



One minute guide

Early help — our approach to responding to the needs of children and families in Leeds

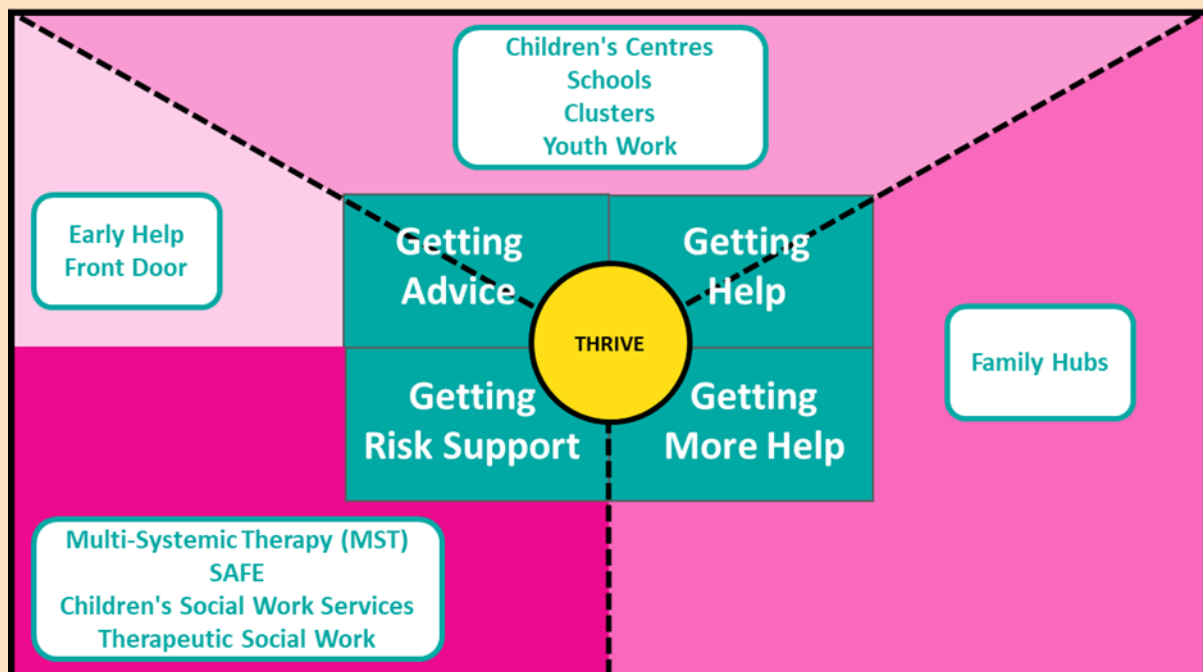
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What is early help?

Early Help should start early in the life of the problem so that statutory interventions (such as the involvement of social work services) can be avoided where appropriate. Intervening as early as possible, regardless of the age of the child or young person, can positively improve their outcomes. Early help is voluntary and consent from children, young people and their families to work with them should always be sought.

In Leeds, we believe Early Help should always be an approach to provide children, young people and families with the right support at the right time to thrive and reach their full potential. Parents and carers know their children best, and we support them when presented with challenges to build on their capacity and resources and be empowered to deal with the issues they face.

Early help is everyone's business! It encompasses a range of services from universal services such as your GP and school to more targeted services such as children's centres (the [Early Start](#) service in Leeds), youth services and your [local cluster](#). When more help is needed you can access the Family Hubs. This can be seen further in the diagram below.



Our [Leeds Early Help Strategy](#) is in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#), which also includes proactive and planned support for those children and young people stepping down from statutory social work interventions or specialist care.

You can visit our [early help website](#) for further information about early help in Leeds.

What is our early help approach?

The Leeds early help approach has four key elements:

1. **Right conversations, right people, right time** - This means talking to families about what support they need. Sometimes the best person to help is someone families already know, which can happen quickly so they don't have to wait. Conversations lead to a meaningful assessment and - where appropriate - a plan to support the child or young person and their family.
2. **The 3As** - Helping every child and young person to **attend, attain and achieve**. If children are supported to go to nurseries, schools and colleges, this will help them to do well, have better health and well-being, and be more likely to get a job when they're grown up. We want children in Leeds to have friends and hobbies and lots of opportunities to play.
3. **[Leeds Practice Framework](#)** - This is a model which helps supports restorative practice which is embedded in how we work with children, young people and their families. We act early, before situations or problems become worse. Families can approach anyone working with them who will respond, begin to understand and start conversations with the right people to identify how help should be provided.
4. **How we put early help into practice** - It is everybody's responsibility to identify and review need, through having conversations with children, young people and their families and planning with them to address these needs.

Where to go for more information

For more information about early help, please visit the Leeds [early help website](#), the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership [website](#), and see related early help [one minute guides](#), including [cluster working](#), [Early Start](#) and [Relationships Matter - reducing parental conflict](#).

Universal – Most children's needs are met by their family or universal services that are available to everyone, provided as a right to all children, young people and their families. Information about Universal services is available from the Family Information Service (tel: 0113 378 9700) and from the [Family Information Service Leeds website](#).

For more information about Targeted and Specialist services, practitioners can contact their local Targeted Service Leader or Cluster Manager if you know them. Alternatively, you can contact the Family Hub central telephone number (tel: 0113 5350185) or email Family.hubs@leeds.gov.uk.

When someone identifies that a child may be a child in need (Section 17) or is at risk of or has suffered significant harm (Section 47) as defined in the [Children Act 1989](#) - they should discuss their concerns in the first instance with their Safeguarding Lead or line manager, if they are unsure if a child or young person is suffering significant harm.

If it is felt that a child or young person is suffering significant harm, practitioners should contact [Duty and Advice](#) who will have a conversation with the referrer to discuss the concerns and advise the most appropriate course of action. This may include making a referral to Children's Social Work Service, signposting to specialist services or recommending that an early help assessment (or re-assessment) is more appropriate. Practitioners can ring Duty and Advice on tel: 0113 376 0336.