

# Early Help Pathway

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem appears, to stop it from getting worse. This could be at any point in a child's life, from birth to the teenage years. Early help involves identification, assessment, planning, providing Whole Family Support and working together to review the plan.

Throughout any work with children, young people and their families, where practitioners have concerns or differences in opinion about the decisions or practice of others that they cannot resolve on their own, they can refer to the [Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership Escalation Policy](#).

## Identification and decision on what response is needed

- Practitioner observes or is informed that the child/family has a need
- Practitioner may need to speak with their line manager, safeguarding lead, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to help identify the way forward
- If the needs can be met by practitioner's own setting's Early Help Offer, organise the support directly
- For additional Early Help resources visit the early help webpages at <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/earlyhelpfamilysupport>

## Completing an Early Help Assessment (EHA)

- Discuss needs with the child/young person and family and gain their consent to have conversations with other practitioners involved
- Identify other agencies currently involved and consider a multi-agency meeting to inform the assessment
- Practitioner completes an Early Help Assessment to identify the strengths and the needs of the family and sends this to [familyassessment@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:familyassessment@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

Is there an additional identified need (Level 2 and 3) for Early Help Family Support that can't be met by the professional or any other service? Read more about Level 2 and Level 3 needs in the [Levels of need Guidance](#).

**If yes**, request services from Early Help Family Support by completing an online form at:

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/requestfamilysupport](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/requestfamilysupport) Continue supporting the family and work with other professionals as necessary.

**Not sure?** Speak to the [Early Intervention Family Support](#) team (Level 2) or [Targeted Family Support](#) team (Level 3) in your local area for advice about your request.

## Create a plan

- Using the assessment, create a support plan along with the child/young person and their family. Identify SMART actions to achieve the outcomes or goals (for example, attending a parenting course)
- Involve other agencies if additional needs are identified as part of the assessment
- If more than one agency is involved, agree who the lead professional will be (this may not be the person who wrote the assessment)
- Set a date to review the plan
- Share the plan with the practitioners who attended the multi-agency meeting as well as the child/young person and family

## Meet the needs in the plan

- Everyone has a responsibility to carry out their agreed actions from the plan
- Conversations can take place between meetings as required to progress the plan

## Review progress

- Multi-agency meeting (or telephone call) every 6-12 weeks to review the plan. This might be a conversation between a single agency and the child/young person or family
- The review is led by the lead professional
- The lead professional and other agencies involved review whether there has been 1) positive change 2) no change/improvement or 3) deterioration or concerns increased
- The decision is made to continue as is/amend the plan/to end the plan as the needs are fully met, or to end the plan and a single agency will meet the need or that only universal services are required
- If the plan continues, further reviews take place
- If the plan is not progressing, review and update the assessment, develop a new plan and consider who else may need to be involved
- The review can be brought forward if the plan is not progressing or the needs escalate

## End of the plan

- When the child/young person, family and multi-agency meeting agree that the needs have been met, the plan will end and all those involved should be informed
- Complete the Early Help Closing Summary form and ensure sections 3c and 3d on the Early Help Family Plan Review/s are updated
- Email the forms to [familyassessment@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:familyassessment@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) Retain copies for your own records
- The child/young person and family have clear information about where they can access support moving forward or if their needs change

## Child is at risk of significant harm

If you believe that a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm, contact the Police on 999.

If you want to refer a child or young person to Children's Social Care in an emergency, contact the [Family Front Door](#) on 01905 822666 (out of hours 01905 768020). If the concern is not immediate, use the online form to raise the concern: [worcestershire.gov.uk/childrenreferral](http://worcestershire.gov.uk/childrenreferral)

## Escalation of need

If a family is already receiving support from Early Intervention Family Support or Targeted Family Support and there are escalating concerns, please refer to the Step Up (Transfer of Need) for Professionals process accessed within the [Levels of Need Guidance](#).

## Document Revision History

March 2019 V3 Author Helen Hey [hhey@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:hhey@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

August 2020 V4 Author Rachel Watkins [rwatkins2@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:rwatkins2@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)