




Extra Support Available to Families

Safeguarding Team Training





As part of the training request form that we as a team asked parents to complete for this years training, an area which came up prominently was advice and support around what help is available to families from social care and family support services.



Early Help

- Early help and early intervention are forms of support aimed at improving outcomes for children or preventing escalating need or risk. Because of this they are also sometimes referred to as prevention or preventative services
- Early help, or early intervention, is support given to families when:
 - a challenge first develops
 - a new or continuing difficulty doesn't meet the threshold for specialist support - for instance from social services or the NHS mental health service for young people






Some groups of children may be more likely to need Early Help than their peers.

These include children who:



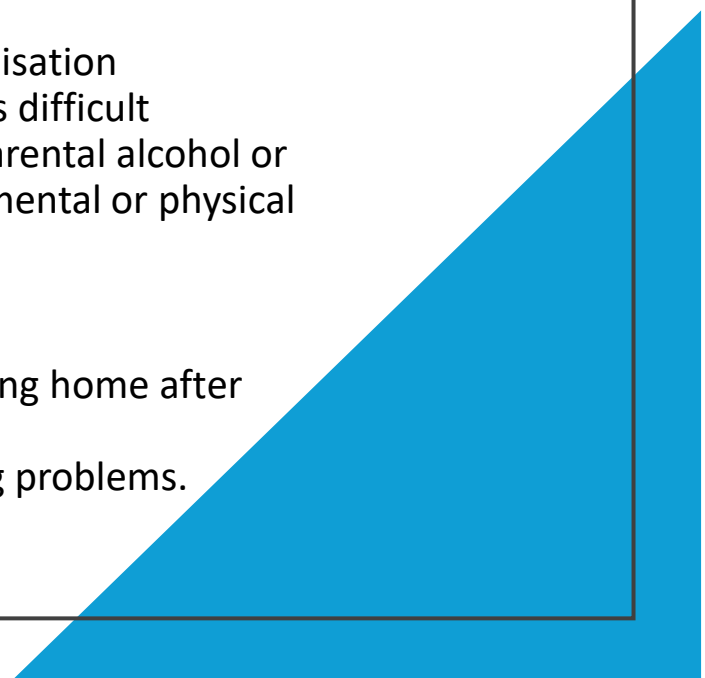
have special
educational
needs

Have a
disability



What situations is Early Help available for?



- Early help may be offered in a wide range of situations within a family in which a child's health or wellbeing could be affected.
 - For instance, you may receive support if your child:
 - has disabilities, special educational needs (SEND) or long-term physical health issues
 - has mild or emerging mental health difficulties
 - is being bullied or bullying others
 - is at risk of exploitation or radicalisation
 - faces challenges at home, such as difficult relationships, domestic abuse, parental alcohol or drug misuse, parental or sibling mental or physical health problems
 - is a young carer
 - is a young parent
 - is in private foster care or returning home after being in care
 - is affected by financial or housing problems.
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Early help is a service that can provide support for children and families when problems arise.

Early help can offer a range of support, including:

- **Parenting programs:** To help with challenging behaviour
- **Activity groups:** For parents, young carers, or other groups
- **Individual mentoring:** To support school attendance or other needs
- **Specialist help:** To develop speech and language, emotional or social skills
- **Relationship support:** To help with parental conflict
- **Housing or living conditions support:** To improve living conditions



Research suggests that Early Help and intervention can:



Protect

Protect children from harm

Reduce

Reduce the need for a referral to child protection services

Improve

Improve children's long-term outcomes

Improve

Improve children's home and family life

Support

Support children to develop strengths and skills to prepare them for adult life.



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- . My experience of early help was of an individual relationship being formed with the whole family over time, so they had a good understanding of our family's needs resulting in effective signposting. The word "advocate" comes to mind.
 - . A parent

Child In Need



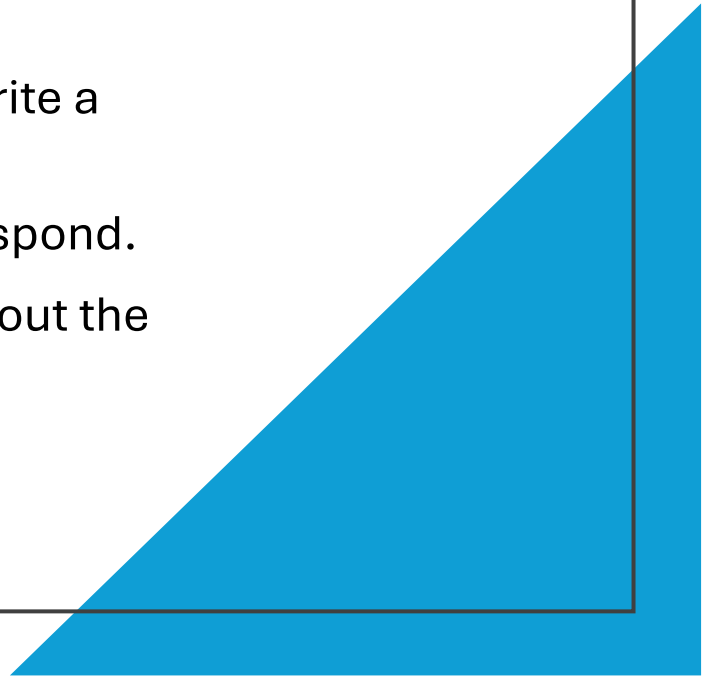
- A child 'in need' is one where the Local Authority have completed an assessment which concludes that they would benefit from support and they meet the definition of a Child in Need as set out by the Children Act 1989.
- Where a child has ongoing needs for their life they may always be a child in need through the 'Children's and Disabilities team'.
- Where extra support is needed at a point in a child's life, this Child In Need referral is a 'section 17' and would come through Children Social Services.



What happens when a Section 17 referral is made:



- There may be times where a family needs more help or support than they are getting from the team around them, or that early Help can offer.
- If the school or the family feel that this is the case the DSL would write a referral.
- Social Care receive this and make decisions about how they will respond.
- This would usually involve meeting the family to make decisions about the best approach.





If a referral is accepted:

Social workers create a Child in Need Plan for each child, in conjunction with the child and their parents or carers. The plan is reviewed at least every three months after the initial meeting, and then at least every six months after that. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the supports provided are helping to achieve the plan's objectives.

The aim of a child in need plan is to provide support so the child to continue to live safely within their family. Parents and carers should be asked what they think would help them and their child, and if they agree to what is put in this plan. It is good social work practice for the plan to be provided in writing and signed by both the family and the social worker if it is agreed, even if this is by email.



A child in need plan will contain the support which is being provided to a child and/or family by children's services.



The plan should set out:

what is working well within the family;

what support is required and why;

which agencies will provide the required services;

what the child and/or family agree to do;

what the expected outcomes are;

what the timeframe of the plan is and when it will be reviewed. The first review should be held within 3 months of the start of the child in need plan and further reviews should take place at least every 6 months thereafter.



If you feel that you need any support in this area:



- Please talk to the DSL team who will support you through the process.
- We are able to help with referral, signposting and support with supporting statements in many areas.



Other support that is available:



Zarach beds charity - [provide beds and bedding for those who require them)

Refugee project – (Helping those new to the country or who have previously needed support in this area)

Kinship carers – supporting carers of all ages

Gateshead citizens advice - service specific to families who are living with neurodiversity, either a child or parent, support with DLA, benefits, health etc

Greggs hardship fund – supporting those who need extra help and supporting schools with breakfast clubs

Foundations Furniture, Teams Gateshead - beds to children, crisis package for furniture

Feeding families - providing emergency food boxes, hospital food boxes and regular food parcels

Props - drugs and alcohol support for families when a parent is user

NTRP - support with drugs and alcohol use for families

Brighter future – support to build healthy relationships

Jenny Hartley, Local Authority Asylum seekers liaison officer, Newcastle

Shoe aid - for winter shoes or school shoes for those who need extra support

Love Amelia, Sunderland - items and equipment from birth to 16 for families in poverty and hardship throughout Tyne and Wear and County Durham

Daisy Chain, Stockton - support and empower neurodivergent people including family support and parents/ carer workshops and coffee afternoons

Toby Henderson Trust - support to families diagnosed with autism including support for families, support groups, and social clubs for young people and their siblings.

The Safeguarding Team can be contacted on the school number at any time in the term. There is a member of the team available in holidays to support you should you need us and the details of this will be sent out at the end of each term within the blog.



- Designated Safeguarding Lead: r.fletcher@percyhedley.org.uk
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