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**Early Intervention Operating Model**

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**Practice Manual**

1. **Introduction and purpose of document**

Rutland County Council is working with partners, stakeholders and users of services to further develop our approach to early help and targeted intervention. Rutland County Council and its partners have agreed an Early Help Strategy which sets out Rutland’s ‘Early Help Offer’ and informs the approach it is taking in working with children and families and the design of future services. Early intervention is crucial to ensure children, young people and families in Rutland have the chance to make the most of their lives. This is a critical role for children’s services across the Children’s Trust and the geographical area of Rutland and is a theme behind Rutland County Council’s strategic commitment to building individual, community and economic resilience and the adopted approach that prevention is better than cure and that early help can both reduce service costs and also improve outcomes for people.

Whilst the Early Intervention Service in the People’s Directorate of the Council has a key role in the provision of early help services: taking a lead in the delivery and commissioning of services - it also has a role as a partner working collaboratively and co-operatively within a system of services from the statutory, voluntary and community sector. It is also a facilitator – helping to strengthen the partnership and build capacity and confidence across the partnerships.

Rutland County Council and its partners have finite resources to support children and families whilst needing to support the most vulnerable, therefore we must get better at early intervention to prevent the sorts of outcomes that demand high levels of investment. We must target our early help where the likelihood is that problems will spiral and become more damaging for children and more expensive for public services to address. The requirement is to reduce demand through effective earlier identification which in turn will deliver better outcomes for children and families as well as reducing expenditure.

This Early Intervention Manual has been produced in the first instance for internal staff but also as an information document for those working in children’s services across Rutland, including those working in schools, early years, health, police, housing, youth work and social care. It sets out our approach to supporting families across the levels of need and supports staff to understand:

1. The service model in which we work with children, young people and families.
2. The role of universal, targeted and safeguarding teams.
3. The range of services and interventions provided both directly and commissioned, to support children and families requiring early help.
4. The services and support provided in relation to Early Years funded education and childcare.
5. The systems and processes used within the services and for broader partnership activities.
6. The partnerships vital to the Early Intervention service to support delivery.

**2.** **Overview of the Early Help Offer and Service Delivery Model**

Rutland’s Early Help Offer identifies the need for 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. **The Early Help Offer is not just about intervention in the early years but interventions as soon as possible after needs are identified,** **at any point in a child’s or young person’s life.** The Early Help Offer includes universal and targeted services designed to reduce or prevent specific problems from escalating or becoming entrenched.

Access to early help services should be simple and straightforward, begin as early as possible and be built on a seamless assessment process that supports the continuum of care for a vulnerable child and family.

It is important that we all have a shared understanding of the model of how the children’s services workforce supports children, young people and families, so that we understand our role – and that of our organisation as well as our partners – and how we need to work with other services in order to support families with additional needs as outlined in the LLR LSCB Thresholds document.

A key element to providing effective early help is the consistent use across the children’s workforce of procedures and processes to identify and address the risks and needs of children, young people and their families. This will support high quality professional practice that ensures the interests of the child and young person are central and that children’s welfare is safeguarded. All agencies and individuals that work with children and young people will be expected to take responsibility for identifying and addressing the needs of children and families in accordance with the agreed local processes.

(DfE. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015)

When we identify additional need, our job - as a community of children’s services practitioners – is to try to get children and families back on a positive track as soon as possible so that they can make a successful transition into adulthood. The job of early help and specialist services is to try and get children, young people and families to a position where they can be effectively supported by universal services, by addressing their additional needs in an effective and timely way.

**3**. **Our** **Vision for Early Help in Rutland**

* We are using data and intelligence so that information on family needs is being shared efficiently and regularly and we all know who our most vulnerable families are and where to find them.
* We can identify our most vulnerable children and families that are a priority in a local area whom can be reached quickly and effectively.
* Thresholds between early help and statutory child protection work are appropriate, understood and operate effectively.
* We have a sufficient and flexible amount of high quality, evidence-based early intervention services matched to the needs of children and families. Children, young people and families are offered help when needs or concerns are first identified; families have more resilience; there are fewer children entering care and; fewer families in crisis and reaching the edge of care.
* Families get well-coordinated help from joined-up teams which is recorded through agreed multi-agency arrangements. All staff involved in delivering early help have an excellent understanding of early intervention and the roles they play. They have high quality training and support to do their jobs. Children and families report that they have been listened to and their views and wishes have been taken into account.
* We are commissioning the right interventions for the right families based on local need.

**4. How do we deliver the Early Help Offer?**

In Rutland early help (or sometimes titled ‘early intervention’) services are defined as operating across Levels of Need (see Diagram 1 for an explanation of the different levels). Early Intervention in Rutland means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life, from the early years through to teenage years: ***preventing the problems occurring*,** providing targeted early help before any social care intervention or adding value and collaboration to a social care intervention: ***preventing problems escalating*,** and also ‘step down’ from social care where the aim is to prevent re-escalation and further statutory intervention: ***reducing the severity of problems.***

In Rutland we describe these as follows:

**Universal need**: Services working with children and families, to promote positive outcomes for everyone, by providing education, health services and other positive activities. Practitioners working in these services should identify where children and families would benefit from extra help at an early stage.

**Early Help and Targeted need**: Early help services focus on children, young people and families who may need support either through a single service or through an integrated multi-agency response. Agencies work with families where there are signs that without support a child may not achieve good outcomes and fulfil their potential. It applies the Early Help Assessment (Formerly CAF), where any partner agency can take on the role of the lead professional within universal settings.

Targeted services refers to interventions if the presenting issues suggest that additional and more targeted support is required that cannot be addressed earlier or at a lower level. Targeted services are also critical in preventing escalation into specialist services, and will also assist with continuing lower level support once a higher level intervention has been completed. In such cases the lead professional role may sit with the Local Authority Early Intervention team and commissioned services. These services are led by a skilled practitioner who offers intensive support and who uses a solution focussed approach and seeks to engage the whole family in their home or in their community.

**Specialist need**: Services focus on families with individual or multiple complex needs, who are at risk of significant harm or significant impairment to health or development, including where help has been requested through Section 17 a child in need and Section 47 where there is a need to investigate a significant safeguarding concern or where a specific disability or condition is diagnosed. Our Early Intervention model is made up of a combination of services structured around the levels of need allowing children and families support at the right time and at a level relevant to their need:

DIAGRAM 1.

Specialist

and

Early Help

Targeted

Universal

To ensure that the best possible support is provided to children and families there needs to be an early assessment of need considering the child’s developmental needs, family and environmental factors and parenting capacity. This assessment is undertaken through the Early Help Assessment.

Where the assessment identifies support needs that cannot be met by a single agency or service, there needs to be a co-ordinated response with local agencies working together to support the family. The Team around the Family (TAF) model is 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 to support an individual child or young person and their family. The members of the TAF develop and deliver a package of solution focused support to meet the needs identified through the assessment with a lead professional identified to co-ordinate the support and act as the key point of contact for the family and professionals/services. Decisions about who should be the lead professional should be taken on a case by case basis and should be informed by the child and their family.

The Early Intervention Co-ordinator is available to support Lead Professionals to initiate and deliver an Early Help assessment and a Team around the Family (TAF) process.

**4.1 Key professionals delivering early help services**

**Children’s Centre Services -** Children Centres are critical in ensuring that children reach their potential and are ready for school and adult life; they provide an environment that promotes growth and learning to enable the children to enter school eager and excited to learn. Rutland’s Children’s Centre known as ‘Visions’ is a multi-agency hub that provides a package of integrated services delivered by Rutland County Council staff, partner agencies and commissioned providers, and provides a range of services to children aged under 5 years and their families from its main base in Oakham and in outreach areas. As a result of the Information Sharing Protocol between Health and the Children's Centre the Children's Centre's are receiving weekly information on live births and families moving into the area and are able to offer new families support as early as possible.

**Schools -** Working with schools to ensure that they are addressing the emerging problems of their pupils, whilst in school and problems in their family life that may be impacting on their disposition to learn, and helping to ensure that appropriate early help services or interventions are available to them.

**Health -** A range of health services will provide valuable support to children and families and where possible the delivery of these services will be integrated with other relevant services for children and families, to try to ensure that they are provided in an accessible and integrated way and in an environment that best meets the needs of the child and family.

**Private and Voluntary Sector –** A range of commissioned services and interventions exists such as parenting support, domestic abuse, early learning and support to young people with additional needs. More detailed information can be found on Rutland’s Information Service on the Council’s website.

**4.2 Key professionals delivering targeted intervention services**

**Rutland County Council’s Targeted Intervention team–** a team of ‘skilled generalists’ offering a family a home based service that supports children, young people aged 5-19, (and up to 25 years for young people with a disability), and their families to function in their natural settings of home, school and neighbourhood. Targeted and in some cases intensive intervention will be put in place when children and young people are at risk of being excluded from their families, education and community. The practitioners in this team will hold specialist skills in working in the early years, with disabled children and with adolescents.

**Children’s Centre Services -** The Children’s Centre team will provide targeted one to one support to the most vulnerable families with children aged 0 to 5 in their home and in other outreach areas, such as the Ministry of Defence (MOD) bases.

**Private and Voluntary Sector –** A menu of commissioned services and interventions exists and includes, family group conferencing and play therapy, which can also be used for families who are already in statutory services.

**5. Rutland County Council’s People’s Directorate**

The Peoples Directorate is made up of the following services and teams:

* Children’s Safeguarding
* Early Intervention
* Education, Learning and Skills
* Adult Social Care
* Commissioning
* Business Intelligence

**5.1 Integrated support for children and families: the ‘Front’ Door to Children’s Services**

The Duty and Assessment Team: The team comprises co-located Social Care and Early Help staff. The current model is that social workers assess all initial contacts and referrals (via telephone and in writing using the online Multi Agency Referral Form) against the Threshold criteria. The Team Manager and the Senior Practitioner sign off all decisions on these initial contacts and referrals. The referral is processed in a timely way to the next stage as appropriate and an outcome is issued to the referrer. The duty team have access to key partners to inform their decision making and assessments. A partner agency seeking to discuss a referral or seek advice on thresholds can also speak to a Social Care Senior Practitioner or an Early Help Co-ordinator.

The social worker undertakes professional discussions with referrers when an initial contact is received. The purpose of these discussions is to gain a fuller understanding of the nature of the ‘concern’ and whether an ‘early help’ response should be attempted to resolve the issues. These discussions will enable robust feedback being provided to referrers and a better understanding of behaviours, attitudes and anxieties from professionals making referrals. These interactions will include providing support to access a range of interventions that are available as part of the early help offer. These professional discussions take place before a referral is accepted as requiring a social care response as set out in the Threshold document.

The Early Help Co-ordinator will actively follow up discussions with professionals about how to put in place an early help response. The purpose of this approach is to be proactive in identifying families that need support early on and recommend the right advice, at the right time, with the right intervention.

The duty and assessment team is led by a Team Manager who is a qualified social worker and has a strong understanding of early help. The Duty and Assessment team standard business operating model covers all initial contacts/referrals to children’s services from both professionals and members of the public

The outcomes include:

* Advice and guidance given
* Early Help Assessment needed
* Provision of services through early help and targeted intervention services
* Information sharing (i.e. Cafcass and court requests). .
* Initial/core assessment needed.
* Child Protection – Section 47 Enquiry.
* Local Authority Designated Officer referral.

Pathway to the Children’s Services Front Door

No further support needed

**Referral Pathway to Rutland’s Children’s Services**

**Concern raised about a child or a child in need of support?**

**Professionals working with children, young people and families**

**Member of the public**

**Contact the Duty team providing integrated support for children**

Email – childrensduty@rutland.gcsx.gov.uk

Telephone – 01572 722577 ext 8407

**Emergencies only**, *outside office hours and at weekends and bank holidays:* Tel: (0116) 305 0005

OR the police: Tel: (0116) 222 2222

**Safeguarding/**

**Child in Need**

Threshold met for social care intervention

Social Care Team commence

Single Assessment

Outcome recorded

Referrer advised

**Early Help Assessment or**

**Targeted Intervention Needed**

Does not meet threshold for statutory intervention

Single Agency or Multi-agency response and early help assessment needed

Referral supported by Early Help Coordinator and signposted to Early Help service, Targeted Intervention Service

Outcome recorded

**No Further Action**

Does not meet threshold for statutory intervention

Can be supported in Universal Services

Referrer advised and signposted on

Outcome recorded

Initial screening of enquiry within 2 hours by Duty Social Worker

supported by Early Help Coordinator

Safeguarding or Child in Need

Not Safeguarding

Within 24 hours

**For general enquiries about services for Children and Families**

**For information about services, organisations, events and activities, please visit the RCC Services Directory at** [**http://www.rutland.gov.uk/education\_and\_learning/family\_information\_service.aspx**](http://www.rutland.gov.uk/education_and_learning/family_information_service.aspx) **where you will find information relating to services for:**

* **Families, children and young people aged 0-19 years**
* **Families with children and young people who have special education needs and disabilities (The SEND Local Offer)**

Early Help Support needed?

**5.2 The Early Help /Early Intervention Service**

 The Early Intervention service has been created to deliver the priorities in the Early Help Strategy and the Children’s Trust‘s Children, Young People and Families’ Plan. The focus is to ensure risks and issues are dealt with at the earliest opportunity before problems escalate. This service is part of the People Directorate and through its work fulfils a number of statutory duties for which the Council has responsibility. The early intervention intention is to identify when children and families need help at the earliest opportunity through robust partnership working and shared intelligence, this will include developing services that support prospective parents, children in early years, in teenage life and through into early adulthood.

 The Council has identified that investing in early help and preventative services is key to supporting families and ensuring that children and families’ needs are identified and met early and issues do not escalate into high cost services unnecessarily. The Early Help service therefore undertakes roles that are crucial to delivering prevention and early help services, as well as working with partners to ensure that all resources are co-ordinated and focused in helping families as early as possible.

 The quality of the interventions that we offer to the children, young people and families that we work with is critical to our success. We want to make sure that as far as possible, the interventions offered are evidence-based and have achievable outcomes for the family. Interventions may be commissioned within the community - through the Aiming High Programme, the Changing Lives programme or provided directly by the Council’s Targeted Intervention team. The need for an early intervention response will usually be identified via:

* the Duty and Assessment team when the concern does not meet the threshold for statutory services
* through a complex case discussion process
* or those families stepping down from Social Care.

**5.3 The Early Help co-ordinators**

The Early Help Co-ordinators help deliver the vision for Early Help across the partnership in Rutland; including the Early Assessment process , the Changing Lives programme, the Aiming High programme and the participation and engagement of customers and communities. The Early Help co-ordinators will be the point of contact to respond to early help enquiries received via the Duty and Assessment Team.

The role of the Early Help co-ordinators is to help professionals to get the right support to children and families as early as possible to prevent crisis. Their responsibilities are to:

* Co-locate with the Social Care Duty and Assessment team to provide the ‘front door’ to children’s services.
* Oversee the Early Help Pathway and ensure the process is smooth, seamless and straightforward for families and early help professionals
* Identify families with increased risk of vulnerability using the ‘Signs of Safety’ approach
* Gather intelligence (build a picture) on the most vulnerable families
* Liaise with professionals already engaged with those families to share intelligence
* Support those professionals to undertake early help assessments to identify needs and to effectively apply thresholds
* Support those professionals to engage other organisations and agencies in identifying needs where needed (team around the family)
* Support professionals to engage families and professionals through ‘complex case discussions’ when the issues are becoming entrenched or the Early Assessment process is stuck.
* Advise those professionals which evidence-based intervention or service (s) would best meet the family’s needs and broker access to that service
* Provide advice and guidance to professionals about children and families needing early help, and about the early help pathway and processes. This will include receiving contacts direct from professionals and receiving requests for early help via the Duty and Assessment Team.
* To monitor progress of early help assessments and case progress, focussing particularly on those families identified as ‘most at risk of vulnerability’.
* Ensure professionals feel confident in delivering early help.

In addition to the above responsibilities, the Early Help co-ordinators will:

* Track the Changing Lives families list which identifies families most in need of early help support
* Prepare evidence and checks on families’ progress within the Changing Lives programme to support the audit process
* Build intelligence onto the case management systems where needed
* Support the quality assurance and multi-agency auditing process of early assessments

The Early Help co-ordinators do not:

* Case manage families or be a key worker for a family or duplicate the role of the Lead Professional
* Sign off safeguarding decisions about children or families
* Be an alternative to a robust assessment for children or families
* Attend Looked After Children (LAC), Children In Need (CIN), Child Protection (CP), strategy or conference meetings, unless it is to advise on service or intervention options once needs have been identified
* Be supervisors to lead professionals, therefore will not support practitioners in their practice decisions which remains the responsibility of the lead professional’s employing organisation

The Early Help co-ordinators deliver their responsibilities based on areas of greatest identified need. This will ensure resources are deployed appropriately to meet demand and will have a thorough understanding of the needs in the area.

**5.4 Changing Lives programme – ‘One family, One Plan, One Worker’**

The Early Intervention Service also carries a specific remit for delivering the national Troubled Families programme, in Rutland; this is known at the Changing Lives programme. Changing Lives families are a cohort of families in Rutland that have been identified using the agreed government criteria. An Early Help Co-ordinator will co-ordinate a service to these families in partnership with other agencies. The Programme funds a number of commissioned services to help ‘turn around families’.

Rutland has qualified for Phase 2 of the Troubled Families programme. The Government are clear in their expectation that Phase 2 must not be a simple expansion of a programme, but must ‘catalyse service transformation across early help’.

The criteria for Phase 2 have been expanded and will be based on ‘a cluster of six headline problems’. There will now be local discretion to determine which local families are eligible for Troubled Families based on the headline problems. The headline problems are:

• Parents and children involved in crime or antisocial behaviour

• Children who have not been attending school regularly

• Children who need help

• Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness

• Families affected by domestic violence and abuse

• Parents and children with a range of health problems

Consequently, problems being experienced by the adult are as important as the problems being experienced by the child. The Council and partners have created an Outcomes Plan that sets out key priorities and measurable outcomes for the programme

Local areas will also be able to determine what constitutes ‘significant and sustained progress for families and subsequently triggers a payment by results claim. Local auditors will still be responsible for scrutinising claims to ensure compliance with the government financial framework

**5.5 The Targeted Intervention Team**

The Targeted Intervention team will offer a family a home based service that supports children, young people and the whole family to function in their home, school or neighbourhood. The intervention would expect to support families for duration of up to 6 months; however this will be determined by the family’s intervention plan and their review meetings. The support will be delivered by Targeted Intervention Practitioners, overseen by a Team Manager who is a qualified Social Worker and senior practitioners. Practitioners will work as the family’s lead professional and deliver individualised interventions to the family using the Early Help Assessment process. The Targeted Intervention team will work as an integrated team, working to their specialisms in early years practice, disability services and youth and community work. They will work from the Children’s Centre, Jules House and other community venues: The will:

•Act as Lead Professional for the whole family

•Complete the early assessment and deliver the intervention plan and team around the family meetings

•Operate across the age range from 0 to 19 (25 for children with disabilities)

•Support and contribute to a Child in Need (CIN), Child Protection (CP), or Looked After Child (LAC) plan

The Targeted Intervention team tailors its offer to the needs of the family in their community in partnership with other local services through the Early Help Assessment process using the ***Signs of Safety*** approach.

Some of the interventions include:

* Practical parenting advice and support
* Interventions with children including building self-esteem, anger management and protective behaviours
* Linking families with relevant services in their local community
* Empowering families to manage problems affecting them, family relationships, boundary setting, implementing routines, housing and debt advice
* Access to practical support in getting back to work or re-engaging in education.

The team will also work with families who have just finished working with Children’s Social Care and need some extra support to reduce their likelihood of re-entering Children’s Social Care in the future. The support may be intensive support lasting a matter of weeks in their home and community or through a group work programme. The support offered is voluntary and is there for families who want to engage in positive change for their family after a period of involvement with Children’s Social Care. Some of the interventions include:

* Reinforcing the progress and the plan put in place with their social worker
* Practical parenting advice, support with housing and finances
* Strengthen adult and child and adult relationships

**Refer to the Rutland County Council Step Up Step Down Procedures and the Joint working Guidance**

**5.6 Services and Support for Disabled Children In Rutland**

 Rutland County Council and its partners are committed to:

• Meeting the needs of children with disabilities and their families/carers

• The active participation of children, young people, families and carers in their intervention plan and in shaping our services.

• Ensuring stable, secure, safe and effective care for all children at home, in school and in their community

• Protecting children from harm and neglect

• Promoting excellent educational outcomes for children and young people

• Planning and supporting young people to enjoy childhood and prepare for adulthood so that they can live as independently as possible and contribute as active citizens

 We offer a range of services which aim to provide comprehensive information and advice including individual and group interventions to support the development of disabled children, and to assist children and their families to lead lives which are as fulfilling as possible.

 We work closely with lots of different professionals including; health visitors, schools, health support workers and occupational therapists to ensure that a multi-disciplinary approach is at the forefront.

 **The Aiming High Programme**

 The Aiming High Programme is an ‘early help’ function that enables children with disabilities (up to the age of 25), and their carers to access support quickly and effectively without lengthy or unnecessary assessments of need. The main element of the Aiming High Programme is the delivery of short breaks, which includes access to leisure activities, day time care in the child’s home and residential opportunities. The provision is made up of two components:

1. Specialist activities such as group and club sessions. These are available to all children and young people who are on the disability register in Rutland.

2. The Aiming High Short Breaks Scheme: The scheme aims to meet the individual needs and interests of children and young people who require additional support to either access or engage in either universal or specialist leisure activities. Families receive a payment which allows them to access the most appropriate short breaks to meet their needs. For example, they may decide to use it to pay for swimming or riding lessons, trips out, specialist play schemes or they may even choose to employ a support worker to help their child access activities in the wider community. Children/ young people who are in receipt of higher level Disability Living Allowance (care component) or have a place at a special school and are in receipt of mid-rate Disability Living Allowance are eligible for the Aiming High Short Breaks scheme.

 The team works closely with the Disabled Children’s service now located in the Early Intervention service to support families to access short breaks support or respite and to support them through a statutory assessment and through transitions to adulthood.

 **The Children with Disability Team (CWDT)**

 This service is an integral part of our early intervention offer. The team works closely with colleagues across children and adult services and our partner agencies, to support children and young people and their families, where the child/young person is aged 0-18 years and has a severe disability (physical, sensory or learning) and/or a long-term complex health condition. The service may also provide support and intervention for some children/young people who have challenging behaviour associated with their disabilities.

 Where a statutory social care assessment has not taken place or prior to one being undertaken, there are a range of packages of care to meet the needs of the child or young person. Needs may be met through:

• Universal services such as school, general practitioner, health and community activities.

• Aiming High group activities which aim to promote independence and social skills whilst also providing a short break for carers and families.

• Aiming High short breaks scheme where eligible families receive funding to create their own short breaks, often with support from a Personal Assistant (PA).

• A one to one targeted intervention delivered in the child’s home or community by one of our Targeted Intervention Practitioners

 Where a statutory social care assessment identifies there is a need for a higher level of support than that detailed, above then the child or young person is deemed Child in Need (CIN) and is allocated a social worker. The child or young person will have a CIN Plan and suitable package of care agreed with them to meet their needs and will have a CIN meeting every 12 weeks. These are multi-disciplinary meetings and include parents and the child/young person to monitor and support the progress which is being made in all areas of development right through to independence.

 Where a child or young person also has an Education,Health and Care Plan (EHCP), any support offered via our early help or social care services will be included and reviewed as part of this plan.

 What’s working well

* 1. We intervene through our integrated early help offer to support children with additional needs and their families as soon as additional needs emerge including in the early years.
	2. We try to ensure through our Aiming High offer and our Early Help Assessments that the needs of a child and the family are met as soon as possible and at a low level to avoid unnecessary statutory intervention or repeated assessments for families
	3. We involve parents and carers in the design and evaluation of our services – their satisfaction levels are high.
	4. We offer support to siblings and family members of children with additional needs to ensure there needs are recognised and met and they receive relief from their caring duties

 What we want to do better

* 1. We will ensure we keep children safe and continue to support families but minimise the disruption and number of meetings families need to attend and will integrate better our assessments and our review meetings
	2. We will increase the personal choice children and young people and their families’ have by ensuring the child’s voice in our plans and promoting the use of personalised budgets
	3. We will work with our colleagues in schools to identify emerging needs and support them to maintain in the interests of a child their place in school and in their home.
	4. We will ensure value for money by providing a robust decision making process to our placement decisions and costs

**5.7 Youth Service Provision**

The service provides for young people aged 11 to 19, and up to 25 years, (for young people with a learning difficulty), educational and recreational activities aimed at improving their well-being with a particular focus on personal and social development. Key activities include:

* Supporting young people to participate and engage in the design, review and evaluation of services including the delivery of the Youth Council, Young Inspectors, Young Carers and other ‘voice’ groups.
* Delivery of activities including weekly youth club provision and a positive activities programme, during the day, in the evening and at weekends in Oakham, Uppingham, the Barracks and some of the outlying villages.
* Targeted one to one services such as mentoring support and advocacy.
* Sexual health, emotional health and well-being and CSE advice and support.

The Youth Options Service provides information, advice and guidance to young people aged 16-19 years and up to 25 years where there is a statement of educational need (now Education, Health and Care Plan). The service aims to assist young people to participate in education, training and employment and supports the duty of the authority under the Education Act 1996. The team will track young people’s participation in education. The Service collects information about all young people so that those who are not participating, or are not in education employment or training (NEET), can be identified and given support to re-engage.

**5.8 Children Centre Services**

The ‘Visions’ Children's Centre delivers a range of services to families from pregnancy right through to when the child goes into reception class at primary school. Universal Children’s Centre services are delivered by Rutland’s Adult Learning Services (RALS), the Library Service and the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA) in outreach centres, such as libraries and village halls. Their range of services which are open to everyone includes:

* Information and Advice Service
* Activities such as Stories, Songs and Rhymes groups.

Universal health services, such as ante-natal and post-natal support from midwives and health visitors, are also part of the overall offer and can be accessed in the Children's Centre at Catmose College. Parents can find out details and make appointments where necessary via their Health Centre or the health professional working with them by contacting the Visions Children Centre

In addition to these universal services, the Children Centre team directly deliver or commission providers to deliver a range of Children's Centre services for families identified as needing early help and targeted support.  These may be based in Children’s Centres, in community venues and in families' homes.  The activities on offer vary according to the needs identified in each area but are likely to include:

* Parenting courses to support new parents who are experiencing challenging behaviour in their children
* Family learning groups, for example skills to return to work, healthy cookery, money management
* Early learning activities, for example sing and sign or time to talk
* One to one family support in the parents' home or in the community

Families can self-refer, or a professional such as the health visitor, midwife, family support worker or social worker already working with the family can support them through referral to the Children’s Centre who will work with them to create an action plan based on the identified needs.  If other agencies are involved, the Children's Centre will work within the Early Help Assessment process.

**5.9. Administrative and Business Support**

• The administrative and business support team provide a complementary business support service including the administration and tracking of the Early Help Assessments, the Aiming High and Changing Lives contracts.

• Gather and collate management information to support the Quality Assurance and Performance and financial reporting processes

• Provide reception cover and across the sites

**5.10.** There are a range of other services to support families which are commissioned by Rutland County Council and Public Health. These include Domestic Abuse support, Drug and Alcohol support, mental health support through CAMHS, Housing support, welfare advice through Citizens Advice Rutland.

**6.** The **Early Help Assessment**

 This is a key process in relation to recording an early assessment of need and risk within a family and is referred to within the LLR LSCB Thresholds document. This assessment process enables practitioners to assess a range of issues related to a family’s wellbeing and its strengths and needs. This in turn enables practitioners to identify an appropriate course of action to address the family’s needs. This process is supported by the Early Help Co-ordinators who can support and advise practitioners on the use of the Early Help Assessment process. All targeted interventions provided by the council are delivered within the Early Help Assessment framework and the *Signs of Safety* approach.

**Refer to the Rutland County Council Early Assessment Process Guidance**

**7. Pathways to Early Help and Targeted Intervention**

Cases are accepted into the Early Intervention service through four referral pathways

* Via the Children’s Service ‘front door’ from the Duty and Assessment Team initial contacts and referrals
* Cases stepping down from Social Care
* Self-referral to universal services such as the Children Centre or youth clubs and mentoring

Cases will be accepted for support where children, young people and families are evidenced to be experiencing additional needs, which may be numerous or more serious/complex in nature and having a significant impact on children’s achievement of expected outcomes and is likely to require more targeted support, potentially from a number of agencies. This may require the identification of a lead professional to co-ordinate the support provided to the family.

* Family must be in agreement to a referral and to engage with an Early Intervention Service.
* Family must have contemplated the need for change or be willing to work on presenting issues.

**7.1 Step down from Social Care**

Cases may be allocated or referred to the Early Intervention service when being stepped down from social care in the following ways:

*Children in Need/Child Protection to Targeted Intervention*

At completion of a statutory intervention a social worker will complete a case closure assessment. During this assessment it may be identified that whilst the case may be ready to move out of statutory support, additional support for the child and families would be useful to support an effective and sustainable step down. In such a case the social worker will make a referral through to the Early Intervention, Targeted Intervention Team Manager who will review the referral for completeness and appropriateness and allocate to the appropriate team.

*Post initial /single assessment transfer to Early Assessment or Targeted Intervention*

Some cases progressed in the Duty team to initial/single assessment will result in a recommendation and referral for a targeted support intervention. These cases will be referred to the team through the Step Down route as above. These cases will have been reviewed by the Social Care Team Manager or Senior with input from the Early Help Co-ordinator

 *Duty and Assessment Team referrals to Early Assessment and Targeted Intervention*

An outcome of a Duty Team referral could be a direct referral for a Targeted intervention. As part of the duty team assessment the case will be reviewed with the Early Help Co-ordinator and a referral to Targeted Intervention completed.

 *Recommendations for Early Help Assessment from the Duty and Assessment Team*

Through the Duty and Assessment team assessment a recommendation for Early Help Assessment for families may be made if the assessment is that support is required but not at a targeted intervention level. In these circumstances the Duty and Assessment Team will send a referral outcome letter to a named person or the safeguarding lead within the most appropriate agency to undertake the Lead Professional role. The letter will advise that an Early Help Assessment is completed to identify what support can be put around a family. The letter will also include details of how to access support about the Early Help Assessment process.

All partners are asked to respond promptly to an Early Help Assessment recommendation and to advise the Early Help co-ordinator if they need support to complete the Early Help Assessment. The Early Help co-ordinator will follow up recommendations within a specified timescale.

**7. 2 Step Up to Social Care**

If during the regular reviews of the needs of and risks to the child via the use of the Early Help Assessment, it is decided that safeguarding concerns are present, and a referral to the Duty and Assessment team is required, practitioners should follow this process:

* Follow the Safeguarding Procedures of their own organisation and that of the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB)
* Contact the Duty and Assessment Team
* All Early Help Assessment documentation including the risk assessment should be updated and identify any changes to the child’s circumstances and any new needs and sent with the referral
* If a child protection concern is raised within a Team Around the Family meeting, the professionals present should mandate the lead professional to make the referral.

The Early Help Assessment will remain open until the referrer and lead professional are informed that one of the following outcomes has resulted from the referral:

* A Section 47 investigation is initiated
* A Single or Core Assessment is initiated
* A social worker is allocated to the case

**8. Complex Case Discussions**

These discussions are intended for those children where there are intractable issues that require a multi-agency discussion *in addition to* those that may have already taken place, for example, an Early Help Assessment review. The Early Help Co-ordinators can be contacted at any time to request advice on any early help and prevention case that is subject to an Early Help Assessment and where there are issues of concern via the Duty and Assessment team either from an Early Help Co-ordinator or the Social Care professional.

A professional may ask for the Early Help co-ordinator to support a complex case discussion meeting with other partners. Consent for a case discussion must be obtained from the family by the person requesting the discussion. If concerns raised can be resolved without coming to a meeting, the referrer will be contacted by the Early Help Co-ordinator, with advice and any actions required from them or to be completed by others.

If a case is deemed to need specialist services or social care the following process is followed:

1. If there is a safeguarding concern it will be directed to the Duty and Assessment team.

**9. Early Years Free Entitlement and Funded Early Learning**

There are two programmes of Early Learning funded through Rutland County Council, the universal offer for 3 and 4 year olds and the eligibility based 2 year old scheme. The Early Years’ team within the Education, Learning and Skills service administer and manage the 2 schemes.

**10. Early Prevention Systems and Processes**

The Early Help and Targeted Intervention service currently use a range of systems to collect, track and monitor data and activity across the services, these include:

* Liquid Logic is the primary case management recording tool, ( since June 2016) for cases worked by Early Intervention and Social Care Services
* The Children’s Centre use the E-Start system to track and report on registrations and contact with families under 5 years
* The Youth Service will utilise the IYSS system to report on young people engaged in education, employment or training and one to one mentoring
* Raise and SharePoint will contain archive case information prior to June 2016.

 **11. Voice of the Child**

The Early Help Assessment process explicitly requires that the view of the child is identified as part of the assessment process. The Early Help Assessment process is based on the ***Signs of Safety*** approach which provides practitioners with a range of tools that can be used at different stages of the assessment and intervention process to improve the quality of the involvement of children and young people.

Evidence of the ‘voice of the child’ is sought in the internal quality assurance process and in contract management processes. The Quality Assurance Practice Standards in Early Intervention set explicit expectations about children and parents’ engagement and involvement in interventions, including and where possible the child and young person completing their own assessment of their needs and contributing to their individual intervention plan. Parents and children if developmentally appropriate are invited to every case review meeting.

Feedback is sought from service users at close of an Early Help Assessment or a one to one or group interventions. Parents and young people are asked to comment on the quality of the information they receive at the start of the process, their level of understanding of the intervention and their satisfaction with the lead professional and the intervention plan.

**12. Quality Assurance**

The Early Intervention service works within the Directorate’s Quality Assurance and Performance Framework and a programme of audit activity is undertaken to improve the quality of the reflective discussion and to maximise the learning for practitioners across the service. These reflective case audits are complemented by observational audits of home visits; team around the family meetings and of supervision sessions.

The learning from this activity is captured and shared among all Early Help and Targeted intervention staff in a variety of ways including formal training, staff conferences, 1:1 support and supervision. Team Managers and teams are receiving support from the QA Safeguarding Manager to support the Quality Assurance process and establish consistent good practice and confidence across the service.

***Refer to the Rutland County Council Children’s Service QA and Performance Framework***

Consistent and appropriate application of thresholds is achieved by cases being reviewed by a Targeted Intervention Team Manager or Senior Practitioner. The senior practitioner will risk assess each case to determine its suitability for an early intervention. The intervention and response for a family will be fully integrated in to the early help offer and a case that comes from the Duty and Assessment team, or that steps down from social care can be allocated to any practitioner across the Targeted Intervention team.

Integrated working across Social Care and Early Intervention is intended to enable a smooth transfer for a family and to secure early engagement with the family and identify support that needs to be put in place quickly through the menu of early intervention and prevention services.

**13. Performance and Impact**

The Early Intervention service monitors and track the performance of its internal services, commissioned services and partnership activity through a range of tools.

* Performance Scorecard – The Early Intervention Scorecard combines a range of management information, performance indicators and outcomes data that enable the Directorate to assess the overall performance of its interventions and partnership activity.
* Children’s Services Development Plan – The plan has been designed to focus on specific performance improvement areas and is designed to drive rapid and continuous improvement.
* Contract monitoring of children services contracts is in place. The format varies, according to the size of contract, and includes qualative and quantative information, financial monitoring and audits.

**14. Training and Development**

The integration and co-location of staff that currently exists in the Early Intervention service, brings a multidisciplinary perspective to case work and is establishing interpersonal trust and building a shared set of beliefs and practice. There are suitably trained and experienced practitioners delivering high quality early help support packages in and beyond the County Council. They act as a single point of contact for the family, providing direct support or co-ordinate additional interventions from a range of services and organisations.

 A comprehensive People’s Directorate Workforce Development Strategy ensures that practitioners have access to good quality training and supervision. Lessons learned from case work and serious case reviews across the partnership are informing training programmes. Practitioners receive monthly supervision and the opportunity for peer supervision and case discussion is in development as part of the Signs of Safety Implementation Plan. Practitioners and managers partake in the Council’s Performance and Development Review (PDR) programme and mandatory and role specific training has been identified for all front line practitioners.

Caseloads are manageable and the majority of staff report working within their required number of hours. Prioritising time with families and completing administrative tasks can be difficult to get the right balance between delivering intensive interventions with families, and the time spent providing recorded evidence of their interventions on the case recording system. Practitioners are provided with the tools to help them do their job, such as IT facilities to support remote working and administrative support with data entry and tracking.

**15. Working with Partners** **Multi-Agency Engagement/Partnership Working**

 Rutland believes that every partner has a part to play in improving the lives of families within Rutland. One of the key strategic arrangements we have for multi-agency, partnership working is the Children’s Trust. The Trust produces and works to a Children and Young People and Families Plan, 2016 – 2019. It provides the governance and performance monitoring of the delivery of the Early Help Strategy.

 In accordance with DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015, LLR LSCB Thresholds document, describes the roles and responsibilities of all those working with children, from universal to specialist and confirms the Early Assessment as the vehicle for identifying early help needs and the 'Team Around the Family (TAF) as the vehicle for early help and support.

 Likewise, the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (LLR) Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB) can provide further evidence and examples of inter-agency collaboration and multi-agency working. There is a shared endeavour and common interest in supporting consistent practice to safeguard children across all agencies as set out in the LSCB Business Plan priorities for 2016 – 2017.