

What is Early Help? A parent's guide

Early help is a way of getting extra support when you or your family needs it, but getting it as soon as the difficulties start, rather than waiting until things get worse. It's for children and young people of any age. Help can come from all kinds of services and organisations who work together to support your family. You might be using some of these services already, but we want to make sure they are providing the right support for you and your family's needs.

Why would I seek Early Help?

It could be that you're worried about your child's health, development or behaviour, or perhaps because you are caring for a disabled child. Maybe your child is affected by domestic abuse, drugs or alcohol. Perhaps your child is a carer for other people.

Who do I ask?

Have a chat with Mrs Phillips, Miss Hardy, Mrs Linnecor or Mrs Carvell, a support worker or health professional – they can help you look at what types of support are available and who might be able to help.

Your local area, through the Multi-Agency Team also has lots of services and support for families with children, some especially for children with additional needs.

What happens if I ask for an Early Help Assessment?

You will be fully involved, and we will listen to you. It may be that we just talk to you and point you to the support you want. If it's a bit more complicated, we'll need to ask you for more information that we'll write down or type. This is so we can get the right information and share it (with your consent) with people who need to know, so we can better understand your circumstances and match up services that would help you the most. You'll get a plan showing what you want to achieve and the support you need.

What sort of services or help do I get?

It will depend on what you need and might include services you already get. We will agree it with you and make sure it all joins up.

Can I say no to an Early Help Assessment?

Yes, you can, but we would like to stay in contact with you in case your circumstances alter, or you change your mind. We will continue to monitor your child in school and will speak to you again if we feel support is needed immediately.

Does it mean Social care will get involved?

No. If in the future your circumstances change and it becomes a possibility, we will keep you involved and work with you so that you understand what is happening and why.

What happens when I stop receiving Early Help services?

We want you to become confident and able to find your own solutions and take responsibility for your family. You can continue to use all services that are open to families and children and if your needs change again, then please ask us for further help, as soon as you need it. Education and Early learning School support Stay and play Library sessions ASD support Family and young people support Parenting groups, such as new baby support Local Support Groups Domestic violence support Youth support Wellbeing support Family Visitors Advice and welfare Benefits advice Adult learning Housing advice Debt management Health GPs School nurse Health visitor Community Health Advisors'