



Northamptonshire's Partnership Early Help Strategy

Because Early Help Builds Strong Families

September 2020

[Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Website](#)

[Northamptonshire Early Help Website](#)

Contents

Foreword.....	3
Partnership Mission Statement and three key priorities:	4
What Children, Young People and Families say about Early Help at Tier 2.....	4
1. What is Early Help?	4
2. What is our partnership vision for Early Help in Northamptonshire?	5
3. What is our partnership ambition for Early Help in Northamptonshire?	6
4. What is the Evidence Base for Early Help?	6
5. Whose Responsibility is Early Help?	7
6. Why is Early Help important for Northamptonshire?.....	8
7. Because we want the early help system to be well understood, and functioning effectively, so that children and families can get help when they need it	12
8. What does effective Early Help look like for children, young people and families?	13
9. What does effective Early Help look like for professionals?.....	13
10. What does effective Early Help look like for public and voluntary sector services?	14
11. What is the Early Help Offer?.....	14
12. What have we done to improve Early Help up to now?	15
13. What will we do to develop Early Help in the period 2020-23 and how will we do it?.....	16
14. How will we know if our Early Help is working?	17
15. Outcome Indicators for Early Help in Northamptonshire.....	17
16. Where can I find more information about Early Help in Northamptonshire?.....	19
17. Linked Strategies.....	19

Foreword

This strategy will be part of a suite of strategies which seek to mirror and support the priorities of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership. The Partnership will work together to identify and respond to the needs of children and families and will operate in line with the requirements of the statutory guidance set out in "Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

The Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership covers the geographical area of Northamptonshire, as defined by the local authority boundaries which corresponds with the geographical footprints of Northamptonshire's CCGs and Constabulary.

Reports released by a range of bodies and individuals (for example Munro, Graham Allen MP and Frank Field MP) unequivocally support the principle that prevention and early help can both improve outcomes for children and families and reduce service costs.

Based on this consensus, Early Help in Northamptonshire has a single goal: to enable children and families to access appropriate support as early as possible so that they can maintain their quality of life, prevent any problems getting worse and feel stronger, happier and more confident.

The Northamptonshire Early Help Subgroup and the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership champion the vital importance of helping children and young people at the earliest point to provide them with the best opportunity for the future. Through effective early help, we will also prevent families from escalating to statutory high cost services.

It is important that we all have a shared vision of how our collective workforce supports Northamptonshire's 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.

Throughout this document, you will see quotes from partners involved in early help. This is a true partnership vision, a commitment by all involved in work with children and families to getting early help to families that need it.

In short, in Northamptonshire, Early Help is never 'someone else's problem' and there is no such thing as "no further action".

Partnership Mission Statement and three key priorities:

Mission Statement

For the children and young people of Northamptonshire to be as safe as they can be from harm, exploitation and neglect.

Priority One : Taking positive action early enough to protect children

Priority Two : To support children, young people and families who are at risk of exploitation

Priority Three : To work effectively as a partnership and support our staff

What Children, Young People and Families say about Early Help at Tier 2

"I really liked my worker, no one shouts at home anymore and we go to the park and do fun stuff now" - 8 year old

"Our Early Help plan has been fantastic in motivating me to change my life for the sake of not only my children's lives but my own" - Mum of 3 children

"I am now living free from my abusive relationship, my children are thriving in school with the additional support they need. I couldn't have changed my life and turned things around if I hadn't had Early Help support" - Domestic Abuse survivor

"I feel this (parenting) course has helped me understand so much more about my son's behaviour and how to deal with it. Thank you so much for helping me with my kids" - Triple P group attendee

"I sometimes wonder where I would be without the help from my support worker" - young person aged 17

1. What is Early Help?

"Early help means 'providing support as soon as the problem emerges, at any point in the child's life from the foundation years through to the teenage years."

Working Together (2018)

Early help is a collaboration not a service. In its simplest terms *everyone* is involved in the delivery of early help. This includes families, communities, voluntary groups, "universal" provision, schools, health and targeted support.

Although research shows that the most impact can be made during a child's early years, early help is not just for very young children, as problems may emerge at any point throughout childhood and adolescence. Children and families are entitled to early help if and when they need it.

The purpose of early help is, through prompt and targeted interventions, to prevent issues and problems becoming acute, chronic and costly to the child, young person, the family and the wider community.

Early help may be provided through an increase in the levels of universal services, or services provided or commissioned in clusters; this includes family support provided by schools and third sector services. Families are best supported by those who already work with them organising additional support with local partners as needed.

This strategy expects Early Help in Northamptonshire to be offered to all children and young people who need it. This ranges from the antenatal period to adolescents age 19 years (and up to 25 for children and young people with SEND).

Early help is voluntary and consent from children, young people and their families to work with them should always be sought.

2. What is our partnership vision for Early Help in Northamptonshire?

The focus of this strategy is Early Help and aims to articulate the current offer and ambition for strengthening this work over the next 3 years. In order for this to be accurate and realistic there will need to be a strong focus on:

- Being informed by what children, young people and families tell us about what they find helpful when they need help additional to that which is universally available
- Understanding what is happening through the use of data and information and via direct insights from practitioners and children and young people
- Being fully knowledgeable and briefed on the key safeguarding issues, both current and emerging, in particularly on exploitation of children and young people (including sexual, criminal exploitation and the changing gang culture in the County)
- Considering safeguarding in the context of all influences on children and young people to gather information from the statutory partners and relevant other partners in such a way as to establish patterns and key points of change
- Looking at the effective use of resources across and between partners to seek opportunities for the unified deployment of resources (staff, money, capital resources)
- Looking outward to the public in order to be sensitive to local needs and to create an effective dialogue with communities

Our early help vision is based on that included in the Early Help System Guide (2020) published by MHCLG and our shared focus in Northamptonshire is on better outcomes for children and families.

All children are safe

All children achieve their best in education, are ready for work and have skills for life

All children grow up healthy and have improved life chances

All vulnerable children achieve the best possible outcomes

Our principles for Early Help in Northamptonshire include:

- Supporting children and families to find their own solutions and help them build support networks within the community
- Working with the views and experience of the child and family, being solution focused and building on the strengths of the child and family so that they can be independent of services
- Being clear in our work with children and families about the intended outcomes and how to achieve these

3. What is our partnership ambition for Early Help in Northamptonshire?

This is an ambitious strategy designed to transform the provision of family support in Northamptonshire; improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children and reduce the need for acute or specialist services. Key to achieving this ambition is a multi-agency commitment to providing effective, proportionate and high quality early help and supporting families to have their needs met in their local communities.

Central to this is ensuring that all children, young people and their families receive the help they need as soon as they need it from people they know already. Trust in the system will be supported through governance and oversight by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Early Help subgroup which has a membership derived from all agencies involved in the provision of Early Help.

Our goal is to work together and build relationships with families in order support children and young people to achieve good outcomes. We will ensure families can trust the professionals they work with and will only have to tell their story once.

Working together, we will implement the recommendations of the *Early Help System Guide* (2020) published by the Troubled Families Team at The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and will create a system wide annual action plan based on the findings of the Early Help System Questionnaire.

Early Help and Police

"Northamptonshire Police is committed to the development of early help and intervention through working with our partners. It is essential that our collective response is co-ordinated to ensure our resources are used efficiently and effectively. The Early Help Partnership Strategy is an illustration of our collective commitment to this mission."

Jamie Piscopo MSc, Detective Superintendent, Head of Prevention & Intervention, Northamptonshire Police

4. What is the Evidence Base for Early Help?

There is indisputable national evidence that early help is effective for children and families, illustrated by the following excerpts from 'Early Intervention – the Next Steps' (Allen, 2011):

A child's development score at just 22 months can serve as an accurate predictor of educational outcomes when they are 26.

The California Adverse Childhood Experiences Study estimated that 54% of current depression and 58% of suicide attempts in women can be attributed to adverse childhood experience. Poor maternal mental health is subsequently linked to poorer outcomes. Early Intervention will have a positive effect on mental health.

Farrington and others found that aggressive behaviour at the age of 8 is a predictor of the following when the subject is aged 30: criminal behaviour, arrests, convictions, traffic offences (especially drunk driving), spouse abuse and punitive treatment of their own children. The Dunedin Study found that those boys assessed by nurses at the age of 3 as being 'at risk' had 2.5 times as many criminal convictions as the group deemed not to be at risk at age 21. In addition, 55% of the offences committed were violent for the at-risk group, as opposed to 18% for those not at risk. Early Intervention will have a positive effect on reducing crime

Deep, long-lasting, emotional attachment influences mind, body, emotions, relationships and values and has a positive effect on self-esteem, independence, the ability to make both temporary and enduring relationships, empathy, compassion, and resilience. Research has long shown that people with an insecure attachment are more likely to have social and emotional difficulties. For example, some forms of insecure attachment are associated with significantly elevated levels of perpetrating domestic violence and higher levels of alcohol and substance misuse.

The returns from intervening early have been well documented. For example, an evaluation by the RAND Corporation of the Family Nurse Partnership (a programme targeted to support 'at-risk' families by supporting parental behaviour to foster emotional atonement and confident non-violent parenting) estimated that the programme provided savings for high-risk families by the time children were aged 15. These savings (over five times greater than the cost of the programme) came in the form of reduced welfare and criminal justice expenditures, higher tax revenues, and improved physical and mental health.

5. Whose Responsibility is Early Help?

Every person working with or engaging with children and families, regardless of organisation, status or position, has a responsibility to help deliver early help. Without shared responsibility – cross sector whether public, private, voluntary or community – we run the risk of missing an opportunity to get help to children and families quickly.

The Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership has the highest aspirations for all children and young people in Northamptonshire and wants them to experience a positive journey into adulthood.

Early Help in Northamptonshire puts the responsibility on everyone who engages with children and families to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs, irrespective of whether they are providing services to children or adults. Early Help in Northamptonshire includes universal services (services that all children and families can access like Health Visitors, School Nurses, GPs, early years' settings and schools). Professionals working in

these kinds of services are often best placed to identify children and families who may be at risk of poor outcomes.

When we identify need, we must support children and families back on to a positive trajectory as soon as possible. At all times, we must aim to get children, young people and families to a safe and strong position where they can be effectively supported by universal services, with the skills to problem solve and find their own solutions to and help themselves wherever possible.

6. Why is Early Help important for Northamptonshire?

There are specific needs in Northamptonshire that show why early help is critical for our children and families. These issues are not unique to our county, but they are all things where we should be doing better, especially when compared to the rest of England and our statistical neighbours.

Because we want all children to be safe

The Issue	The Scale of the Issue
Too many children are referred more than once to the Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH) because someone was concerned about their safety	In 2018/19 the percentage of referrals to social care with a previous referral within 12 months was 29.4%. Our statistical neighbour average was 22.1%
Too many children become looked after by Northamptonshire County Council and are looked after too long	At the end of 2017/18 there were 1,092 children looked after in Northamptonshire. At the end of 2018/19 there were 1,115 children looked after in Northamptonshire. This amounts to 65.0 children looked after per 10,000 children, while our statistical neighbours average was 60.72. The current average length of care for children aged 10+ is more than 3.5 years
Too many children are on child protection plans, especially due to neglect	Northamptonshire's rate of children who were the subject of a child protection plan at 31 March 2019 was 40.0 per 10,000 children. Our statistical neighbour was 45.5. 320 children out of 661 presented with neglect ¹
Too many children are exposed to domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse in their families, and to sexual exploitation	In 2018/19 there were 175 referrals for child sexual exploitation concerns In Northamptonshire approximately 14,000 children are affected by parental drug or alcohol use ²

¹ Characteristics of Children in Need, 2018-19. DFE (gov.uk)

² Children Who Misuse Drugs or Alcohol. NSCB Procedures online

	In 2014/15, Northamptonshire Police had recorded 3362 incidents of domestic abuse where children were present.
Too many young people are admitted to hospital for injuries	In 2018/19 there were 1660 hospital admissions caused by injuries in young people aged 15-24 in Northamptonshire, equating to 208.6 per 10,000. England's average was 136.9 and England's best rate was 56.06. ³

Because we want all children to achieve their best in education, be ready for work and have skills for life

The Issue	The Scale of the Issue
Too many children are excluded from Northamptonshire schools	In 2017/18 0.2% of Northamptonshire's secondary school population were permanently excluded compared to 0.21% statistical neighbour average. 4.4% of our secondary school population had a fixed term exclusion (4.4% statistical neighbour average) ⁴ <i>NB 2018/19 data to be published mid-August 2020..</i>
Too many children are not achieving their expected progress levels in education	In 2019 the percentage of Northamptonshire's children achieving a good level of development within Early Years Foundation Stage Profile was 71%. Our statistical neighbour average was 72.2%. England's average was 71.88 In the same year, the percentage of Northamptonshire's young people achieving a grade 9-4 pass at in GCSE Maths and English was 63.2%. Our statistical neighbour average was 65.2% and England's average was 59.5%
Too many young people are not in education, employment or training	4.6% of our young people aged 16-17 were NEET at the end of 2018, statistically better rate than England's 5.5% but worse than the closest statistical neighbour local authority rate of 3.7%

³ PHE, Public Health Profiles, 2020

⁴ Permanent and Fixed Period exclusions in England, 2018-19, DFE (gov.uk)

Because we want all children to grow up healthy and to have improved life chances

The Issue	The Scale of the Issue
Too many children and young people are experiencing mental health problems resulting in high admissions to hospital, especially for self-harm	In 2017-18, Northamptonshire hospital admissions rates as a result of self-harm (10-24 year olds) were 725.9 per 100,000 population. England's average rate was 421.2 and England's best rate was 116.9
Too many children and young people are experiencing drug or alcohol misuse problems	In 2017/18 – 2018/19, Northamptonshire hospital admission rates due to substance misuse (15-24 year olds) was 140.3 per 100,000 population, significantly higher than the England rate of 83.1 per 100,000 and the highest rate in the East Midlands. The East Midlands' best rate was 63.1 ⁵
Too many young people are becoming parents in their teenage years in some parts of the county	In 2018 the live birth rate for mothers aged under 18 years was 3.8 per 1,000, compared to 4.5 per 1,000 for England. In the same period the live birth rate for mothers aged under 20 years was 13.5 per 1,000, compared to 11.8 per 1,000 in England ⁶
Too many children are becoming first time offenders	In 2018, there were 150 first time entrants to the youth justice system, a rate of 213.3 per 100,000 of 10-17 year olds, a rate statistically similar to the England average of 238.5 per 100,000 England's best rate was 72.3 per 100,000

Because we want all vulnerable children to have the best possible outcomes

The Issue	The Scale of the Issue
Too many children with SEN and disabilities experience social exclusion, and do not get timely support, early intervention and diagnosis	In 2018, the gap between pupils with EHCP and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stages 2 RWM was 66% 36 points at Key Stage 4 attainment 8.16 ⁷
Too many children leave care without qualifications	In 2018, 10% of children looked after achieved grade 9-4 in maths and English. Our statistical neighbour was 18.3%. England's average was 17.8%.

⁵ Child Health Profile, 2019, CHIMAT, PHE

⁶ NOMIS 2020

⁷ Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) February 2020

Too many children looked after become involved in the criminal justice system	In 2019, the percentage of children looked after in Northamptonshire who were subject to Community Resolution Disposals; Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Cautions during the year was 5.0%. Our statistical neighbour average was 3.13% and the England average was 3.0%
---	---

Early Help and Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire County Council is committed to its Early Help offer and recognises that the best way to deliver services to child, young people and families is through the Early Help partnership.

The Early Help partnership allows us to identify and coordinate our response to ‘need’ in a more timely and effective way. It also enables us to be resourceful by sharing the responsibility to support families across a number of services, including the community and voluntary sectors.

The refreshed Early Help Partnership Strategy is another important step and demonstrates our combined commitment and desire to improve the lives of so many across Northamptonshire

Clive Seall, Interim Assistant Director – Early Help Services, Children First Northamptonshire

Early Help is essential to improve the lives of Northamptonshire children and young people, to make sure they are safe, happy, stable and nurtured by caring and responsible families and strong communities.

We are committed to better support families and help children to thrive in Northamptonshire, and Early Help allows for support to be put in place early to meet families’ needs prior to issues reaching crisis point. We do know preventative services are cheaper and more effective than reactive services and they are also more effective in improving the life chances of children, young people and their families.

Lots of families in Northamptonshire face challenges and difficulties in their lives and these can lead to difficult times for children. As we aspire to have an Early Help offer that transforms Northamptonshire, it is important to recognise that Early help is not a service or a single team, but it is way of working with families that we all need to put into practice.

We do need to adopt a can do attitude and a flexible approach to support, working with the families and communities, recognising they have strengths and with the right support from the right people, children and families can be helped to overcome difficulties in their lives. We need to put the children and their families first, and the first person to offer support to a child or young person and their family should be the professional identifying the issue who knows the child best.

As we refresh the strategy, we look forward to what we can achieve together in supporting children and families in Northamptonshire.

Equally we know that while the early help system has significantly improved since our last strategy in 2015, there is more work needed to guarantee consistent delivery of improved outcomes for children and families:

7. Because we want the early help system to be well understood, and functioning effectively, so that children and families can get help when they need it

- Parts of our early help system have not had the opportunity to become sufficiently skilled, confident or well supported/supervised to engage and support families. This means our lead professionals and managers are not always able to identify and assess families and get them the help they need.
- Consistent understanding or application across the system as a whole of the thresholds of need across families has improved, but could be even better. This results in more safeguarding concerns and referrals to high need high cost services than there needs to be.
- We should be consistently identifying families in greatest need, or ensuring they receive help which is proportionate to that need. This also means we are missing potentially significant opportunities to prevent or reduce future problems for families and demand on high cost statutory services even when problems are highly predictable. Some parts of the system are using risk profiling, intelligence and insight to great effect and we need to make sure all parts of the partnership early help system can use this approach.
- We should consistently across the early help system be taking a 'whole family' approach to identifying issues and solutions or planning/providing support. Too many different services and people are trying to support individuals within families. Because of this, no one is helping the family to grip its challenges, and the family can become confused, overloaded and disengaged. There is some excellent 'whole family' practice in some parts of the early help system that we need to grow.
- We need to provide a broader and more effective range of support for families across the early help partnership. We also need to do more to ensure there is a clear and accessible market of support wherever the family may be on their early help journey, and not focus exclusively on intensive interventions at the higher end of the spectrum.
- We still need a single, easily accessible description of the early help offer across the county and how it is meant to work for families, or comprehensive information about how different services should be accessed. This means professionals working in early help are not always aware of what services are available, and how they fit together as a whole, to guide their responses to families.
- The voice of the child, and often of the parent, isn't always heard or listened to. This means we can't always be sure that we're responding to what the child needs or respecting their wishes. This has improved in the last 2 years, but there is still more to do.

8. What does effective Early Help look like for children, young people and families?

Early Help is effective when children, young people and families can say:

“We only have to tell our story once”

“We have a trusted individual in our lives that we can confidently turn to for help when we need it”

“We can focus on strengths and building resilience”

“Our lives are better because of early help”

“We are empowered by the services involved in our lives to make the changes we want to make”

“We are supported to think about what we want to change and how we might make those changes”

“We have as much continuity as possible, without unnecessary service changes”

“We can have early help for the whole family”

“We have flexible support, including longer or shorter-term help depending on our needs”

“We have one ‘go-to’ person that we can rely on to coordinate our early help support and keep things simple and manageable”

“We have listened to, heard and respected at every stage of our journey through early help”

9. What does effective Early Help look like for professionals?

A strong early help system means a capable and confident early help workforce, supported by effective and efficient processes.

Information will be shared across partners to enable rigorous, risk-based analysis of families' needs and effective multi-agency action planning with families at the centre.

Outcomes will be derived from evidence-based practice and thorough quality assurance activity. Individual agencies will share outcome data to enable a system wide understanding of early help provision and efficacy.

Whole family working is considered the norm for all professionals involved in early help and there is shared responsibility for early help outcomes across all agencies. Agencies will commit to making an effective contribution to multi-agency teams around the family and will act as lead professional where best placed to do so.

Professionals working in universal services will be supported to deliver quality early help through robust Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and the support of other professionals working in targeted and specialist services.

Integrated, multi-agency teams work best together and in Northamptonshire we aspire to working in integrated community hubs based in the community. This approach will be tested in the Daventry locality and then rolled out countywide during the lifetime of this strategy, 2020-23.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) sets out the critical features of effective Early Help as:

Effective Early Help System:-

- Early help assessment that identifies what help the child and family need to prevent
- Simple, streamlined referral and assessment
- Practice empowers families and helps them to develop the capacity to resolve their own
- A multi-disciplinary approach, bringing a range of professional skills and expertise in a team around the table
- A relationship with a trusted lead professional who coordinates the support needed
- A holistic approach that addresses the children's needs in the wider family
- An interagency assessment for a child and family who would benefit from coordinated support

10.What does effective Early Help look like for public and voluntary sector services?

- Demand for high need/high cost services is reduced
- The workforce operating in the early help system is confident, skilled and experienced
- Partners are communicating – sharing information, sharing effective practice, sharing knowledge and skills – and this is helping more families get the help they need
- A solid and reliable evidence base of need is visibly driving decision making
- The early help journey – and the pathways through it - is easy to understand and navigate.

11.What is the Early Help Offer?

We use a range of conversation opportunities to identify appropriate support for the child and their family. Anybody working with children, young people and families, including services for adults for example mental health and housing, is responsible for starting conversations on their behalf.

Where a practitioner feels that a child or young person may need additional support (beyond that available from a single agency) there will be the opportunity to have a quality conversation with practitioners from other agencies to: clarify the nature of the concerns; identify the needs of the child / young person; and agree the appropriate response and how it will be co-ordinated.

Conversation opportunities include the phone calls and meetings that take place between those people working across universal, targeted and specialist services.

The best time is early in the life of the problem, when it is felt that the child's needs are not being met and something else is needed to improve their outcomes.

As children's needs are met and concerns are reduced, we continue to have quality conversations in order to provide appropriate support for the child and their family until that support is no longer required.

Level 1 – UNIVERSAL SUPPORT – No additional needs

Level 2 – EARLY HELP – Additional needs putting child at risk of poor outcomes requiring early help

Level 3 – TARGETED EARLY HELP – Significant additional needs requiring a targeted response

Level 4 – STATUTORY – Reasonable cause to suspect child suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

Most children's needs are met by their family or universal services that is, those services that are available to everyone. These are provided as a right to all children, young people and their families, including those whose needs are also met within targeted and/ or specialist and statutory services.

For those children and families who face more challenges and may have multiple needs, targeted services provide additional capacity and expertise to work with these families to address their needs.

For children whose needs and circumstances make them more vulnerable, a coordinated multi-disciplinary approach is usually best, based on an early help assessment, with a Lead Practitioner to work closely with the child and family to ensure they receive all the support they require. A range of targeted services are available through clusters to support these interventions.

When a child's needs cannot be met in universal or targeted services, practitioners can make a request directly to specialist services. This includes when a child is in need of help, and where it is believed that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

12. What have we done to improve Early Help up to now?

Significant work has taken place across the Partnership since the last Early Help Strategy, including:

- Commissioning of a package of interventions to meet key needs of Northamptonshire families, including Multi Systemic Therapy, Family Intervention Project, challenging behaviour, parenting and domestic abuse support
- Significant developments across the health system in Early Help including an extensive review of CAMHs services; the extension of the Family Nurse Partnership and the integration of 0 – 19 services in a countywide offer
- Prevention and Diversion workers in the Youth Offending Service continue to support children and young people who have committed first or very low level offences. Work is underway to identify young people at risk of coming to the attention of the Youth Justice system and offering PaDs support at the start of the support.

- Early Intervention work by Northamptonshire Police who have trained 1400 officers in safeguarding and have launched an Early Intervention Hub in Northamptonshire and have established the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) to tackle gang culture and criminal exploitation
- Increased early help work by district and borough councils through Community Partnership Teams and housing services, including Trusted Relationships work
- Strengthening of the MASH, resulting in one front door for families and professionals
- Early Help Coordinators and domestic violence specialists in the MASH providing expert advice and support to families and professionals through the Multi-Agency Daily Risk Assessment (MADRA) process
- A new, online Early Help Assessment, designed to simplify the process of identifying needs and getting help for families and professionals
- A refreshed Early Help Support Service, providing information, advice and guidance to professionals working with families, supporting the Troubled Families Programme and part of a dedicated early help team in MASH and Locality Connectors collating information about services available in the community
- The creation of a new Adolescent Service to meet the needs of teenagers at risk in the community as well as at home
- As these improvements develop further, the impact will be seen through our outcome indicators shown in section 13.

13. What will we do to develop Early Help in the period 2020-23 and how will we do it?

Early Help and Health

The CCG and all health providers for children's services in Northamptonshire are committed to working in partnership with the Local Authority, Police, Education and other stakeholders to help early in the development of a problem with children and young people of any age

Health services which include the CCGs, GPs, acute hospitals and community services are playing their part by commissioning and delivering excellent health care services which promote health and wellbeing and contribute towards building resilience in families and communities which, in turn, helps to safeguard the children and young people of Northamptonshire.

Angela Dempsey, Chief Nurse, Nene and Corby Clinical Commissioning Group

There are a multitude of partners and programmes supporting early help improvements in Northamptonshire. This Strategy does not aim to describe in detail all the actions partner agencies will be taking to develop early help. It aims instead to describe the broad 'umbrella' objectives that the Children's Early Help Partnership will focus on and in turn will require all partners to focus on through their specific development work and programmes. These objectives will deliver a strong and effective early help system. A strong and effective early help system will in turn deliver improved outcomes for children and families.

There is a multi-agency action plan to accompany this strategy. See Appendix 1. Priority actions have been identified by all partners involved in Early Help and additional actions determined through completion of the Early Help System Guide questionnaire in June 2020. The action plan will be reviewed at every meeting of the Early Help subgroup of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Partnership and updated every year following annual repeated completion of the MHCLG System Guide Questionnaire by all partners.

14. How will we know if our Early Help is working?

The objectives in this strategy will all have outputs and clearly linked to the action plan. We are committed to ensuring that outputs lead to better lives for children and families. Our outcome indicators provide a benchmark against which to measure whether early help for children and families in Northamptonshire is making a difference to our population. All our partnership activity – whether strategic or operational – over the next three years, will be expected to make a contribution to these outcomes.

This strategy follows an outcome-based accountability model. The indicators below tell us whether early help is working at population level. Outcome measures are used at service level to tell us whether early help is working for individual children and families. It follows that if early help services are delivering positive outcomes to children and families, then we should see that reflected at population level.

This strategy is governed by the Children’s Early Help Subgroup which will monitor progress towards these outcomes throughout the 3 years of the strategy cycle. The Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership will provide additional scrutiny and receive regular progress reports.

Early Help and Education

For the pupils and families of Croyland Primary School, the Early Help intervention has proven successful in strengthening family units, developing and empowering parents and carers and ultimately, making the world of our pupils a little better.

Their success is for many reasons:

Parents and carers feel more relaxed and open to support and guidance because they are already familiar with the ethos and drive of the school, and those working with the plan.

They are more confident to talk in a setting and with those who they are comfortable with.

There is daily support available, and an opportunity to talk and share their worries and concerns.

Professionals are able to formulate a plan with the family, of the support that they need and want in order to strengthen the family unit.

Communication between the family and professionals allows there to be a better understanding of the ‘bigger picture’.

Parents feel listened to and know that things can be challenged and chased up in order for actions to be met in a timely manner.

Lucy Deakin, Head Teacher, Croyland Primary School

15. Outcome Indicators for Early Help in Northamptonshire

Because we want all children to be safe

- Fewer referrals to social care with a previous referral within 12 months with a focus on reducing the numbers of children referred due to neglect
- Fewer children at 'child in need' status (s17) who subsequently become looked after
- Fewer children subject to a repeat child protection plan
- More adults with parental responsibility who have drug or alcohol issues are completing drug or alcohol treatment
- Evidence of increased use of graded care profile by operational health & social care professionals
- Appropriate repeat referrals where necessary to ensure further safeguarding and support to victim
- Increase in young people's awareness of risk and exploitative behaviour and a reduction in frequently missing young people (missing episodes)
- Fewer hospital admissions caused by injuries in young people aged 15-24

Because we want all children to achieve their best in education, be ready for work and have skills for life

- More children are taking up free nursery education entitlement at age 2, including % with SEN and disabilities
- Fewer children are permanently excluded from school or have less than 3 fixed term exclusions over 3 consecutive terms, including % with SEN and disabilities
- More children are achieving a good level of development at the end of reception year
- More children are achieving their expected progress levels at primary and secondary levels, including % with SEN and disabilities
- More young people are in education, employment or training, including Children in Care & those with SEN and disabilities

Because we want all children to grow up healthy and have improved life chances

- Fewer children and young people are homeless or living in temporary accommodation
- Reduction in the rate of children admitted to hospital as a result of self-harm (10-24 year olds)
- Reduction in the rate of children admitted to hospital due to substance misuse (15-24 year olds)
- More children and young people with drug or alcohol issues are completing drug or alcohol treatment
- Infant immunisation rates are maintained at above national average levels

- Fewer young people are becoming parents in their teenage years
- Fewer children and young people become first time offenders
- Child poverty rates are maintained at better than national average level
- Child obesity rates are maintained at better than national average levels
- More statutory assessments for children with disabilities are completed within timescales

Because we want all vulnerable children to achieve the best possible outcomes

- Fewer children and young people report that caring responsibilities are negatively impacting on their lives
- More children who receive mental health services self-report improved outcomes
- More children in care achieve 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent including maths and English
- More children in care receive immunisations
- Fewer children in care commit offences

Because we want the early help system to be well understood and functioning efficiently and effectively so that children and families can get help when they need it

- EHAs completed by all partners being of a good standard
- Improved accessibility to early help and targeted support services from all agencies available to families in need.
- Increase in directly delivered and commissioned early help services achieving demonstrably improved outcomes for children and families (outcome star performance)
- More partners report understanding of, and confidence in, early help
- Increase in overall annual score on Early Help System Questionnaire (MHCLG)

16. Where can I find more information about Early Help in Northamptonshire?

The following documents and services support delivery of our early help strategy:

Thresholds and Pathways – Northamptonshire’s approach to levels of need, how to identify what level of intervention a child or family may need, and the differences between early help and statutory child protection

Early Help Practice Manual – a key document that sets out the Early Help Pathway in Northamptonshire and how early help works in the county

Early Help Assessment – a suite of information and documents to help practitioners from all agencies to identify, assess and get help to children and families

Early Help Offer – a guide to what early help is available in Northamptonshire and how to access it

Early Help Support Service – a team dedicated to supporting professionals working with children and families who may need early help

17. Linked Strategies

[Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

[Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Strategy](#)

[Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Plan](#)

[Northamptonshire Strategy for Learning and Development](#)

[Northamptonshire Disabled Children and Young People's Strategy and Action Plan](#)

[Northamptonshire Youth Justice Plan](#)

[Northamptonshire PCC Police and Crime Plan](#)

[Northamptonshire CCG Children and Young People's Services](#)

[Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Strategy](#)

[Northamptonshire Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Strategy](#)

[Northamptonshire Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy](#)