



Rutland
County Council

Supporting Families and Communities

Rutland's Strategy for Early Help

Updated January 2023

Supporting Families and Communities – Rutland’s Strategy for Early Help

This document outlines Rutland’s Early Help Offer and informs the approach we, with partner organisations, take in working with children and families.

Our Early Help Offer takes in to account the everyday conversations with our children and families, the feedback from our Rutland First conversation with our community and considers the research underpinning, the ‘Best Start for Life: a vision for the 1,001 Critical Days’ (DHSC 2021), in summary:

- *A coherent joined up Start for Life offer available to all families.*
- *Family Hubs as a place for families to access Start for Life services.*
- *The information families need when they need it.*
- *Developing a modern skilled workforce to meet the changing needs of families.*
- *Improving data, evaluation, outcome and proportionate inspection.*
- *Ensuring local and national accountability and building the economic case.*



What we do know is that:

- There are 8,009 children and young people aged 0 to 17 years which is 19.4% of Rutland's population. This is lower than the equivalent figure for England (20.8%) [ONS Mid-Year Estimate, 2021]
- 8.5% of Rutland's children live in poverty, compared to 18.7% in the UK. [children aged under 16 living in relative low-income families before housing costs -DWP/Children in Low Income Families: local area statistics: financial years ending (FYE) 2021]
- Of all children attending Rutland schools in 2021/2022 10.5% were eligible for support via pupil premium.
- 129 children and young people were subject to a social care referral during 2021/2022, a decrease of 119 referrals on the previous year.
- 78 cases are open (as at end of December 2022) to the Early Help team receiving targeted support.
- In January 2023, 94 young carers were known to Rutland County Council, 36 of which were supported by young carer groups.
- In January 2023, 307 children and young people had an Education Health & Care Plan (EHC Plan), an increase and the highest figure on previous years.

1. Introduction

What is the Early Help Offer?



Rutland's Early Help Offer describes the help for children and families as soon as problems start to emerge, or when there is a strong likelihood that problems will emerge in the future in relation to, for example, emotional and behavioural difficulties, risk of criminal activity or parental neglect of needs.

An early intervention approach can be applied to a wide range of issues, at any age from pre-birth to adulthood. Rutland's Early Help Offer includes schools, health visiting and GP services, or adult learning programmes and targeted services, such as one to one family support in the home, or the Aiming High for disabled children service, designed to reduce or prevent specific problems from escalating or becoming entrenched.

Early Help in **Rutland** means bringing together everything we know about local needs and risks with robust evidence on the effectiveness of different programmes and practices and using this information to make decisions in the best interests of both the people who need additional support and local budgets which are under pressure.

Rutland County Council and its partner agencies' commitment to Early Help is central to the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan 2022- 2025 and the Rutland Health and Well Being Strategy and its aims, which are:

- Every child lives in a happy and safe environment
- Children who do become looked after, or are receiving care, are supported to achieve the best emotional, physical, and learning outcomes
- Children experience an aspirational and inclusive education offer in their community
- The emotional health and wellbeing of children in Rutland will be promoted,

Early Help is underpinned by a key set of principles, as set out in the Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) Safeguarding Children Partnership, Thresholds Document.

Principles underpinning early help and prevention

1. We will understand the needs of children and their family so that the support offered is appropriate and can be addressed in the context of the whole family.
2. We acknowledge that parents and carers have primary responsibility for and are the main influence on their children. Our role is to strengthen parenting capacity, whilst remaining clear about our duty to safeguard vulnerable children and young people.
3. The activities and services we offer to children and families will help build and strengthen resilience.
4. We will focus on strengths in families and engage families with their consent so that they identify what they want to change and how they will help achieve this.
5. Practitioners will take a shared responsibility to provide a seamless service for families, ensuring there are clear pathways for those accessing our services, reduce duplication of assessment so that families do not tell their stories multiple times.

6. Our workforce will be supported to be multi-skilled and to be able to support a range of needs and approaches when working with families, for example adopting the principle of the Signs of Safety model of working with families to identify strengths and resolving challenges.
7. The services we deliver will be cost effective and utilise shared resources across partnerships.

Key features of the Early Help Offer

Rutland County Council provides a 'front door' through which parents and professionals can access early help advice and support.

The critical features of an effective Early Help Offer which have been identified nationally and on which Rutland's early help process is founded are:

- a multi-disciplinary approach that brings a range of professional skills and expertise to bear through a **team around the family** approach
- a relationship with a trusted **lead professional** who can engage the child and their family, and/or co-ordinate the support needed from other agencies
- practice that **empowers families** and helps them to develop the capacity to resolve their own problems
- a holistic approach that addresses children's needs in the **wider family and community** context
- simple, streamlined referral and assessment processes that are easy **to access** for families and easy for partners to understand

Our Early Help Offer recognises the crucial role that all family members – not just mothers and fathers, but stepparents, grandparents, siblings and other extended family members and carers – play in influencing what children experience and achieve as well as the consequences when families are in difficulty.

'Working Together to Safeguard Children', puts the responsibility on all professionals to identify emerging problems and to take professional responsibility to ensure that if a family does not meet the thresholds for specific services, that action is taken to prevent the lower-level needs escalating. Key professionals working in community services such as, health visiting, and education services in Rutland are best placed to identify children or their families, who are at risk of poor outcomes.

2. Who can Access Support?

The provision of early help services forms part of Rutland's continuum of help and support to respond to the different levels of need of our individual children and families. In Rutland this includes, services working with children and families, midwives, health visitors, schools and early year's settings, adult learning and community voluntary groups, or multiagency services, housing, youth options, and community safety, or services, such as social care, adult mental health services, with a focus on families with individual or multiple complex needs, who are at risk of significant harm or significant impairment to their health or development.

This document should be read in conjunction with the LLR Safeguarding Children Partnership Thresholds document,

<http://lrsb.org.uk/uploads/view-the-llr-lscb-thresholds-for-access-to-services-for-children-and-families-in-leicester-leicestershire-rutland.pdf>

A family may have an early assessment of need which considers, a child's developmental needs, family and environmental factors and parenting capacity. In Rutland, this assessment may be an Early Help Assessment.

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-services/health-and-family/early-help/early-help-assessments/>

In some cases, a professional will be able to identify a specific need but may not be able to provide the appropriate support., Rutland County Council will signpost the referrer to the appropriate services.

If support needs to be a coordinated response with local agencies working together to support the family, a 'Team around the Family (TAF) model may be used in Rutland to bring together a range of different practitioners from across the children and young people's workforce and sometimes from adult services. A lead professional may be identified, to co-ordinate the support and act as the key point of contact for the family and agencies. Decisions about who should be the lead professional should be informed by the child and their family.

3. Our success criteria and outcomes

Our Actions

1. We identify when children and families need help at the earliest opportunity through robust partnership working and shared intelligence. This will include having robust' front door 'arrangements.
2. We utilise our Supporting Families (Changing Lives), programme and our Family Hub, to create sustainable improvements by tackling the root causes of problems and the factors we know correlate toward negative outcomes for children and families e.g., unemployment, poverty, poor health, family breakdown and generational difficulties.
3. As a partnership system, we provide a range of integrated services across early years and into adulthood. These services will support prospective parents, children in early years, in teenage life and through into early adulthood.
4. We support children with additional needs and their parents and carers in a way that enables them to engage in positive activities in their community.

Performance and Outcomes

Rutland's Children's and Young People's Partnership will monitor whether the outcomes for children and their families are being achieved and will agree the key performance indicators which will help us to measure the impact our Early Help Offer is having for children and families.

These key outcomes include:

- Supporting children's mental health and wellbeing
- Preventing neglect and tackling domestic abuse
- Enhancing school achievement and employment and support for children who become vulnerable in their education, including children with SEND
- Preventing crime, violence, and antisocial behaviour
- Preventing substance abuse
- Contextual safeguarding and preventing risky behaviours and risk of exploitation
- Preventing obesity and promoting healthy physical development.
- Improvements in children and families' lives at the end of an intervention.