



CHILDREN
& FAMILY
SUPPORT

Warwickshire's Early Help Toolkit for Practitioners



For more information visit
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies



Warwickshire
County Council

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Resources available

- 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.

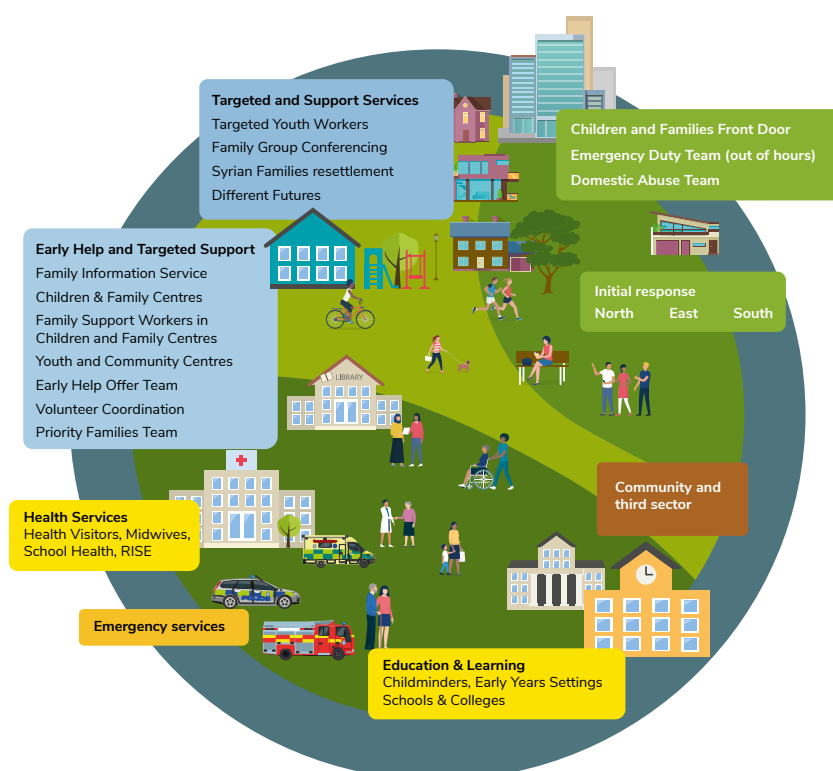
Early Help does not always mean early years. Although research shows that most impact can be made in those crucial first few years of a child's life, early help can be needed and put in place at any time and at any age.

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:

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

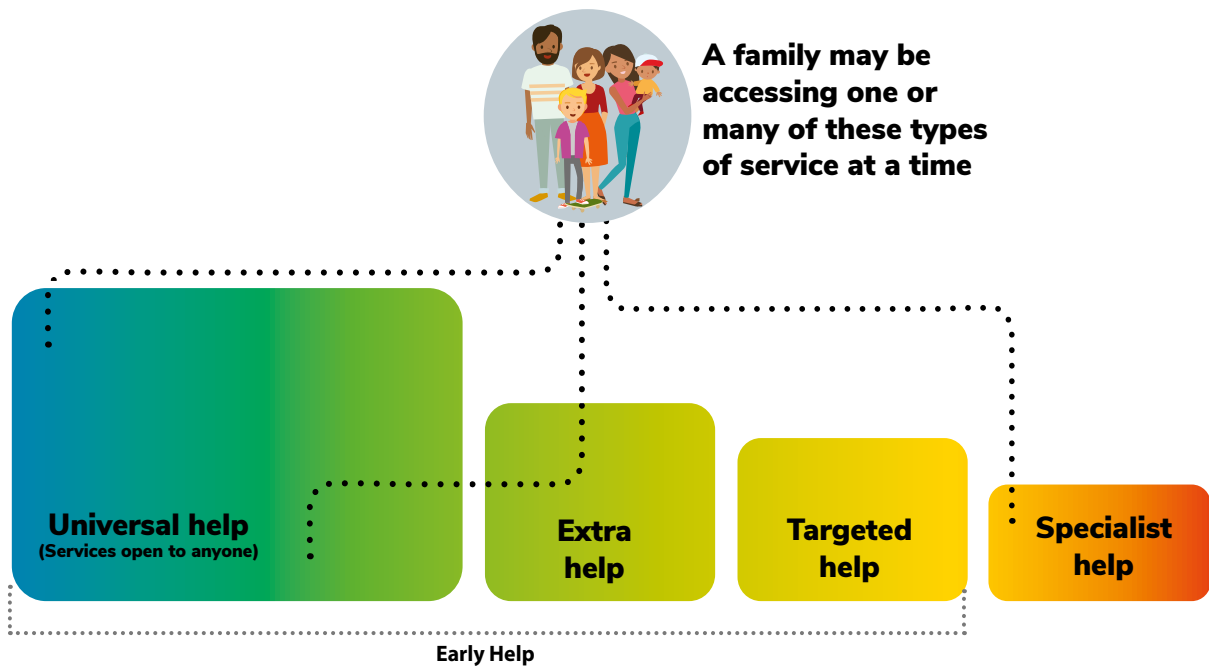


In Warwickshire, Early Help for families is supported through universal access to services, for example:

- 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

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

3. Family Information Service

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.

Examples of when FIS support is beneficial can include:

- Family relationships
- Finance
- Housing
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Childcare
- Health and wellbeing services
- Grants/charity funding for families.
- Early help assessment: Pathway to change planning tool

This effective early intervention delivers better outcomes for everyone.

For further information contact Family Information Service (FIS):

Phone: 01926 742274

Email: fis@warwickshire.gov.uk

Website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis

Twitter: @WarksFIS

Facebook: Warwickshire Family Information Service

4. Case Study

Situation:

- Children and Families Front Door 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

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 the Children and Families Front Door

All of the information above is available on the website here -
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 a 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 _____ Name _____ Date _____




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

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.

Pathway to change _____ Name _____ Date _____



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

7. Extra help

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 Children & Family Centre FSW 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 offer advice and support via phone (duty line also available), email or consultations on the completion and facilitation of Early Help Pathway to support plans. They will also be responsible for the delivery of the Targeted Help Clinics in schools.

Locality Support Officers

- Based in Children and Family Centres, Locality Support Officers will be responsible for the delivery of the LEAP groups, partnerships / networks in the areas and the associated action plans. They will deliver multi agency training and problem solving circles.

Targeted Help Clinics in schools

- Targeted Support Officers will organise bi monthly clinics in designated Early Years settings, Schools and Colleges to support Lead Professionals with a number of open Early Help: Pathway to Change Plans to provide support and guidance, specifically for complex situations.
- To support professional anxiety and debriefing for professionals with challenging cases.

Locality Early Action Partnership (LEAPS)

- Based upon the principles of Restorative Practice Problem Solving circles, these monthly multi agency locality groups will bring designated practitioners together to:
- Focus upon solutions and support from LEAP members in relation to complex situations:
- Identify and act upon locality based issues, using data and analytics as evidence

121 Support for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

- Support for DSLs in Early Years settings, Schools and College staff to build confidence in Early Help processes and to provide direct 121 support for identified DSLs to deal with issues such as trauma
- A local Team Managers from the Initial Response team will be a named contact for local DSLs and can attend DSL network meeting to develop strong locality partnerships.

Early Help Board

- The 5 district groups will report into this strategic group and will review progress and monitor the delivery of actions to address locality based issues.

Children's Social Care Services - The Children and Families Front Door

- The Front Door is 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 a number of 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.



8. Support for parents

Parenting Support will be available through a variety of mediums, including outreach:

- **Online parenting support information** (via Family Information Website)
- **Duty Family Support Worker** in each district all week (9-4pm). This will enable a family or practitioner to have a same day telephone consultation regarding parenting or behaviour concerns
- **Short courses** - the ability to book onto short 2 hour courses in a range of subjects such as Sleep, routines and boundaries, challenging behaviour and home conditions
- **Parenting group:** A variety of parenting groups available to meet a variety of needs
- **121 work:** available via an Early Help Pathway to Change plan, targeted support to meet short term needs

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:

Other emotional wellbeing and mental health support for parents can be found from the following links:

- [Help for expectant and new parents](#)
- [Mental health and wellbeing](#)

8. Support for Practitioners

Service Contacts by locality

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

or scan the QR code.



