents
- **Mental Health Matters** – telephone helpline providing emotional guidance and information

# 9. Support for Practitioners

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For contact details please visit: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies)

## Service Contacts by locality

### Marina Kitchen:

Service Manager for Early Help & Targeted Support:

[marinakitchen@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:marinakitchen@warwickshire.gov.uk)

### Operational Managers

Early Help & Targeted Support Operations Manager	<a href="mailto:staceygill@warwickshire.gov.uk">staceygill@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Targeted Youth & Support Operations Manager	<a href="mailto:davejones@warwickshire.gov.uk">davejones@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Initial Response Operations Manager	<a href="mailto:vickywoodfield@warwickshire.gov.uk">vickywoodfield@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Family Information Service Operations Manager	<a href="mailto:joannerolls@warwickshire.gov.uk">joannerolls@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>

### Locality Support

Headteacher Coach for Rugby, Warwick and Stratford [roygarner@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:roygarner@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Headteacher Coach for North Warwickshire,  
Nuneaton & Bedworth & Rugby

MASH Education Lead [MASHeducationlead@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:MASHeducationlead@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Early Help Social Worker (North Warwickshire,  
Nuneaton & Bedworth

Early Help Social Worker Rugby Area

Early Help Social Worker Warwick & Stratford

### North Warwickshire

Early Help Family Support Worker Team Manager [jenniepalmer@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:jenniepalmer@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Targeted Youth Team Manager [louisehargreaves@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:louisehargreaves@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Team Manager for Initial Response [richardhamblett@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:richardhamblett@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Targeted Support Officer [celestewatkins@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:celestewatkins@warwickshire.gov.uk)

### Nuneaton and Bedworth

Children and Family Support Worker Team Manager [naomibradley@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:naomibradley@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
Targeted Youth Team Manager [louisehargreaves@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:louisehargreaves@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
Team Manager for Initial Response [richardhamblett@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:richardhamblett@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
Targeted Support Officer [catherineamos-hirst@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:catherineamos-hirst@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
[adambindley@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:adambindley@warwickshire.gov.uk)

### Rugby

Children and Family Support Worker Team Manager [markroden@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:markroden@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
Targeted Youth Team Manager [holliehutchings@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:holliehutchings@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
Team Manager for Initial Response [zoeaton@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:zoeaton@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
Targeted Support Officer [alisontweedale@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:alisontweedale@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
[ninamankoo@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:ninamankoo@warwickshire.gov.uk)

### Warwick

Early Help Family Support Worker Team Manager [joywood@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:joywood@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
Targeted Youth Team Manager [holliehutchings@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:holliehutchings@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
Team Manager for Initial Response [beverleyschofield@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:beverleyschofield@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
Targeted Support Officer [amycoopertutton@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:amycoopertutton@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
[christalrudduck@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:christalrudduck@warwickshire.gov.uk)

### Stratford

Early Help Family Support Worker Team Manager [alisonirvine@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:alisonirvine@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
Targeted Youth Team Manager [holliehutchings@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:holliehutchings@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
Team Manager for Initial Response [beverleyschofield@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:beverleyschofield@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
Targeted Support Officer [charlottelloyd@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:charlottelloyd@warwickshire.gov.uk)

