



CHILDREN  
& FAMILY  
SUPPORT

# Warwickshire's Early Help Approach



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Warwickshire  
County Council

# Warwickshire's Early Help Approach

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



Our **Early Help Strategy 2018–2023** sets out our partnership vision for Early Help in Warwickshire. It is based on national evidence and what local families have told us they want and need. Our strategy represents the commitment made by all organisations to making this happen. This document has been written primarily for professionals working within Early Help and related services but should also be accessible to parents. It can be accessed through the Warwickshire [Early Help page](#)

# 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 reoccur.

'Early Help' refers to all the support available to children, young people and families before formal intervention (such as when children are placed on a child in need or child protection plans or taken into the care of the council).

This includes universal services that are designed to improve outcomes for all, such as Children and Family Centres, open access youth services and health visiting. While early help is led by local authorities, the local offer usually includes the work of a wide range of agencies, including: the health system; schools; the police; and the voluntary and community sector.



## Early Help Ecosystem

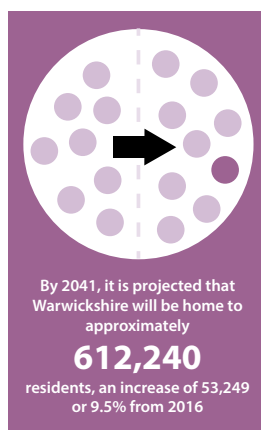
Support services available to children and families in Warwickshire is like an ecosystem. To provide families with the best chance of success, local authority services, commissioned partners, community groups and third sector organisations must work together. Locality-based partnerships are essential for identifying a family's strengths and needs so that the most appropriate help for that family can be identified at the earliest possible time

## **Key principles of Early Help Ecosystem in Warwickshire**

- Our Early Help Partnership encourages practitioners to see families and communities in terms of their strengths to fully understand and respond to their needs
- We focus on the continuous development and improvement of our Early Help Ecosystem; to align our offer with partners from Schools, Health, Police, as well as the voluntary and community sector
- We focus on preventing needs from escalating by offering an accessible support through our Children and Family Centres
- We focus on a strengths-based approach, supporting families to build resilience by linking with appropriate community resources
- We focus on data and evidence to ensure that what we deliver is based on community need. A fundamental part of this is listening to the voices of children and families
- We will be clear and focused on the outcomes we expect and how we measure against them.

# The Local Context in Warwickshire

## Population



Warwickshire will need to prepare to deliver services to a greater number of residents over the next 20 years. The number of permanent residents is projected to be 612,240 by 2041, which is a 9.5% increase since 2016. Over this time, the number of dependants (0-14s and 65+) will increase from 66 for every 100 working-age adults, to 75 dependents for every 100 working-age adults.

The school-age population is estimated to increase by 3.0% by 2025, to approximately 93,550 children aged 4-17. This will increase the demand for school places and services that support the needs of children. Conversely, there is estimated to be a 3% decrease in 0-3-year-olds over this time period.

Most growth in the total population is projected to take place in Rugby (+4.5%) followed by Nuneaton & Bedworth (+2.8%). The population in Stratford is likely to decline overall by 0.7%, with a 7.4% decrease in the 0-3 age group. Warwick is the only district/borough where the population of 0-3-year-olds is expected to increase (by 1.4%).

## Housing



The demand for housing in Warwickshire is rising. Between 2018 and 2025, the number of households is projected to increase by 4.1%, to 250,123 homes. The largest growth is projected in Rugby with 2,498 extra households, and the lowest in Warwick with 1,832 extra households. However, when taking new housing stock into account, this is likely to be an underestimation, with proposals for 56,000 new houses across Warwickshire by 2033.

During this period, the demand for private rentals is also predicted to increase, with 25% of households renting by 2025. This will put pressure on rent levels, security of tenure and housing quality, which is likely to negatively impact vulnerable renters. In the social rental sector; housing stock, reduced incomes, and welfare reform will have a compounding effect year on year in the most deprived areas.

Statutory homelessness in Warwickshire is currently above the England average (3% of households in Warwickshire, compared with 2.4% in England), and is likely to continue to rise due to these housing and population pressures.

## Health



In 2017/18, 62% of Warwickshire adults, 32% of year 6 pupils, and 22% of reception age children were classified as overweight or obese. National trends suggest these figures will rise by 2025.

Hospital admissions for alcohol specific conditions for under 18s is above the England average and increasing. It is likely to be over 50 admissions per 100,000 by 2025. Admissions to hospital for unintentional/deliberate injuries is also above the England average for 0-14s, at 118.3 admissions per 10,000 (England is 96.4)

Mental health figures are above the national average in Warwickshire, although both the all age suicide rate (11.3 per 100,000) and hospital admissions for self-harm for 10-24-year olds (477.1 per 100,000) reduced in 17/18.

In April 2019, there were 2,411 young carers (0-25) registered with Warwickshire Young Carers. Of these, 62% are aged 16 and under. With an average of 360 new referrals a year, support for this age group is predicted to more than double by 2025 to 3,658 young people.



## Education

An estimated 3% increase in the school-age population will put pressure on school places. Demand for primary school places is likely to exceed supply in 19 planning areas across Warwickshire, and demand for secondary school places is likely to exceed supply in 15 planning areas. In Rugby North, the forecast suggests 38% more pupils than school places by 2025/26.

In 2019, school readiness, GCSE results, and the number of NEETs are currently all above the England average, and improving. 72% of reception aged children were achieving a good level of development, 47.8% of pupils gaining 5 A\*-C equivalent, and 3.8% of 16 and 17-year-olds recorded as NEET.

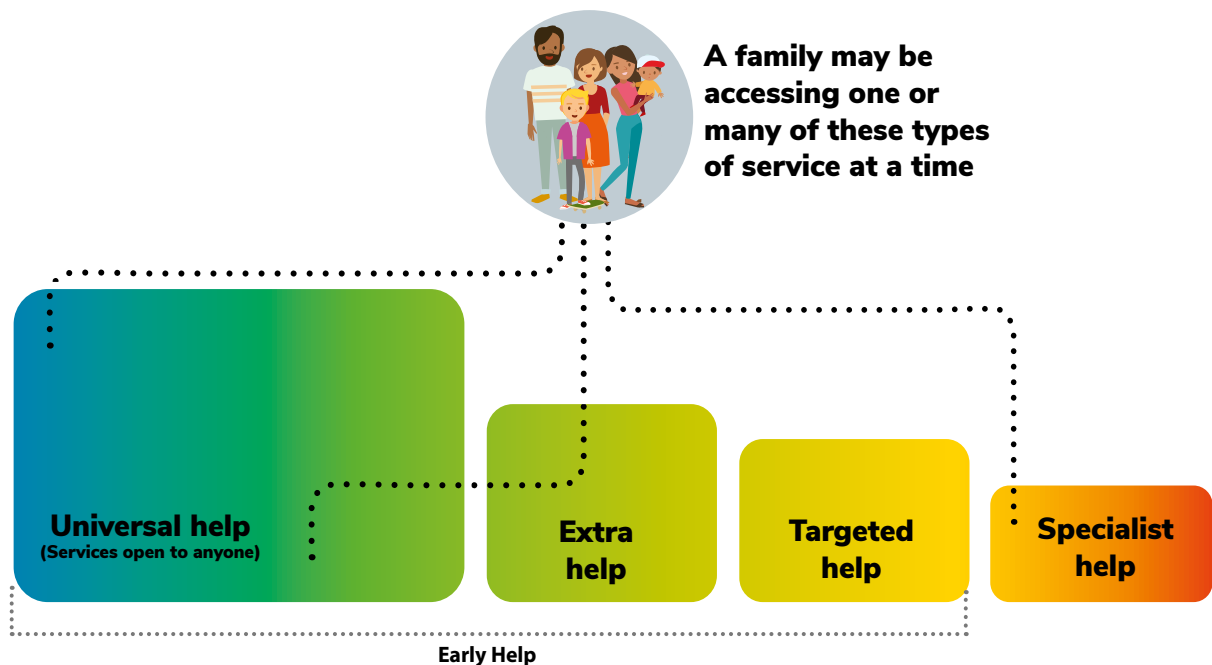
In 2018, there was a 28-point attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, 11% of pupils were eligible and claiming free school meals, and 15% of pupils were receiving support for a Special Educational Need. That is 12,191 pupils. Demand for specialist provision is forecast to increase by 20% by 2022/23, with a projected extra 259 specialist places needed for vulnerable and at-risk learners.



## The spectrum of support (Stepped Approach)

In Warwickshire, we have developed a stepped approach to Early Help services. This means that families and practitioners can identify what support is available to them at the level that best meets their needs.

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 an assessment called the Early Help Pathway to Change Plan. This is to ensure that families receive support from the right service at the right time.



All children, young people and families in Warwickshire are **entitled** to receive Early Help. It means any **signposting, guidance, support or service** offered as soon as a problem **starts** to emerge, or when it is very likely that a problem will begin to emerge. This is not additional responsibility but an essential part of the 'day job' for all people working with Children and Families.

Families can **approach anyone working with them** who will **respond with help**. They will do so by starting a conversation with the family to help identify what help they require and identify how help should be provided.

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**.

Early Help (**signposting, guidance, support** or **services**) refers to all the support available to children, young people and families before formal intervention (such as when children are placed on a child in need or child protection plans or taken into the care of the council). However, there are times that Early Help services will be accessed by families who are involved in formal intervention level, such as a group parenting programme. In addition, Early Help is also an important part of a child or young person's 'step down' from being vulnerable or having been in formal interventions, such as Child in Need plans.

Practitioners should have conversations safely within their agency information sharing protocols that are recorded to ensure that all the agreed detail has been captured, confirmed and shared.



# Stepped Approach to Services

## What support is available to children, families and practitioners?

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### Family Information Service

Warwickshire FIS has a pivotal role in WCC Early Help strategy by providing easy access to information and universal access to direct advice and guidance. FIS also provides a vital pathway for Warwickshire's Children and Families Front Door (Front Door) to ensure that callers whose needs are not severe enough to require statutory input from Children's Social Care receive appropriate information and support.

Whilst it is vital to ensure easy access to up to date digital information, it is a key priority for the service to ensure families that are unable, or do not wish to, access services digitally can also access information and signposting support by alternative methods as early as possible. FIS facilitates this via telephone and e-mail helpline, outreach events at targeted locations throughout the County. They also provide 1:1 targeted support for families in their own homes via the FIS brokerage service. This effective early intervention delivers better outcomes for everyone.

### The service provides the following:

#### Helpline

Family Information Service (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.

The local rate telephone number and central e-mail address gives families and professionals working with families the opportunity to seek impartial information through a trained member of staff on a variety of subjects which include finance, SEND, housing and family relationships.

#### Online

FIS provides a comprehensive suite of webpages to enable families and professionals to access information on a wide variety of subjects. Daily updates via FIS Facebook and Twitter pages deliver information that is relevant for families living in Warwickshire. A fortnightly electronic newsletter is also distributed. Organisations both within and outside the council use our pages to promote information and events.

FIS manages an integrated online system where all Ofsted registered childcare is listed. Families looking for childcare can either conduct their own searches or FIS can search on their behalf to ensure families residing in Warwickshire have access to appropriate childcare to meet their needs.

## Brokerage

FIS brokerage officers work with families on short term basis (one or two visits), delivering timely, focused, interventions assessed on the individual needs of families within Warwickshire. Support offered enables 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.

## Children and Family Centres

Children and Family Centres deliver a range of provision both in the centres and as outreach provision. Barnardo's are commissioned by Warwickshire County Council to manage and run 13 sites across the county with St Michael's running 1 centre in Bedworth and providing outreach for the wider Bedworth community. Services are offered from 0-19 years of age and up to 25 for those with additional needs.

There are 14 children and Families Centres:

- **North Warwickshire Borough:** Atherstone
- **Nuneaton & Bedworth District:** Camp Hill, Stockingford, Riversely, St Michael's
- **Rugby Borough:** Claremont, Boughton Leigh, Long Lawford
- **Warwick District:** Kingsway, Lillington, Westgate
- **Stratford District:** Stratford, Lighthorne Heath, Alcester

Timetables can be found on the Barnardo's and St Michael's Children and Family Centre Facebook pages. Additional information can be accessed on the [Children and Family Centres page](#).

## Parenting Support

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 Website) and access to free online parenting courses for 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. This will enable a family or practitioner to have a same day telephone consultation.
- Online booking for short courses and parenting programmes to enable easy accessibility
- Short courses - the ability to book onto short 2-hour courses in 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](#).

## Targeted Youth Support

Targeted Youth Support will be delivering 4 short courses in secondary schools. The courses are 4 x 1-hour sessions and are for groups of 6 young people.

### Sharp Edge

Focusing on peer group pressure and knife crime. This course would be useful for young people who you feel are at risk of being involved in antisocial behaviour out of school

### Managing Feelings

Learning skills on how to manage anger and exploring reasons behind behaviours. This course would be useful for young people who are struggling to keep it together in class

### Respectful Relationships

Looking at healthy relationships by exploring gender socialisation, personal rights and boundaries. This course would be useful for young women who might be a risk of being in a controlling relationship and young men who have a stereotyped idea of how men should behave

### Digital Tattoo

Exploring issues around social media and Child Sexual Exploitation. This course would be useful for young people who may be struggling to manage their social media presence and need support in setting themselves some safer boundaries

## Other TYS services

### Health store

A drop in project for young people based in Nuneaton and Atherstone. This is sexual health support for young people where they can access NHS Contraceptive Nurses.

### Detached Youth Work sessions

A model of youth work practice targeted at young people on their own territory, such as streets, parks and shared open spaces. Participation is voluntary and on the terms of young people. The model is very successful with over 40 young people engaging per session with workers.

### Summer Hubs

Young people who have been identified as needing extra support over the holiday period and can be referred into the Summer Hubs. Food and positive activities along with support offered by qualified youth workers.

### 1-2-1 offer

Sessions to support a young person making changes in their life. Young people are involved in the referral process and have chosen to seek support from a youth worker. **Referrals are only from social workers and family support workers.**

### Warwickshire Youth Council

Warwickshire young people vote for nominated young people to represent them. They meet monthly at Shire Hall and have the responsibility of campaigning and liaising with bodies of power on behalf of young people.

### Well Being Projects

Linked to 121 work, identified young people take part in weekly group support. Group work and activities enable young people to develop confidence and cope with anxieties.

### Youth Clubs

Targeted Youth Support run two youth provisions, Camp Hill in Nuneaton and Lillington in Leamington Spa. The projects are run in age groups and offer a wide variety of activities and support.

Information can be accessed through the [Targeted Youth Support page](#)

# Services commissioned by Warwickshire County Council

## Health Visiting Service

The Health Visiting Service offers a wide range of support to parents, from the ante-natal period until the child starts school. The universal service offer consists of 5 mandated contacts: ante-natal, up to 28 days, 6-8 weeks, 9 months and 2 years. If a family has needs identified that cannot be met through the universal offer, they will be offered additional support through the Universal Plus and/or Universal Partnership Plus offer. Additional support includes:

- The Family Nurse Partnership programme for teenage mothers
- Baby Steps parenting programme
- Listening visits for mental health
- Support for weight management through the Henry 1:1 programme
- Stop smoking in pregnancy
- Breastfeeding

For further information please visit [SWFT](#)

## School Health & Wellbeing Service

Once children reach school age, they (and their families) are supported by the School Health & Wellbeing service. Like the Health Visiting service, support is provided at a universal level to all families, with additional support for those families who need it. The universal offer includes a health needs assessment in reception, year 6 and year 9, as well as heights and weights measurement in reception and year 6. Additional support includes:

- Parent workshops, e.g. toileting
- Family weight management programmes
- 1:1 and group support, e.g. behaviour, emotional and mental health

For further information please visit [Compass – School Health and Wellbeing Service](#)

## Compass - Children and Young People's Substance Misuse Service

Compass provides a substance misuse service for children and young people with an extended offer to those between the ages of 18 and 25 years. Working closely with schools and in local community locations on an outreach, education and learning and development basis, the Service offers prevention and early intervention services as well as group sessions for those involved in using drugs and alcohol.

For further information please visit [Compass – Children and Young People's Substance Misuse Service](#)

### **RISE Community Offer**

Information sessions at the Community Hubs will include a presentation of a topic, with refreshments available before and after, with a chance to meet other parents. After the presentation, parents will have the opportunity to meet other parents and to book a consultation with a RISE professional later in the morning or the following week – depending on availability.

For more information visit [RISE](#)

### **RISE Early Help Dimensions Tool**



The Dimensions Tool is a web-based app that will help you to find wellbeing support in the Coventry and Warwickshire area, that is specific to your needs, or someone else's needs. The tool will tell you about relevant advice, support and local interventions that may be helpful, after you have answered a series of questions. The Dimensions Tool is free to use and has been developed in conjunction with parents and carers, referrers and our clinical staff. For more information and to complete the Dimensions Tool click [here](#).

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

More emotional wellbeing and mental health support for parents can be found online at [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mentalhealth](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mentalhealth) or [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/children-families/help-new-expectant-parents](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/children-families/help-new-expectant-parents)

# Multi Agency Early Help

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## Early Help: Pathway to Change Plan

When it has been identified that a multi-agency Early Help action plan is needed, the Practitioner should seek consent to complete an Early Help: Pathway to Change Plan.

This replaces the Early Help Single Assessment to provide a less complicated and restorative, whole family plan. Practitioners will have direct conversations with families, working with them to identify strengths first and then the needs of the children, young people and their families so that they are the focus of the process from the beginning.

To access the Early Help: Pathway to Change Plan and associated documents, visit the [Warwickshire Early Help page](#)

When completing an Early Help: Pathway to Change Plan, conversations should involve shared decision making; 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. This should be the most appropriate individual for that family. They will ensure that outcomes are SMART, responsibilities are clarified, and plan review meetings are coordinated with appropriate agency representation present.

Once improvement is made and sustained for an agreed period, services will reduce or end their involvement in order to support families to maintain their independence.

# Extra support available in localities for professionals

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## 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 formally undertaken by the Education Safeguarding Team.

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 [\[insert link here\]](#)

### **Early Help Social Workers**

- The service will benefit from 3 Early Help Social Worker posts for a pilot of 1 year
- Support from Early Help Social Workers will expand the skill set and will provide direct consultation to practitioners in the network in relation to Early Help level Children and Families, focusing on Targeted Help level (Orange Level).
- In addition, there may be occasions they will also deliver appropriate direct intervention to families to prevent escalation to Childrens social care.

### **Locality Early Action Partnership (LEAPS)**

Facilitated by the Early Help Operations Manager, these monthly, 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.

### **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. Facilitated 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

### Targeted Help Clinics in schools

- Targeted Support Officers can organise clinics in designated Early Years settings, schools and colleges to provide support and guidance for Lead Professionals on complex open Early Help: Pathway to Change Plans.
- They will support professional anxieties for Lead Professionals in school around complex and challenging cases.

### Children's Social Care Services - Warwickshire Children & Families Front Door (Front Door)

- The Front Door 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 Front Door 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 Front Door.
- Schools have a dedicated worker located in the Front Door to support them called the Front Door Education Lead. This role enables schools to get advice and guidance on complex situations and can be contacted by telephoning **01926 414 144** or email [TriageHub@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:TriageHub@warwickshire.gov.uk)

# The Right Support at the Right Time



## REMEMBER

**EARLY HELP** can provide tailored, preventative support. Contact them when you first think a child or family might be struggling, to help avoid a problem becoming a crisis.

If you need to talk through the right course of action call the **DSL INFOLINE** for advice.

As well as providing urgent help, **Front Door** will support with specialist help for disabled children.

## Which service is right for the child?

### Early Help

Call:

**01926 412412**

#### WHEN

The situation would be improved with additional support for the child or family. To help prevent a problem becoming a crisis.

#### WHY

You may be concerned about poor school attendance, substance abuse, the child is a young carer, or if the family is experiencing financial problems or they would benefit from parenting support. Call for easy and rapid access to support, and signposting to a range of specialists.

### DSL Helpline

Call:

**01926 418608**

#### WHEN

The situation is complex, or you are concerned about a child's safety or welfare – but they are not in immediate risk of harm.

#### WHY

If you are uncertain and want some advice before deciding on the best course of action.

## Only call the Children & Families Front Door...

### FRONT DOOR

Call:

**01926 414144**

#### WHEN

You have an urgent or ongoing safeguarding concern and immediate action is needed.

Contact the Front Door helpline directly or submit the contact form. The Team will assess the concern and will respond to you.

#### WHY

You feel the child may be at risk of harm, or of exploitation, or they have significant or ongoing mental health problems.

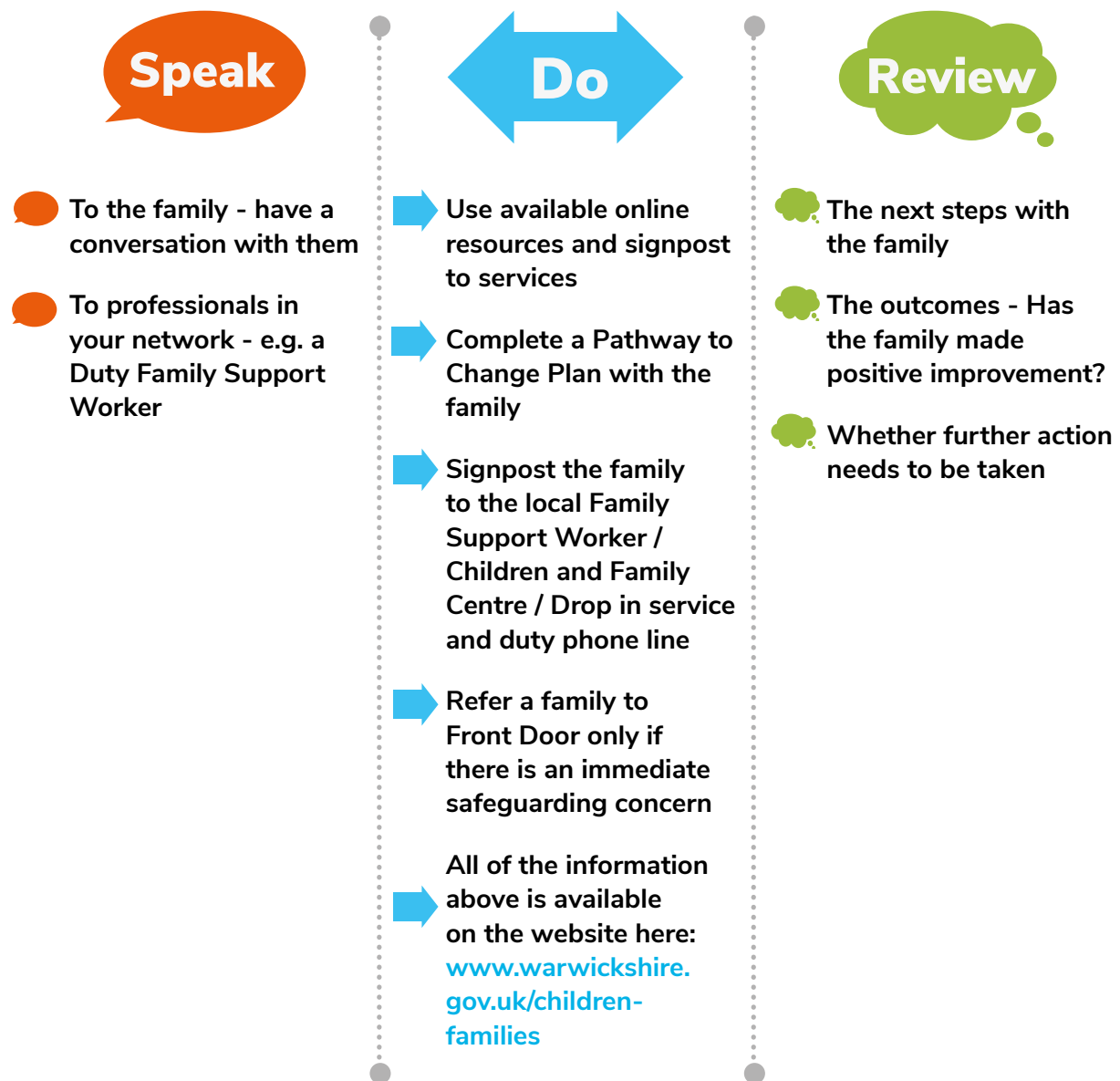
#### OR

A disabled child needs a specialist social care assessment.



# What to do to support a family with Early Help

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# Service Contacts by locality

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**Marina Kitchen**  
Service Manager for Early Help & Targeted  
Support Services  
marinakitchen@warwickshire.gov.uk

**To view contacts visit:**

[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/children-families/early-help-warwickshire/3](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/children-families/early-help-warwickshire/3)

or scan the QR code.



