

WALSALL'S EARLY HELP PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY, APPROACH AND RESPONSE TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & THEIR FAMILIES

Supporting Families 2021- 2024



The right
children...

In the
right place...

At the
right time...

For the right
amount
of time.



Walsall Council





Foreword

Walsall Right 4 Children

We are delighted to present the Early Help Strategy for Walsall, reflective of our belief that the provision of the 'Right Help at the Right Time' to stable, resilient families living in strong communities is the key to children and young people being safe, happy learning well and having an ambitious future.

Firstly we would like to thank the Early Help Partnership who have been actively involved in shaping the way we deliver our Early Help approach; partnership commitment is so critical to ensuring we work together and that our interventions with children, young people and families are timely, co-ordinated and effective.

This strategy recognises that the delivery of an effective Early Help offer is not the responsibility of any single agency but owned by all partners across the borough.

We know that working with and supporting families at the earliest signs of need is the most effective way to achieve positive outcomes and opportunities for their future.

A strong and local multi-agency partnership, that shares information in a timely way and understands data is key to effective 'early identification and intervention' and by working together helps to refocus the Early Help partnership offer and move appropriately away from the need for statutory and specialist services.

We have all been through difficult and unprecedented times during the Covid-19 pandemic and for some families, this has further exacerbated emerging problems, never has it been so vital that we work together to support families and harness the strength that communities have shown during this difficult period. Our collective learning from the experiences of the pandemic can and will help us to shape and strengthen our support to families, improve our practice and secure positive outcomes for children, young people and the families of Walsall.

The Governments programme 'Supporting Families 2021-22 and beyond aims to take the former Troubled Families Programme to a new phase with a refreshed vision and focus on 'building the resilience of families', so they can 'find their own solutions to problems' and importantly ensure families don't just 'avoid poor outcomes' but have ambitions and thrive.

We need the commitment and dedication of the whole borough, every practitioner, service and community to help us deliver this.

We look forward to working with you all and together making sure that families in Walsall receive the help they need, by the most appropriate service, when the family need it, for as long as they need it, and that we all have ambition for our children and young people to be

'Safe, happy and learning well'



Sally Rowe
Executive Director Children's Services



Councillor Tim Wilson
Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Foreword

As the Chair of the Early Help Partnership Steering Group I fully endorse this strategy and development of the subsequent action plan.

As we move along a continuum of recovery from the Covid19 pandemic many of us are reflecting on the past 18 months, thinking about what this means for our children, young people and their families moving forward and what we have all learnt as a result.

During these unprecedented times we have shown resilience and found ways to keep our services operating and supporting children, young people and their families albeit in different ways to how we usually operate.

We have stepped outside of our comfort zones, worked across boundaries to support beyond the normal remit of our roles and found ways of keeping our connections with our colleagues across different services so that the children and young people are always at the centre of what we do.

We have the opportunity to take this learning and experience and to build on the good practices & partnership working that we were delivering prior to the pandemic and strengthened throughout it.

We can continue our journey of building a collaborative approach across services and partners to ensure 'Early Help is Everyone's Responsibility'.

Together we will work with children, young people and families and provide the right support at the right time and improve outcomes for children and young people, I am proud to be the Chair of such a strong and committed partnership and look forward to being part of this next phase of the Early Help journey.



Sallyann Sutton
Chair Early Help Partnership Steering Group

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1. Our Early Help direction of travel

Our focus has been on understanding the needs of families as a whole and establishing a coherent offer around locality in response to those needs, developing capacity, refining our design and delivery model based on evidence of need, evaluating impact, quality and supporting children, young people and their families.

So what have we done?

Achievement	Impact
We have undertaken a review of 668 children & young people within Early Help locality to understand needs, thresholds and interventions being offered/available	As a result we have strengthened the Early Help offer based on our learning; the timeliness of contacts and assessment has significantly improved. March 2021 - timeliness of contacts 93% within target March 2021 - timeliness of assessments 80% within target, and improving
We have refreshed the Right Help Right Time guidance and introduced the Early Help Pathway, securing a partnership approach to support families with complex needs	As a result we are able to better understand the needs of families and plan support earlier
We have reviewed the Early Help Hub structure and approach	As a result we have merged the Early Help Hub with MASH, operating a 'one front door' to ensure Right Help Right Time and support to families is proportionate and appropriate, with clear and consistent rationale for decision making
We met with 90 schools & early years settings across the borough, school nurses, speech & language colleagues, Public Health, police and children's social care to look at how we could all work better together to help prevent exclusions, how to consider how we could develop clearer, 'connected' pathways	As a result we piloted a partnership School Inclusion & Emotional Health & Wellbeing Team who supported 100 children and young people at risk of exclusion, over a 12 month period, providing individual support and planning meetings to prevent exclusion. The pilot was a success with school exclusions being prevented, attendance improving and children and young people's SEND needs being recognised. We commissioned a provider to deliver Restorative Practice to form part of our collective approach and practice in reducing exclusions Over 200 children's social care practitioners, social workers, police, school nurses and teachers, nursery nurses have been trained, with over 40 schools (predominately primary schools) taking up the offer. We piloted the 'shooting star' an evidenced based practice and outcome tool to gain the voice of children and young people to enable us to understand educational barriers

Achievement	Impact
We piloted dedicated Early Help Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) across 2 of our localities, in order to collectively work with families where there were risks of anti-social behaviour and/or criminal activity	As a result of the successful pilot all 4 localities now have a dedicated PCSO attached and co-located to support local families with local issues.
We met with key partners to strengthen locality partnership working based on the needs of children and young people needing Early Help support, such as emotional health & wellbeing, debt, unemployment and housing concerns	As a result we have co-located partners including school nurses, DWP employment advisors, homeless & housing partners supporting local families within their local community.
We designed and implemented a Keep in Touch (KIT) project, a dedicated 6 week summer support, initially, to families whose schools were their Early Help lead professional and then extended to families the school felt would benefit from the 'extra support' during summer holidays to reduce risks, prevent escalation into statutory and specialist services and to support transition from primary to secondary school	As a result this offer has developed significantly over the past 3 years, with over 900 children, young people and their families receiving dedicated support including home visits, telephone calls/ contacts with families checking things were ok. We have provided direct work around transition, emotional health & wellbeing, domestic abuse, neglect and poverty and a dedicated offer to children & young people at risk of exclusion. We have 'tracked' the CYP we supported, none were permanently excluded following return to school. We went that 'extra mile' Summer 2020 and offered the support further, including the production and delivered of 136 individual activity pack for families during the Covid19 pandemic 'lockdown'.
We have developed an evidenced based informed parenting offer, a partnership between the local authority, school nursing and teenage parenting service	As a result we now offer a 'hybrid' model of delivery, including on-line self-help training, top tips, a range of group work courses based on needs and a bespoke 121 support in the family home. Over 700 families have been helped We worked with the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) around the evaluation of our parenting offer and, the EIF told us 'the evaluation has showed statistically significant positive impact on parent's relationships and wellbeing post their attendance at an Early Help Parenting programme'

Achievement	Impact
We secured funding from the DWP to help us to understand the impact of parental conflict and consider how to raise the awareness around the importance of Reducing Parental Conflict and enhanced support to families and partners in understanding this further	<p>As a result we have trained over 200 practitioners and partners from Childrens Social Care, School, Police, School Nurses, Health Visitors, Housing & the Voluntary Sector</p> <p>Worked as a partner with Eif to support the Reducing Parental Conflict evaluation measures which have now been introduced and published by the Eif.</p> <p>We are taking this work to the next stage, have pulled together a Black Country Consortium for Reducing Parental Conflict and have secured further funding, with Walsall leading on the programme (launch due date September 2021).</p>
We have reviewed and effectively managed risks and needs associated to the Covid - 19 pandemic, adapting delivery, support and have 'gone the extra mile'	<p>As result we have developed virtual meet and greet sessions for partners to keep 'connected', to share knowledge and the ability to support each other throughout this period. We were also able to put the spotlight on local organisations and services delivering help and support to children, young people and families in Walsall during the pandemic, and how to access this borough wide and/or locality based support.</p> <p>We have delivered a range of webinars to partners including Domestic Abuse, Trauma Informed Practice, and Neglect in light of COVID19 and we have developed a range of virtual activities for children, young people and families to take part in.</p> <p>We have introduce locality 'Time to Talk' sessions to continue and develop the community and locality partnership further.</p>
We have developed an Early Help Pre-Birth Pathway identifying and supporting vulnerable parents	As a result we have an agreed and combined pathway to support vulnerable expectant parents.
We have refined our performance data and audit programme to understand demand and impact	As a result we have strengthened understanding of our localities better and will hone this further over the next 3 years to inform and shape our offer
We have co-designed our website with children, young people and families including providing a range of self-help advice, tops tips and on line courses	As a result we have a much improved information for parents/carers, children/young people and partners/ professionals.

What Parents/Carers, Children, Young People & Partners have told us.

Feedback from a sibling group



Dear R

Thank you so much for all the help and support you granted us during this year.

We enjoyed your visits and telling you how our day went and how we were progressing at school.

Thank you so much for everything, your emotional and economic support you have given to us all

Lots of hugs
N, S & E

The drawing the girls did to say thank you



Feedback from a partner

Dear Sharon,

I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for great partnership working with my school. You have always informed us of relevant training opportunities and Michelle and I feel working together has been inclusive towards meeting the needs of our children and families. I especially found the 'Time to Talk' meeting to be beneficial, as I am confident this will be a good platform for schools and other external providers to work together having a clear agenda in place.

You have always been approachable and informative, especially when I have contacted you unplanned requesting further information or support. I am sure Michelle would agree that partnership working with yourself has grown from strength to strength!

As schools are coming to a break for the six weeks, you are aware our service for children and families is still open. I know you will be in touch where necessary. I am confident we will continue further working together in the new academic year.

Thank you for all your support and guidance.

Feedback from a parent (participant in the Mellow Bumps for father's pilot session run by the Early Help & Health in Pregnancy Service)

"[The course] made me feel better in myself, I know what to do for my baby, to encourage her to be more alert and responsive to me, to really get to know me, interact with me. The group helped me trust people better and feel more confident with parenting. I learnt to understand my child, what they want and how to manage their needs. I feel more confident, I know more than I realise. I would be interested in other courses. I am to attend mellow parenting in September and I am attending a fathers group. I will be accessing holiday programme and parenting stay and play sessions. I would recommend this to others parents.

2. Our Refreshed Strategy 2021 -2024

This partnership strategy is an ambitious strategy designed to transform the ways of working and provision of early support to families in Walsall, and in doing so, improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children & young people, reducing the need for acute or specialist services. Key to achieving this ambition is a multi-agency commitment to provide effective, proportionate and high quality Early Help and supporting families to have their needs met in their local communities.

3. What do we mean by Early Help?

Put simply Early Help means providing support to children, young people and their families as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life from pre-birth through to the teenage years: 'Support from 0-19'.

Walsall's Early Help Partnership recognises that an effective Early Help offer is not the responsibility of one single agency; it requires a partnership approach from all stakeholders working with children, young people, their families and the community.

Early Help is everyone's business & responsibility'

A quote from a parent

*It's a proper support bubble,
it's like someone backing
your corner basically*

A quote from a child

*"I ay naughty no more ...
School don't have to keep
phoning my mum now"*

A quote from a young person

*You helped me a lot, if
it wasn't for you I wouldn't
be where I am now, I love
school and gets loads of
certificates*

4. Why is Early Help important, what do we know?

We know previous reviews and policy developments including *Working Together 2018*, *Munro Review* and the MHCLG's vision of *Supporting Families 2021 and beyond* recognise and highlight the significance of Early Help for children, young people and their families in improving outcomes long-term.

We know a healthy start in life for our youngest members of society within a nurturing and loving family environment maximises their potential for lifelong emotional and physical wellbeing, *The Best Start for Life*.

We know mental health concerns for adolescents are increasing, with one in seven young people aged 11-19 experiencing at least one mental health disorder *EiF Adolescent Mental Health Report*

We know there is a significant link between emotional behavioural problems in adolescence and adult outcomes, including mental health, education & employment and physical health *EiF Adolescent mental health evidence brief 2*

We know that the COVID 19 pandemic and subsequent 'lockdowns' have had and will continue to have significant impact on emotional health & wellbeing, with teachers already reporting evidence of increased levels of anxiety and depression, reduced motivation and engagement *EiF survey*

We know working together to support families, providing Early Help and eradicating silo working prevents children and young people in families entering the care system, increases their chances to have a 'good' life, reduces the likelihood of poor outcomes, including involvement in crime, substance misuse and helps families into work.

We know providing the 'right help at the right time' can help families to look forward to their future and feel positive.

We know from feedback from parents/carers, children and young people the positive difference Early Help makes.

We know however there is much more we need to do.

A quote from a young person

***"I would like the Council and
other organisations to make
Walsall a more enjoyable
place to grow up."***

5. What do we know about children, young people and families living in Walsall?

Locality evidence of need & challenges: understanding our children, young people, the or families and local communities

Walsall, like our neighbouring local authorities, is seeing growing challenges. Needs and demands are changing and increasing; demographic growth and the unknown impact of the COVID -19 pandemic are all areas of concern.

The impact of the pandemic is yet to be fully understood. Child poverty, deprivation, neglect, mental health, emotional wellbeing, unemployment, domestic abuse, to name a few, will be exacerbated, especially for those families already struggling, where the impact on family life will be significant.

Our road to resetting services needs to focus on creating sustainable futures by improving family relationships, keeping children and families safe and healthy, reintegrating children & young people back into school, supporting emotional wellbeing, mental health and helping parents back into employment.



Children and Young of Walsall

Population of 285,478
68,970 (24.2%) of whom are children aged 0-17

T The number of children and young people aged 0-17 is projected to rise to 71,091 by 2025

Education

At 18th March 2021 2662 children and young people had an EHCP (29.0 per 1,000 age 0 to 25)

- **746 (28%) of the EHCP's are due to Autistic Spectrum Disorder**
- **418 (16%) have speech, language and communication difficulties;**
- **349 (13%) were for moderate learning difficulties;**
- **320 (12%) were for social, emotional and mental health**

Special Educational Needs

6188 children/young people subject to SEND @October 2020

2/3 year old Nursery Placements reducing

Fixed Term Exclusions

4,542 fixed term exclusions from Sep 2017 to March 2021

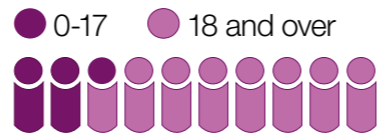
includes multiple exclusions that were given to one student over the course of a year.

Permanent Exclusions

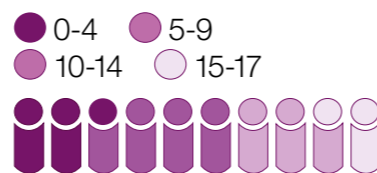
241 permanent exclusions from Sep 2017 to March 2021

Elective Home Education

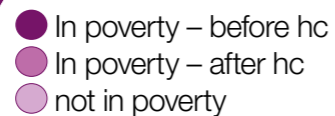
564 children registered as EHE @ March 2021 8.1 per 1,000 0-17 population



24.2% of the population are children and young people 2019 mid-year population estimates



28% of children are aged 0-4, **29%** are aged 5-9, **28%** are aged 10-14 and **15%** are aged 15-17 2019 mid-year population estimates



39% of children live in poverty after housing costs Campaign to end child poverty – May 2020



31.2% of Children are from BME backgrounds 2011 Census

Children in Care

672 children in care
190 Child Protection Plans @ March 2021

Highest number of children in care had a postcode within the North locality, the highest average level of deprivation

Free School Meals

14,197 children, young people eligible for free school meals (21% with a post code within the North locality)

Deprivation levels are high

In the Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children (IDAC), Walsall is the 19th most deprived Local Authority in the country with 48 (29%) of neighbourhoods in the top 10% of most deprived neighbourhoods nationally which is the 15th highest.

Two of Walsall's three parliamentary constituencies are in the top 50 constituencies with the highest levels of child poverty

Benefits

- 1939 households claims income related benefits
- 5995 claims universal credit (48% of all claimants from West locality)
- 1048 claiming tax credit

Neglect

22.4% CYP subject to neglect had substance misuse as a factor.

Of all CYP referred for neglect 44% are aged 0-4, 27% aged 5-9, 20% aged 10 to 14, 8% aged 15 -17

Children and young people have more health challenges than their peers

4.2% of babies are born with a low birth weight

compared with 3.5% for stat neighbours, 3.3% in the West Midlands and 2.9% nationally

9.4 per 1000 children die before their first birthday

compared with 5.2 for stat neighbours, 5.7 in the West Midlands and 3.9 nationally

3.0% of young girls get pregnant at 15,16 or 17

compared with 2.3% for stat neighbours, 1.9% in the West Midlands and 1.7% nationally

11.0 per 10,000 would be admitted to hospital as an inpatient for mental health issues

compared with 7.4 for stat neighbours, 9.0 in the West Midlands and 8.8 nationally

1.5 per 10,000 admitted to hospital for alcohol related issues

compared with 2.9 for stat neighbours, 2.6 in the West Midlands and 3.2 nationally

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6. Why do we need Early Help, what do we know?

Between April 2019 and March 2021 The Early Help Hub received 9,058 contacts, asking for help and support.

In March 2021 the needs analyses told us:

- Most contacts received relate to children and young people from the North locality
- Most contacts received relate to children and young people from a white ethnic background in most localities with the exception of the South & Central locality where there is a slightly larger proportion of contacts received relating to Asian or Asian British children and young people
- Most contacts received for Early Help are relating to children and young people aged between 10 and 15 years old across all localities. However in the North, South & Central and West localities contacts relating to children and young people aged between 0 and 5 years old are only slightly lower than 10 to 15 year olds
- Reasons for contact

Top 5 presenting needs at contact	Top 5 presenting needs at assessment
1) Domestic abuse/violence	1) Mental Health (parent/carer)
2) Challenging behaviour	2) Emotional Wellbeing (CYP)
3) Mental Health (parent/carer)	3) Mental Health (CYP)
4) Emotional wellbeing (CYP)	4) Challenging behaviour (CYP)
5) Mental health concerns (CYP)	5) Learning disabilities (CYP)

*Children & Young People (CYP)

- Of those pupils on roll in Walsall schools the largest number eligible for free school meals are in the North locality followed by the West locality
- Of those households claiming income-related benefits most households can be found in the West and North localities
- Similarly with universal credit, the largest numbers of households claiming this benefit are in the West and North localities
- Most households claiming tax credit again are located in the West locality however unlike income-related benefits and universal credit, the second highest is the Central & South locality.

Both the Walsall Borough data and the Early Help data shows that Walsall has some challenges ahead and highlights why we need to provide good quality Early Help Support the 'Right Help at the Right Time', and to consider the impact of:

- the rising deprivation
- the increasing mental health needs
- the projected rise of children and young people living in Walsall
- the increasing need for income related support
- the impact to a child and young person experiencing domestic abuse, mental health of a parent/carer and neglect
- the levels of inappropriate contacts made by partners, the understanding of thresholds
- the low levels of partners leading the way for Early Help families with a low % of the Lead Professional role
- the emerging problems as a result of the COVID - 19 pandemic and how all of these factors effects our children, young people and their families
(See Appendix A-Needs Analysis)

7. Our practice model and approach

Our Early Help practice model and approach has been informed by what children, young people, parents, carers and practitioners have told us:

1) Bespoke: One Family, One Plan, One Lead Professional,

Quote: "don't make me tell my story more than once"

So we will, where possible reduce the number of professionals involved with the family and identify a 'lead professional' to act as the main contact and to co-ordinate the family plan of support

2) Relationships:

Quote: "take some time to get to know me "

So we will, ensure we give you time, that we together explore and focus on strengths within a family as well as the needs. We will be respectful, and build trust with our families and work together 'with' families in a restorative way

3) Outcome Focused:

Quote: "talk to me and help me understand how you will help me and my children"

So we will: talk and plan together, have agreed goals with our families, with a priority and focus on building the foundations for long term improvements

4) Resilient:

Quote: "how are you going to make me feel more able to start making changes, and keep making them and being able to cope?"

So we will: ensure the support provided builds mental, social, emotional and physical resilience within the family and work with colleagues from the Black Country Mental Health Trust to improve our support

5) Ambitious:

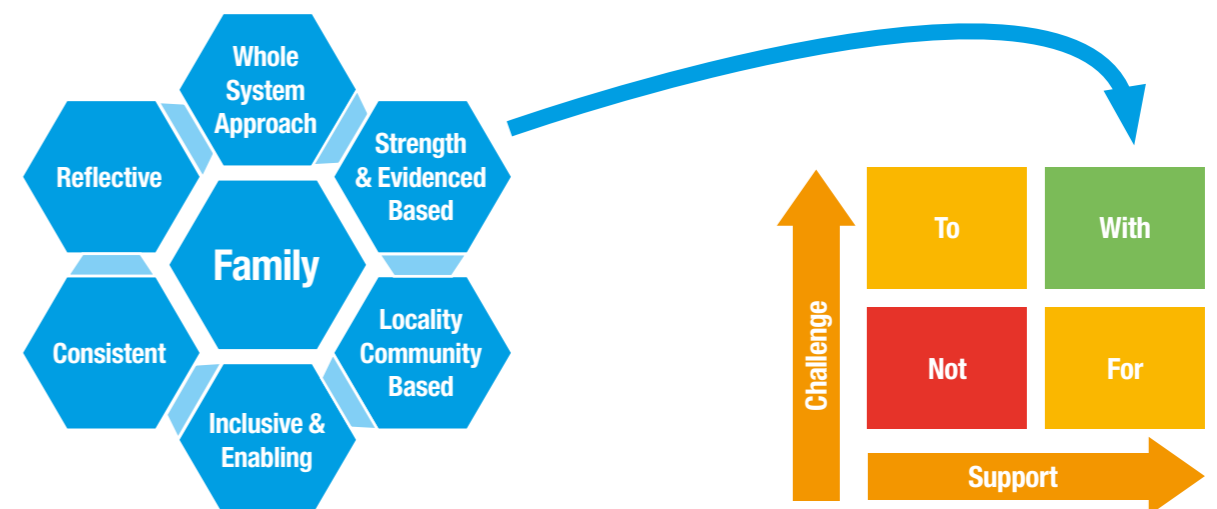
Quote: " thank you, you're the only one that helped me, if it wasn't for you I would not have finished my education"

So we will: ensure the whole family are supported to thrive and are ambitious for their future

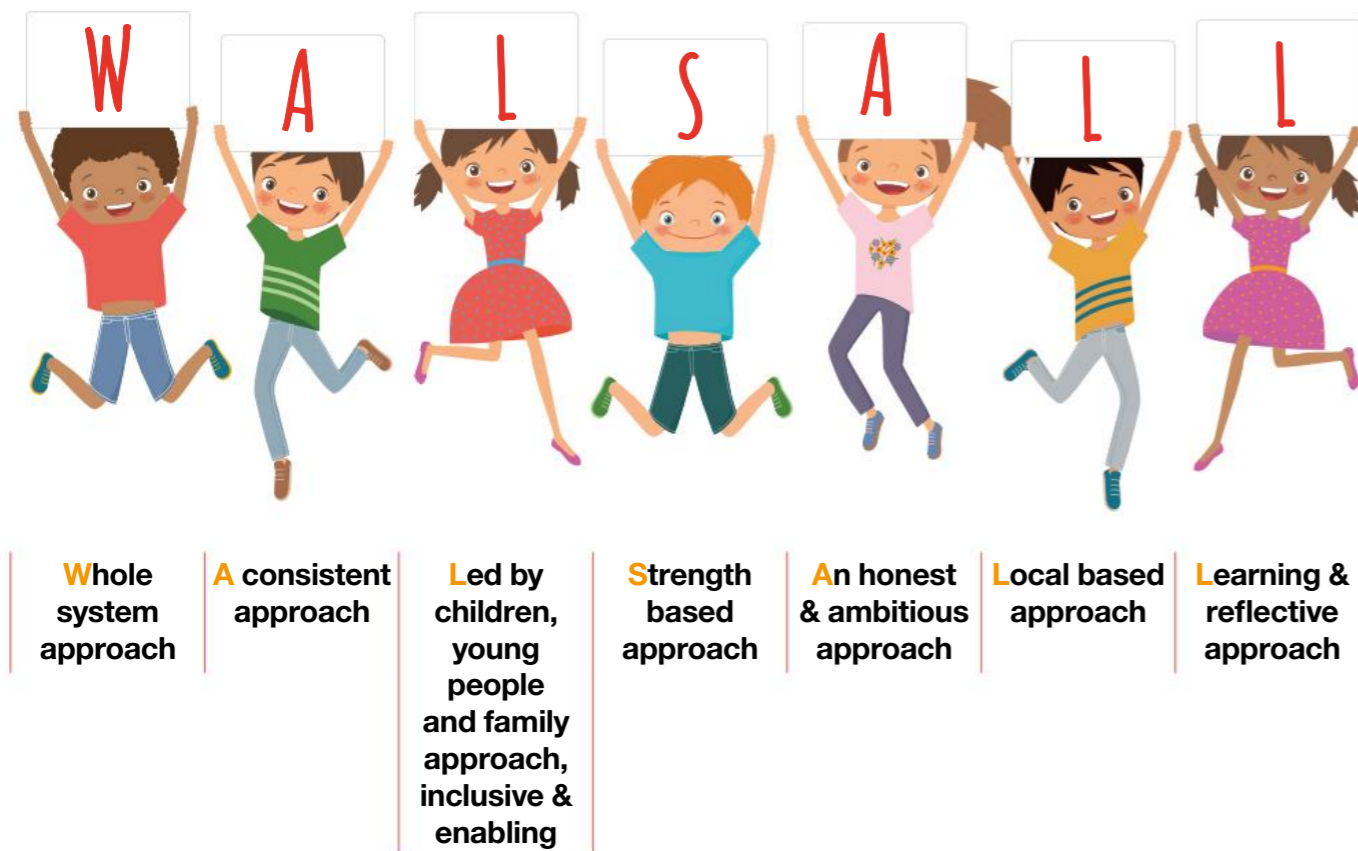
6) Positive:

Quote: "it was a positive meeting today with mom and child. I saw mom at the end of the day who was quite emotional with relief"

So we will: make sure we listen, get children, young people and their families feedback and continually work together to improve services, ensure children, young people and families are central to co-production of future development of the Early Help model

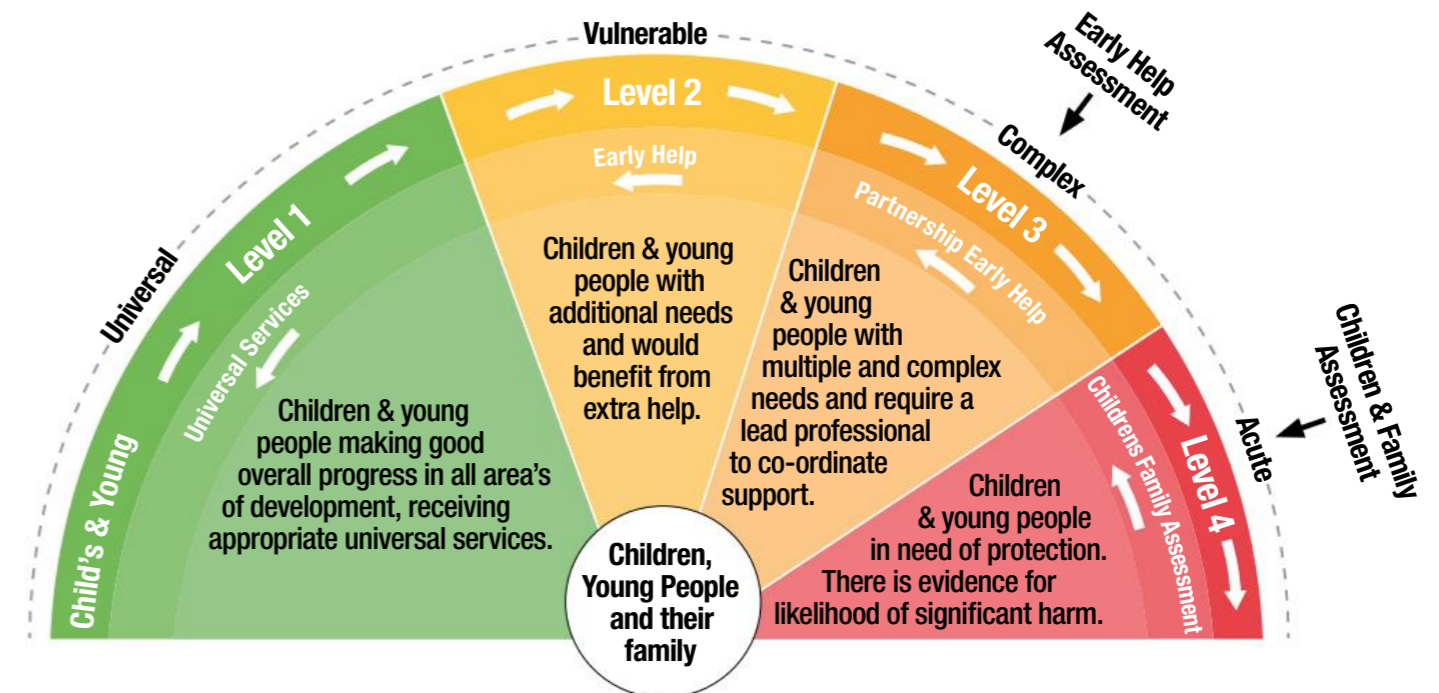


8. Our approach to Early Help?



9. Providing the Right, Help at the Right Time:

The partnership works and provides the right support, works with the family as early as possible when emerging needs are recognised and to prevent escalation into statutory services



The continuum of need:

We identify that a child, young person or family needs additional support

A conversation takes place with the child, young person and their parents/carers to share concerns, discuss strengths and support required

We identify if these additional needs can be met by a single agency (level 2) or if there is a need for a co-ordinated multi-agency response, underpinned by an Early Help Assessment (level 3).

10. Our commitment

Our Commitment is to provide

- 'Effective whole family support, to prevent escalation into statutory services, to ensure our families thrive, build resilience and have ambition and to
- 'Create the space for services to work together proactively, identifying and solving problems rather than reacting to crises'

And to

- Know our children, young people and the communities they live in
- Be informed by our children, young people and their families
- Understand and act on the impact of COVID - 19 pandemic and having a collaborative recovery plan

11. Our Strategic Priorities 2021 - 2024

Our strategy has **4** outcome focused priorities, aligned to our commitment, and based on what we know now and what's on the horizon regarding the **children, young people, families** and the **partnership** in Walsall.

Priority One: Culture & Practice - Ensure our Early Help partnership and the way in which we work together is fully understood and that together we achieve better outcomes for families.

This is a priority because:

- We know that strong local partnerships deliver better outcomes for families
- We know that there are some gaps and an inconsistent understanding and application of the Early Help system and approach
- We know we are not consistently identifying the needs of the children, young people and their families (presenting needs change from contact to assessment)
- We know that we have a strong partnership platform committed to developing partnership capacity, ways of working and impact
- We know that early identification of a child, young person or family needing help, improves life chances

To address this we will:

- 1) Redesign the Early Help Assessment, Plan & Review - to enable improved understand of presenting needs of our children and young people and to have a timely and smart outcome focused support plan in place
- 2) Refresh the Supporting Families Outcome Framework - to enable outcomes and impact to be measured across the partnership
- 3) Extend further the 'Time to Talk: Partnership, Practice & Progress' - to bring together locality based group of key partners, statutory and voluntary, to share knowledge, pathways, and systems to improve the outcomes for families, ensures quality decision making, sharing of good practice, support and guidance across the partnership
- 4) Further strengthen the support to partners to influence and co-ordinate partnership capacity and capability
- 5) Review the Right Help, Right Time and lead professional training - to ensure all key elements of early identification and intervention is understood, and link to other priorities such as neglect and domestic abuse
- 6) Scope out the potential of a bespoke Early Help training programme
- 7) Improve knowledge and self-help opportunities – to provide information, advice and self-learning

Outcomes to achieve	How will we know
Refreshed Early Help Assessment, Plan, Review	Partners assessing needs with families Clear and timely outcome focused plans Positive impact on the lives of children, young people Reduced re-referral rates Children, young people, parents and carers tell us
Consistent understanding of threshold	Reduction in NFA contacts
Partners feel supported and confident in taking the LP role	Increase % in LP from partners Increase of partners accountability and response
Children, young people and their families are supported by the right professional at the right time, at the earliest opportunity that prevents escalation into specialist and statutory services	Reduction in NFA contacts Reduction in children's social care contacts and step up from level 3 Increase LP role from the wider Early Help partnership Self-help tools effectively used
The whole family approach is consistently taken	Referrals/contacts and Early Help assessments are received from the wider partnership Partnership audits, dip sampling Children, young people, parents and carers tell us
Needs of families are identified at the earliest opportunity	Presenting needs are clear and focused Increased recognition of vulnerabilities and risks such as neglect Improved use of evidenced based tool such as GCP2
Map out the training needs/requirements of partners across the partnership and identify key partners to be trained	Increased partners attending the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right Help, Right Time training • Lead Professional training • Neglect training • Restorative Practice training • Reducing Parental Conflict We will have a skilled and confident partnership workforce

Priority Two: Smart use of data – share local data to understand the needs of our children, young people and their family.

This is a priority because:

- We know from the current data available the needs of the children, young people and their families are changing and we need to respond and adapt the Early Help offer
- We know elements of partners data sets including those from education, health and police however we do not ‘overlay’ this data to enable us, from a data perspective, to take a ‘whole family’ approach
- We know what the Early Help core offer looks like, however we also know that the locality needs look different therefore so should the ‘locality offer’
- We know sharing data across local agencies and partners reduces duplication, optimises expertise, and aids improved identification of need, local evaluation of what works, how to problem solve and ensure improved outcomes for families, building resilience and ambition

To address this we will:

1. Develop a data sharing platform within localities to create the space and opportunity to look at a range of data sets to inform and to strengthen the earlier identification and support required
2. Agree and introduce a standard partnership data set for sharing at a strategic level as part of the Early Help Steering Group performance measures
3. Agree a partnership auditing framework and opportunities for learning from practice

Outcomes to achieve	How will we know
Develop a standardised locality performance scorecard and quality assurance framework to monitor demand, identify barriers, share learning across partnership audits and dip samples	Partnership audits and dip sampling Feedback from parents/carers children and young people
A strengthened core offer with additional bespoke ‘local offer’ based on the understanding of need	In addition to the Early Help ‘core offer’ will be an additional locality offer based on evidenced needs and predicted demand Data sharing Audits/Dip Sample
Improved identification of need	Reduction of inappropriate contacts/referrals
A whole family approach will be evident, no silo working and targeted support will be delivered in a co-ordinated ‘joined up way’	Joined up services within the Early Help roles and responsibilities – horizon scanning and earlier intervention offered, i.e. housing providers see rent arrears and think ‘whole family’ solutions, see beyond the arrears themselves – informed decisions and opportunities to support

Priority Three: Resilient Communities: use local resources in the most effective way

This is a priority because:

- We know communities have ‘solutions’
- We know we do not build the ‘community scaffolding’ of continued support for children, young people and families
- We know we do not ‘tap into’ and utilise the voluntary sector effectively enough or consistently
- We know there are barriers preventing children, young people and families from participating in parts of community life
- We know that communities do come together in time of need, evidenced by the response provided during the COVID 19 pandemic

A quote from a young person

I would really like to go on University visits but only the top performing classes are allowed on these. I think if the school gave the other classes the opportunity too, more kids (including me) would feel more inspired to work harder and get better grades.

To address this we will:

1. Improve our knowledge base of local resources
2. Utilise and include local communities
3. Develop further pathways and referral routes
4. Develop an Early Help Volunteers programme to support families at a local level, supporting the use of local resources and the ‘community scaffolding’
5. Further develop our co-location model with key voluntary and community partners
6. Introduce the Early Help ACTION Campaign, an awareness and training campaign across ALL practitioners in Walsall who work with, support or come into contact with children, young people and families, including contractors, housing officers, clean & green practitioners, private companies



Outcomes to achieve	How will we know
Services delivered at a local level	Additional partners working together and 'co-located' delivering services to children, young people and families in the area they live
Voluntary and community services become our partners	Attendance at locality meetings Co-location of partners
All key services understand 'Early Help and the positive difference early intervention has on family life and opportunities	Training, awareness delivered across the borough Case studies Feedback Skilled and knowledgeable partners

Priority Four: Voice: children, young people, parents & carers are heard

This is a priority because:

- We know the views and involvement of our children, young people, parents & carers matter
- We know working with children, young people, parents and carers achieve better outcomes and opportunities for their future
- We know this is their service and they do and will support us in shaping the future delivery model
- We know children and young people want us to be open and honest
- We know co-production is essential
- We know relationships matter

To address this we will:

1. Work with children and young people to develop a meaningful 'feedback' questionnaire
2. Work with parents and carers to develop a meaningful 'feedback' questionnaire
3. Utilise the feedback to help shape services and improve practice across the partnership
4. Develop, together, a Children & Young Peoples Early Help forum and a Parent/Carer forum
5. Introduce a 'daily conversation programme' where we will consult with children and young people on specific topics

Outcomes to achieve	How will we know
Children young people and parents/ carers are at the heart of transforming our services	Co-production/ co-design of the refreshed Early Help assessment, plan review Self-help tools , information advice and guidance are provided in partnership with children, young people, parents/carers Walsall Right 4 Children Big Conversation tells us
Children, young people, parents/carers are at the heart of all decisions made	Early Help plans and review Feedback questionnaires Compliments/complaints Audits & dip samples

12. Governance & Accountability

This strategy will be governed and overseen by the Early Help Partnership Steering Group.

The steering group will monitor progress, performance and review the action plan associated with the strategy.

The Early Help Partnership Steering Group has representation from key partners including

- Public Health
- Housing Providers
- Teenage Pregnancy Services
- School Health
- Speech & Language
- Police
- DWP
- One Walsall, Voluntary Sector
- Money, Home, Job
- Education
- Children's Social Care
- Early Years
- Employment & Skills

13. Link strategies and support documents

Strategies

- Neglect Strategy
- Inclusion Strategy
- Behaviour & Wellbeing Strategy
- SEND Strategy
- Accessibility Strategy

Support

Nurture BRICS

Mental Health Support in Schools

Our Parenting Offer

Behaviour & Relationship Guidance and Support in schools

DV Bill

Best Start

Appendix 1 Early Help Needs Analyses

Contact made to the Early Help Hub between April 2019 and March 2021

Locality	Total	Percentage of EH contacts	Population 0-17	Rate per 1,000 0-17 population
North	2,491	28%	15,931	1,56.4
East	1,652	18%	17,964	92.0
South & Central	1,799	20%	17,302	104.0
West	2,366	26%	18,043	131.1
Out of Borough	750	8%		N/A
Total	9058			

The main presenting needs of the children, young people and their families at the contact stage were

1. Domestic abuse/violence (21%)
2. Challenging behaviour (16%)
3. Mental Health concerns of parent/carer (15%)
4. Emotional wellbeing of child/young person (14%)
5. Mental health concerns of child/young person (7%)
6. SEND concerns (7%)
7. Educational issues (7%)
8. Housing issues (6%)
9. Abuse/Neglect (6%)

Presenting needs change following assessment, once a full understanding of the issues children, young people and their families were experiencing, three of the same top 5 presenting needs are present both at point of contact and assessment. Whereas domestic violence is identified at contact, mental health (child) and learning disabilities (child) are more evident at assessment.

Following assessment:

1. Mental health concerns of parent/carer
2. Emotional wellbeing of child/young person
3. Mental health concerns of child/young person
4. Challenging behaviour
5. Learning disabilities

Locality	Total	Percentage of EH contacts	Population 0-17	Rate per 1,000 0-17 population
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West	2,366	26%	18,043	131.1
Out of Borough	750	8%		N/A
Total	9058			

Early Help Assessments	North	East	South	West	Total
Mental Health (parent/carer)	115 (26.9%)	87 (23.3%)	74 (29.0%)	82 (22.8%)	358 (25.3%)
Emotional Wellbeing (child)	77 (18.0%)	91 (24.4%)	74 (29.0%)	77 (21.4%)	319 (22.6%)
Mental Health (Child)	82 (19.2%)	77 (20.6%)	39 (15.3%)	70 (19.5%)	268 (19.0%)
Challenging Behaviour (child)	87 (20.4%)	73 (19.6%)	34 (13.3%)	72 (20.1%)	266 (18.8%)
Learning Disabilities (child)	66 (15.5%)	45 (12.1%)	34 (13.3%)	58 (16.2%)	203 (14.4%)

Locality needs of children, young people and their family, differ within the locality area of their home address:

Top 5 Presenting Needs	North	East	South & Central	West	Total
Mental Health (parent/carer)	115 (26.9%)	87 (23.3%)	74 (29.0%)	82 (22.8%)	358 (25.3%)
Emotional Wellbeing (child)	77 (18.0%)	91 (24.4%)	74 (29.0%)	77 (21.4%)	319 (22.6%)
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Learning Disabilities (child)	66 (15.5%)	45 (12.1%)	34 (13.3%)	58 (16.2%)	203 (14.4%)

Contacts by Age Group

When looking at the age groups of contacts received to Early Help they are mostly relating to children and young people aged between 10 and 15 years of age across all localities. However in the North, South & Central and West localities contacts relating to children and young people aged between 0 and 5 years of age are only slightly lower than 10 to 15 year of age as shown in the table below

Age Group	North	East	South & Central	West
0-5 years	822 (33%)	484 (29%)	602 (33%)	778 (33%)
6-9 years	587 (24%)	357 (22%)	353 (20%)	552 (23%)
10-15 years	848 (34%)	637 (39%)	646 (36%)	778 (33%)
16+ years	218 (9%)	167 (10%)	189 (11%)	238 (10%)

Contacts by Ethnicity

Most of the contacts to Early Help are related to children and young people from white ethnic backgrounds. With the exception to the Central & South locality where there is a slightly larger proportion of contacts received relating to Asian or Asian British children and young people.

Ethnicity	East	North	South & Central	West
White	1139 (69%)	1569 (63%)	564 (31%)	1474 (62%)
Mixed	94 (6%)	210 (8%)	168 (9%)	183 (8%)
Black or Black British	35 (2%)	173 (7%)	116 (5%)	108 (5%)
Asian or Asian British	56 (3%)	131 (5%)	570 (32%)	154 (7%)
Chinese or Other	266 (16%)	339 (14%)	301 (17%)	354 (15%)
Unknown	62 (4%)	69 (3%)	80 (4%)	93 (4%)

Of all the contacts received 23% (2083) led to a Multi-Agency Early Help Assessment.

Of the 23% (2083) less than 10% of the assessments had a Lead Professional of a partner outside of the local authorities Early Help Service, this needs further analyses across the partnership, given that Early Help is 'everyones business and responsibility'.

Appendix B

Early Help Partnership Action Plan 2021 - 2023

OUR QUICK GUIDE TO EARLY HELP IN WALSALL



What is Early Help?

This is the term we use to describe the support we give to children, young people and their families when they need extra help.

We take a partnership approach as it's difficult at times for one single agency to deliver effective support alone. It means we work alongside a number of services to help you and your family.

As we like to say: 'Early Help is everybody's business and responsibility.'

Walsall's Early Help Partnerships commitment is:

- To provide 'effective whole family support' to prevent escalation into statutory services, to ensure families thrive, build resilience and have ambition.
- To create the space for services to work together proactively, identifying and solving problems rather than reacting to crisis

We, the partnership, take action to support you and work with you and your family as soon as a problem emerges. This can be at any stage of your child's or other family member's life and we're here to help when you can no longer cope on your own.

We aim to help your family achieve its full potential. Our goal is to improve the quality of family life, help children and young people have the best possible start, are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.

Who is it for?

Our Early Help offer is for children and young people aged 0-19 and their families.

Who provides the support?

If your family needs support, it could be provided by a School, School Nurse, Health Visitor, Teacher, Speech & Language Therapist, Locality Family Support Practitioner, Domestic Abuse Advocate, Youth Worker or Housing Officer.

How do we do it? – Right Help Right Time

Where you or a practitioner feels that your child may need additional support (beyond that available from a single agency), they will speak to you and your family and with consent arrange for an Early Help Assessment to be completed with you.

This provides you and the practitioner and other partners the opportunity to have an open and honest conversation to clarify the nature of the concerns, identify the needs of your family, and agree the appropriate response and how it will be co-ordinated.

A support plan will be written, this is your families plan and nothing will be added that you do not want to be included. The support will be co-ordinated by a 'Lead Professional', this is someone who will be the main point of contact for you and your family and will ensure the help that has been agreed is delivered.

The support will be reviewed, by you, your family and others, at least every 6 weeks to make sure the support is the right support, to make sure things start to improve, you see positive changes in your family life, children and young people's concerns are reduced, along with those of partners who are working with you.

We will provide the support and hold reviews until the support is no longer needed.

We will be open and honest with you throughout.

For more information or if you want some help, or know someone who wants some help you can speak to your child's school, your health visitor, school nurse, housing officer or contact the Early Help team either within your local area or the central based team on: 03005558266

Your Local Family Hubs:

West Locality Hub

Address:
Ilmington House, Crescent
Road, Wednesbury,
WS10 8AE
Contact Details:
0121 526 5537

North Locality Hub

Address:
275 Blakenall Heath,
Walsall, WS3 1HJ
Contact Details:
01922 476698

Central and South Hub

Address:
Birchills Street,
Walsall, WS2 8NG
Contact Details:
01922 646 574

East Locality Hub

Address:
Silver Court, Brownhills,
Walsall, WS8 6HA
Contact Details:



