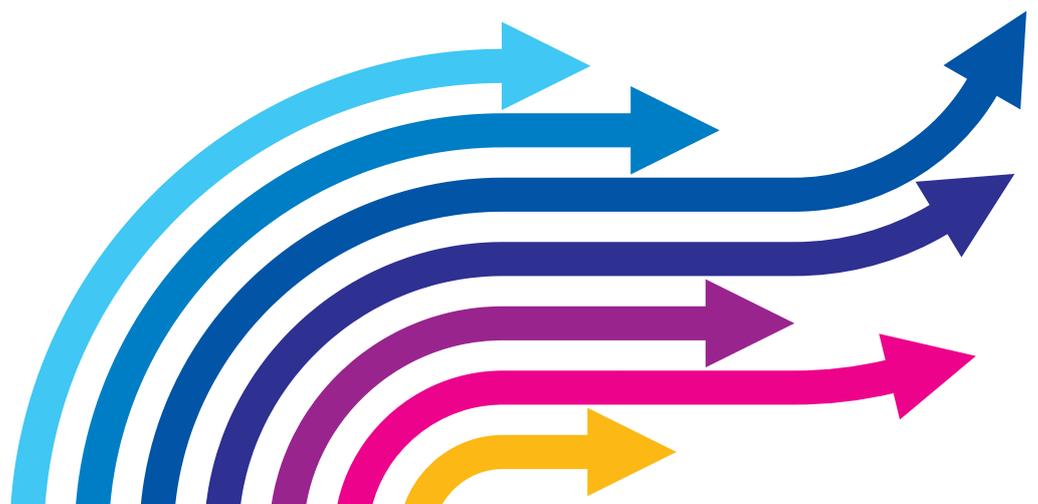




North East Lincolnshire Early Help Strategy 2021-24



Introduction and Approach:

On behalf of the Prevention and Early Help Strategic Board and indeed the partnership across the borough I am delighted to present our new Prevention and Early Help strategy. It is testament to the enduring and positive partnership work we see, hear and all personally experience here in North East Lincolnshire.

Whilst the pandemic brought significant challenges it also brought out the real need for all agencies and sectors to cut across organisational barriers and focus on what is important- ensuring our children and young people feel and are safe and that parents, carers and our residents know where to go and who to speak to when they need or consider they want assistance and help at the earliest opportunity.

As a partnership we have taken time to understand need and discuss approaches with a broad range of organisation and individuals. We have listened to local children and families about what is important to them and how and where support can be provided. We have considered national best practice and important messages from research. Our local data across systems and partners have also been key in identifying areas of focus and demand. If we are to be successful in ensuring families receive the right support at the right time preventing the need for statutory intervention then we must continue with this collaborative approach reviewing our progress at regular intervals.

Finally, many people, organisations, services and families were involved and engaged in getting us to this stage. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this strategy.

Stephen Ryder

Chair, Prevention and Early Help Strategic Board,
Vice Chair VCSE Alliance



Image: Young children playing outside

Our **priorities** are to:



Support families to be as emotionally and financially resilient and secure as they can be



To protect those at risk of harm



To promote health and well-being for families



To ensure that children have a really great start in life



To ensure that our community helps support people to achieve in life

What is Early Help?

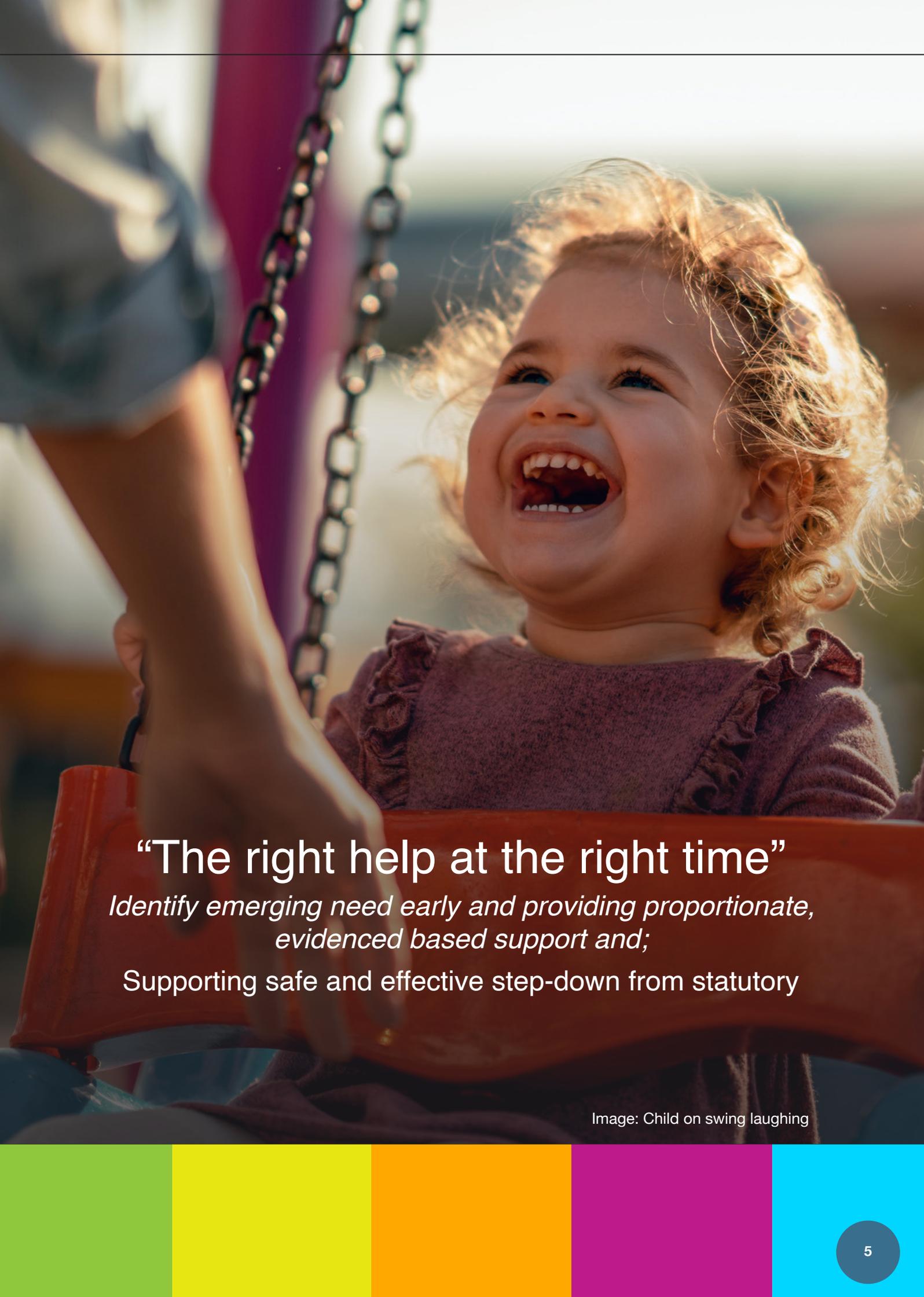
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 says that **“Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later”**.

Our Early Help providers are committed to working with each other and families to provide the right service, by the right people, at the right time to children and families who will benefit.

This approach means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life. Early help providers can also prevent further problems arising and can support families who have been involved with statutory services by helping them prevent problems from re-emerging.

In North East Lincolnshire we will ensure that we have an Early Help system which puts children and their families first. Early Help providers will work together to create a joint response to emerging needs, so that our resources are used to their best and families experience the service in the way that they want.

The purpose of Early Help is to support families by building on their strengths and promoting resilience. Both our universal Services (available to everyone) and our Targeted Services (available to those assessed as needing them) are part of our Early Help Offer.



“The right help at the right time”

Identify emerging need early and providing proportionate, evidenced based support and;

Supporting safe and effective step-down from statutory

Image: Child on swing laughing

Key Principles of our Approach:



To work together to maximise the benefits for families - everyone plays a role in delivering early help services



To work with families as early as possible to prevent problems growing or re-appearing



To work restoratively, building relationships across early help providers and working in partnership with children and their families



To be family-led, placing families at the centre of decision making, listening carefully to the voices of children and families, being flexible and responsive to individual needs



To work to prevent harm and give children the best start in life



To support children and families “stepping down” from statutory services



Image: Child playing with wooden train

Why Do We have a New Early Help Strategy?

We are building on our previous Early Help Strategy (2019-2021) with a stronger commitment to working in partnership with families, building relationships and providing family-led services with an increased emphasis on engagement with local community groups. This new strategy sets out an approach for joint commissioning and shared delivery of community based services.

We also recognize that only a small number of children and young people will have acute needs requiring intensive statutory intervention and that families are best supported at an early stage with services that they want.

This strategy has been developed to sit alongside other newly revised strategies in North East Lincolnshire, including Nel Outcomes Framework, the Education Strategy for NELC 2021-2024, NELC Child Looked After Sufficiency Strategy 2021, Talking, Listening and Working Together Strategy 2020

It is important to note that this strategy is developed within the context of the Covid pandemic which has impacted on children's mental health, family financial resilience, social connectivity and education attainments; and a key driver of this strategy is to prevent current vulnerabilities becoming much bigger difficulties in the future.

The partners named below have supported the development of this strategy and 'pledged' to meet the shared priorities identified in this document and provide services/support to families who need them.

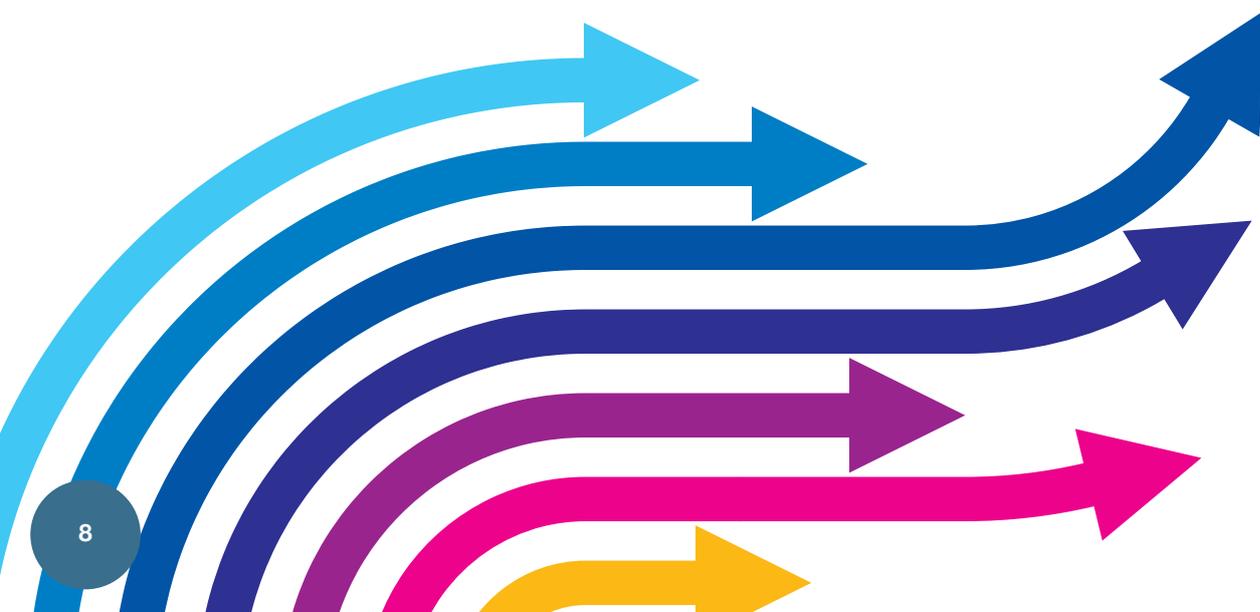




Image: Baby looking at book with mother



We are all committed to this shared approach and agree that **Early Help is Everyone's Business** – These are the partners currently engaged with the partnership

North East Lincolnshire Council

NEL CCG

NSPCC

Childrens Health

Private, Voluntary and Independent Early years providers

Public health

Young Minds Matter

Navigo

Safeguarding Children's Partnership

One Voice

Humberside Police

Compass Go

Maintained Schools and Academies

Barnardo's

Grimsby Full Families

CPO

CatZero

Safe Families

VSCE Alliance / VCSE Forum

We are with You

What We Know About Families in North East Lincolnshire:

- Total population 159,826
- 2015 - 2019 population of Children and Young People aged 0 to 19 decreased by 0.6%
- Significant differences between most deprived wards most affluent re the proportion of children in poverty
- 20th most deprived out of 326 local authority areas (Indices of Deprivation 2019)
- Small, but increasing proportion from BME background 9% National figures 33.9% - primary, 32.3% secondary)
- Children and Young People under 18 years 37,614 / 23.5% of the total population 50.7% female male 49.3%
- Children and Young People with English as an additional language increasing gradually 5.6% (2018)
- 26% children living in poverty compared to 17% nationally (2016)
- Free school meals 17.4% (Y1 to 11). primary schools 15.7% national average 13.7% secondary schools 14.9% national average is 12.4%
- 2015-2019 the annual number of births decreased by 13%.

We are building on what is already in place to make sure that services are effectively working together, including:

- Our Locality Family Hubs bring together support from services including Children's Centres, Health Visiting, School Nursing, Families First Practitioners, Early Help and some youth provision. They work with partners in the community across North East Lincolnshire to identify and offer services for children, young people, and families from pre-birth to adulthood. Locality Family Hubs are for everyone, including support for children with additional needs
- Our Integrated Front door (inclusive of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) is available to all partners and public to contact if they are worried or concerned regarding a child. This service provides advice and guidance and where appropriate support with the necessary completion of the early help assessment tool. This allows for a better, more focused response so that we get the right support to children and families at the right time
- Our Access Pathway is the route for children and young people (Over 5 and up to their 18th year), where support has already been accessed and tried but further specialist intervention or assessment may be required (including CYP with complex needs across speech, language and communication, difficulties with social interaction, learning difficulties, sensory difficulties, and neurodevelopmental difficulties). This multi-agency panel also recommends any extra intervention or specialist assessments needed, for example Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The pathway has undergone much improvement over the last 2 years and we have consulted with parents/carers and stakeholders to identify areas of improvement and enhancement. We are now in the process of re-validating the model with all stakeholders to merge the Child Development Centre Multi-Agency Assessment (Under 5s) and the Access Pathway (Over 5s) into a single process for all CYP 0-18 (25) years who require further specialist assessments for ASD and ADHD.
- Our Threshold of Need document has been amended and agreed between all partners. This document ensures that families get the right level of support that they need and provides guidance on the stepping up and stepping down processes between early help and child safeguarding practice

What We Aim To Do:

Shared services – delivered by a range of agencies and organisations that starts with a universal assessment of need completed by health, education or voluntary sector services working with the family within a whole family approach. This will include the team around the family/child/worker approach and the role of a Lead Professional person to coordinate the services offered.

Our Targeted Early Help team – will focus on families with more complex needs. All agencies offer early help however this team works with families who have a greater level of need. This team provides intensive casework and all referrals for this service go through the social care ‘front door’.

Our Community Based Services – based in physical locations where a range of organisations and volunteers will deliver services based on what families say they need, informed and evaluated based on feedback and the views of children and families.

Family-Led Services – families are at the heart of decision making about themselves and the voice of each individual family member, especially children, will be crucial in helping to plan what the Early Help offer will be. We will do this quickly, without delay so that support can be in place as soon as needed. At all times our aim is to support families to help themselves be the best that they can now and into the future.

Our Early Help Process takes place in stages:

1. Identifying need and gaining consent from families
2. Completing an Early Help Assessment
3. Meeting to agree the plan
4. Taking action and delivering services
5. Reviewing progress and talking about what is needed next

We have 5 Key Priority Areas for our Early Help provision:

- 1. Improved Child Health and Community Well-being** – these services and support will have a strong focus on developing good physical health and child and adult mental health, using a trauma aware workforce to help families have good local accessible support when they suffer mental or physical ill-health. Local treatment and support will be available to help parents who use substances to cope with adversity and there will be support to help families improve healthy living, diet and physical activity.
- 2. Early Years** – these services will focus on building an early years collaboration of partner agencies which will include Health, Education, Children’s Services and the Community Sector. They will include support for expectant parents and work with families from birth to 5 years. A key goal is to drive up the number of children who are deemed to be school ready at age 5 from areas at greater disadvantage within North East Lincolnshire, through services which improve child development, speech and language and communication skills.
- 3. Supporting children through Education to meet their full potential** – these services will focus on working with schools and education partners, reducing school exclusions and providing support advice and intervention to increase attendance and attainment and offer children support through the transition years. Young people will be supported to take up training and employment opportunities and families will be supported to increase the take up of free childcare to allow them to have paid work. Services will work with children who have special educational needs and disabilities to increase inclusion and reduce vulnerabilities. In line with the Education Strategy preventative work will support a reduction in the number of children who require an Education, Health Care Plan through early engagement with schools around difficulties experienced by children.
- 4. Building Family strengths** – these services will focus on intervention with families that build capacity and strength and be informed by national best practice, evidence about what works and partner innovation. A central element of this is the development of the work force so that everyone is clear about which service is needed for each individual family and at what level is best to intervene. Family collaboration is best achieved working at the lowest level of intervention required to ensure children are safe while changes are made. Families need services which are community based and meet the needs of the whole family, including parental relationships, their extended family and their parent-child relationships. Building close working relationships with families and the community will be a core objective of the Early Help Partnership. Intervention will focus on helping families to stay together, to avoid children becoming Cared for by the Council and reducing the need for statutory child protection services. Innovative partner working will support families to feel safe within their communities and reduce the risks of children being exploited or neglected.

5. Reducing the harm caused by poverty – We know that poverty overloads families and causes unnecessary stress, which makes it harder to keep children safe. Families will be supported to know what money they have coming in and what they need to spend, and have easy access to support, to ensure they receive their full benefit entitlement. Support services will consider the financial, housing and neighbourhood where families live in all assessments, plans and support. This will include work to reduce reliance on food banks and unsuitable housing. By ensuring families are able to meet their basic needs, they will be better able to focus on providing safe, nurturing homes for their children. We will focus on developing relationships with children and families. By supporting families, in practical, meaningful ways they will be more likely to engage in help seeking behaviours. This will ensure families have enough money to live and eat, have options about good home conditions, leisure activities, employment and financial stability.





Image: Children at school

How We Will Know If We Are Making a Difference:

We are highly ambitious for our children, young people and families and want to know whether or not we are being successful. We will put in place measures which monitor our performance that can be scrutinized by senior managers and elected members.

We will measure how successful we are by looking to see whether:

- More children under 5 years will be school ready from local areas of greater disadvantage, will be school ready
- Fewer children will be excluded from school or not attend school
- More young people will be in training or employment
- Fewer children, young people or parents will suffer from mental ill-health
- More parents, children and young people who misuse substances will access specific services
- Children and their Families will report feeling safer in their communities
- Families who receive statutory child protection services will reduce and there will be fewer children who become cared for by the Council
- There will be an increase in the numbers of families who take up free childcare places
- Numbers of families who don't escalate following Early Help support
- Number of families making progress against their Early Help plan
- Number of families who have been able to seek the support they need to meet their needs
- Number of plans owned and led by families
- Number of families who are satisfied with the support that they receive

Governance and Accountability:

Early Help Partnership Board. This Board consists of senior representatives from all local partners- both statutory and private and voluntary sector. This Board has overseen the development of this strategy and will monitor its implementation and the joint commissioning arrangements.

The Safer Children's Partnership. This group receives reports from the Early Help Partnership Board and holds them responsible for delivering to this strategy.

Consultation with Children, Parents and Partners: regular opportunities will be created to consult with children, parents and partners so that they both provide feedback on services received and inform the development of new policies and services. We believe that families who have experienced services should have a say on how services are developed and delivered.

Finally, an action plan that sits alongside this strategy and supports the priorities will be created and reviewed and updated every 12 months to ensure that it is making the difference that we want it to so that our vision is achieved. We will also plan for new issues that emerge and include them in the action plan as needed.



Image: Children laughing

