



One Minute Guide

Early Help

August 2024



What is Early Help and why it is important to children and families?

Early help is not a service provided by one agency but is an approach that services adopt with many stakeholders working together to produce an early help offer. The Early Help Offer (system) is a network of services, processes and interactions that aim to help children, young people, and families at the earliest opportunity.

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare and well-being of children than responding later and can also prevent further difficulties and struggles arising in the child, young person, and family's life.

The help should be needs led with support and empowerment from universal and targeted services.

Early help identifies those families that may need support and signposting to help, at any stage in a child's life when these needs cannot be met from within the family network, universal and community services alone.

An enhanced single agency approach should always be considered, but at times a collaborative multi-agency approach across agencies and partners will be required to prevent escalation and provide families the help that they need.

Early help support should enable families to build on their strengths, promote resilience to sustain positive changes and enable them to find their own solutions in the future. Understanding a family's own support networks of family and friends who can help and build a family's resilience will enable sustainable positive outcomes.

Early help can offer children the support needed to reach their full potential. It can improve the quality of a child's home and family life, enabling them to perform better at school, support their mental health and develop skills that can prepare them for adult life. Providing timely support is vital. A quality early help offer will prevent continued challenges escalating.

Coventry's Vision for Children, Young People and their Families

Early Help services can make a real difference to a child's life from providing opportunities to give every child the best start in life, and enabling all children, young people, and parents to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives. Early Help services must work collaboratively to ensure that every child, young person and family have relevant support and interventions delivered at the right time, in the right place, by the most appropriate professional and service.

Universal, Targeted, Specialist

Universal, targeted and specialist services are available to families that have different levels of needs. Families may need to access one, two or all three types of services at any one time.

Universal services are those available and accessed by all families, targeted services are developed and aimed at children, young people and families with specific needs, and specialist services are those delivered by practitioners with specialist knowledge and expertise which only some families may need, or at specific times

Importance of Partnership working

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) statutory guidance emphasises the crucial role of effective early help. This has a focus on the collective responsibility of all agencies to identify, assess and provide effective early help services. The early help offer is not a single service, it is a network of services, processes and interactions that aim to help children, young people and families at the earliest opportunity.

Partnership working is at the heart of Coventry's Early Help Offer. By ensuring an effective partnership approach, leaders and practitioners will work together to focus on improving outcomes for children and families. The early help offer available to children and their families is made up of different types of services that collaborate to form the local early help offer which includes universal services, community support and targeted and specialist services.

When partners work together to deliver an early help offer:

- Families receive the right help at the right time.
- Families tell their story once.
- Individual family members needs are not seen in isolation (whole family approach).
- Resources are maximised and shared.
- Families receive support without delay.
- Duplication is reduced and needs are met.
- Data and insights are shared.
- Partners learn from one another and help one another.
- Families' needs are met and the need for statutory services is reduced.

How the Early Help Partnership are working together

Learning how partners can work together is integral to achieving the best possible outcome for the child, young people and their families. This is described in the Early Help Strategy <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/earlyhelpstrategy>

Early help is recognised as being important across a range of multiagency strategies and plans. Opportunities for partnership working will be maximised and enhanced through a variety of strategic and operational means including the Early Help Strategic Partnership (Subgroup of the CSCP), the multiagency "Doing it Together" Early Help Outcomes Groups, the Team Around the Family Approach, Family Hubs and the Parenting and Relationships Strategy.

You can be part of the offer by contacting us at: earlyhelp@coventry.gov.uk

Early Help system of support

