

Offer of Early Help for Children, Young People and Families

What is early help?

Early help is about children, young people and families getting the right help at the right time, before issues get worse.

Being a parent is one of the most important jobs there is - it is also one of the hardest. Parents are the key to giving children a happy and stable childhood.

There is no such thing as the perfect family. Every family is unique with its own combination of strengths and weaknesses. Any family can get overwhelmed by what seems like endless challenge when it comes to juggling money, school and each other's needs. And sometimes families are disrupted by an upheaval such as a mental or physical illness, a job loss, or an addiction. Even "joyful" events such as a wedding or a new job can bring unexpected problems.

Every family is different; each needs options from which to choose to find an early solution to challenges as they arise. This solution could be as simple, for example, as talking with a worker in the Academy; with a voluntary worker; a faith worker; a GP; a health visitor or using a self help checklist.

The Early Help Offer (the Offer) is an approach not a service. It respects every family's right to access information to help manage their own lives successfully, whilst guiding them to seek support from appropriate sources. Help can then be agreed as soon as concerns start to emerge. The 'Offer' is for all children, as issues may arise at any point in a child or young person's life. It includes both universal and targeted /specialist services, to reduce or prevent concerns from growing or becoming entrenched

Early Help in Gloucestershire

In Gloucestershire, we believe that families are best supported by those who are already working with them, with additional support from local partners arranged as needed. Children and families are entitled to early help if and when they need it. It may also be provided through an increase in the levels of universal services, or services provided or commissioned in localities.

When children and families need additional support, a coordinated multi-disciplinary approach led by a Lead Practitioner is usually best.

When families -and professionals who are helping them - need more support, this can be requested from Early Help Partnerships. There are six Early Help Partnerships across Gloucestershire and each has a fortnightly Allocations Group. These are made up of representatives of services who decide the help that's needed and offer advice, guidance and support to Practitioners. These groups are supported by Families First Plus teams in each District.

To access support, a Request for Support form needs to be completed along with a Consent form from the family and sent to your locality Families First Plus inbox.

In Gloucestershire, with partners, we have built on the positives of the Common Assessment Framework and SEND Graduated Pathway to develop one, holistic pathway of early help and support that meets the needs of all children and their families with additional needs.

The "Gloucestershire Family Information Service" provides easy-to-access information to help families meet their needs and it is also used by professionals when supporting families.

www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk

Graduated pathway of Early Help and support

The Graduated pathway is Gloucestershire's response to ensuring Early Help is available to all children, young people and their families with additional needs, whether these are educational, social or emotional needs or a disability.

The Graduated Pathway is based on a simple Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle and has the following graduated responses which can be used in any order depending on what would best meet the needs of the child or young person:

My Profile – A My profile can be completed with any child even if there are no concerns about the child's wellbeing or development. The My Profile helps a child or young person to share personal information which can help professionals working with them to understand what motivates them, their preferences, their goals and their self-image. It can also help professionals to understand what form of communication is most meaningful to the child or young person.

My Plan – A My Plan is used when it is clear what the presenting needs are and who or what can help. It is a holistic child or family centred plan and can be used as a single or multi-agency plan. The My Plan should draw together existing information to identify the current needs and set out the outcomes to be achieved. The My Plan allows professionals working with children and families to quickly and simply draw together an action plan to co-ordinate the appropriate help and support for the child and/or family at the earliest opportunity.

The My Plan + is the Plan developed from the My Assessment. The '+' indicates to other professionals that an assessment has been completed to ensure there is not duplication of work and that the family do not have to tell their story repeatedly. The My Assessment and My Plan + must be completed together with the family so that they can be empowered to make changes for themselves.

An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) – an EHC Plan is a statutory plan that has replaced a Statement of SEN. An EHC Plan may be needed when a child or young person's educational needs cannot be met within existing additional resource already delegated to the school. The Local Authority assesses this need based on the evidence provided.

Early Help at Dursley C of E Primary Academy

As an Academy we work closely with services across Gloucestershire to offer Early Help and follow the graduated pathway. Our intended outcomes for children, young people and families are:

- enhanced life chances as a result of the well documented benefits of Early Help in preventing issues later in life
- an all age integrated service providing continuous support across age groups and for the whole family
- an easy to access one stop service with no wrong front door
- co-ordinated support resulting in maximised opportunities and outcomes for children, young people and families
- a relationship with a known and trusted key worker, whilst benefiting from the pooled knowledge and skills of a range of professionals.

The strategies and practice we follow to achieve these objectives are:

- To ensure all staff are aware of those pupils currently considered at risk
- To train all our staff and volunteers in how to identify the early signs that a child or family are struggling
- To ensure all staff know our Child Protection Policy, who to refer concerns to and how to escalate matters if not satisfied with responses
- To have two members of staff trained as Designated Safeguarding Leads with a clear job description outlining their responsibilities
- To have a trained SEND co-ordinator who is also lead for inclusion and mental health to meet the needs of children and their families
- To have a member of staff trained as a PSA (Pupil Support Advisor) to support children and families
- To have 2 members of staff trained to be lead professionals to run CAFs (Common Assessment Framework).
- To run a Nurture Group with fully trained members of staff to support pupils and families
- We are currently part of a Gloucestershire NHS project for Mental Health enabling early help for children and families both through trained school staff with a designated lead and engagement with key agencies.
- We currently hold the Achievement for All Quality Mark, an approach that enables staff and families to build strong links and understanding, particularly through a 'Structured Conversation' approach.
- To ensure careful management of children and families at transition points both on entry and exit as well as during their time with us.
- To liaise carefully with the Local Authority when a child's behaviour places them at risk of exclusion
- To continually liaise with outside agencies to ensure prompt and appropriate support
We are registered with GSCB's alert service and receive their newsletter service which ensures staff are kept up to date with the latest Serious Case Reviews and their implications for our practice.
- To support Children and Young Person's Services to ensure that multi-Agency work can have the maximum impact

If you believe a child or young person is at significant risk of harm

Call the Children's Help Desk

01452 426 565