

'Early Help' is an umbrella term that describes the work of many agencies engaged with children and families who need some additional support. The definition of Early Help includes both **help early in life** (with young children including pre-natal interventions) and **help early in the development of a problem** (with children or young people of any age).

Early Help includes universal help that is offered to an entire population to prevent problems developing, and **targeted** help that is offered to particular children, young people and families with existing risk factors, vulnerabilities or acknowledged additional needs in order to protect them from developing problems or to reduce the severity of problems that have started to emerge.

Early Help is often provided as a collaborative, partnership approach between families and a range of other services and professionals, for example school nurses, health visiting, family support workers, housing officers, voluntary sector providers.

Leicestershire County Council's Early Help Service is made up of **3 component parts** who all work to deliver services in the seven districts of Leicestershire.

Supporting Leicestershire Families – Works with whole families (including extended family) and individual young people and uses a range of interventions which may last up to 12 months. This includes group work, brief, targeted and intensive interventions aimed at whole family working and include areas such as parenting, behaviour management, accessing services and service co-ordination. Group work covers areas such as domestic violence, mental health promotion and wellbeing activities, parenting.

Childrens Centre Programmes – Provides a 0-2 year pathway for parents with new-born children attending groups including, antenatal, infant massage, childrens learning, early communication and parenting. Support workers also provide families with brief and targeted one to one interventions, and other targeted group work for families, for example supporting families who have been affected by domestic violence, Solihull Parenting Groups.

Youth Offending Service – Provides delivery of services that are split into 6 areas of work, Anti-social behaviour, Youth cautions /youth conditional cautions, detention and training orders, restorative justice, court order interventions and prevention which can be delivered as group work or 1-1 interventions.

Referrals for county council early help services are all made on Request for Service form. The county council services use a privacy notice and 'presume to share' approach to sharing information as this is the best way to appropriately meet needs. Early Help in the County Council will pass on referrals which may be best supported by other agencies, or which require the input of more than one service. Having a holistic approach means that early help services try to work collectively to meet the whole needs of the family, recognising that poverty, lack of access to services and resources, etc, can all have a significant detrimental impact on family functioning: families are more likely to improve outcomes through a holistic approach that considers all aspects of family life.

