



Early Help Strategy

For the Children & Young People in Trafford

January 2018



What is Early Help?

Early help is an approach, rather than a discrete service offer, which involves all partners sharing responsibility for intervening as early as possible to help those children, young people and their families at risk of experiencing poor outcomes.

The emphasis is on preventing poor outcomes and promoting, positive, productive, healthy and fulfilling lifestyles. It refers to both help in the early years of a child or young person's life, including ante-natal interventions, and help in early in the emergence of a problem at any stage in a child's life.

Trafford Safeguarding Children Board has adopted the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Service (C4EO) definition of early help:

“Intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and families with a population most at risk of developing problems. Effective intervention may occur at any point in a child or young person's life.”

Early help involves partners (including the Local Authority, Youth Offending Teams, community rehabilitation companies, National Probation Service, Police, adult social care, schools, mental health services, community and acute health services and the voluntary sector) working together to identify those at risk and ensuring processes and systems are in place and are effective in supporting children and families.

Effective early help must be a partnership with families based upon respectful engagement and a commitment to helping families find ways to help themselves. It must build upon strengths and encourage resilience and independence to equip people with the necessary skills to deal with adversity and set-backs while seizing opportunities to flourish.

It is also important that early help is challenging in order to ensure restorative practice is reflected. Early help should also situate families within the communities in which they live and encourage them to be productive members of their community while drawing on its assets and resources.



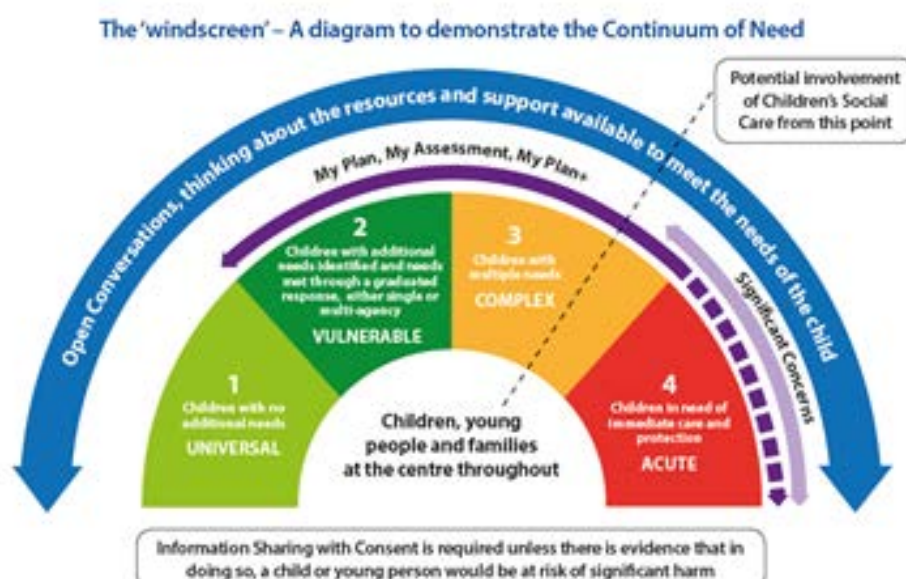
Supporting the children and young people of Trafford

Trafford Safeguarding Children Board (TSCB) outlines its approach to supporting children and young people in Trafford in its Threshold Document. This document focusses on the Early Help approach taken in Trafford and should be read in conjunction with the full Threshold document.

Link to the TSCB Threshold: <http://www.tscb.co.uk/docs/TSCB-Threshold-Guidance.pdf>

Link to TSCB Threshold Charts: <http://www.tscb.co.uk/docs/TSCB-threshold-chart-Jan-2018.pdf>

In Trafford, services are considered to be providing Early Help when the child or young person's needs are assessed to be at Tiers 1 (universal and Prevention), Tier 2 (Vulnerable/Targeted and co-ordinated) to Tier 3 (Specialist/Complex) within the Threshold Document.



Services that provide Early Help to children and families in Trafford include a wide range of services such as Early Help Hubs, Targeted Support Services, early years settings, schools, colleges, services for children with special educational needs and disabilities, midwives, health visitors, school nurses, GPs, contraceptive and sexual health services, the police, voluntary and community sector providers and the Faith sector etc.

These services provide a range of support and interventions to children and families including evidence based parenting programmes, breastfeeding support, learning support, help to find education and employment, short breaks for disabled children, as well as community based activities as described in the Trafford Service Directory (<https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/home.page>).

The principles that underpin our Early Help Strategy

Our strategy for early help has its roots in a vision that usually children, young people are best supported by their family and services should be involved in their life in the least intrusive way that offers them support. It is better to offer a minimal level of support at the early stages of issues arising than wait for issues to turn into a crisis.



1. The role of all partners and services working with children, their parents/carers and families is to ensure that their life chances are maximised, especially those who are potentially disadvantaged.
2. Parents have primary responsibility for and are the main influence on their children. Our role is therefore to strengthen parenting ability whilst remaining vigilant with regards to our duty of safeguarding vulnerable children and young people.
3. The best way of helping people is to help them help themselves. Our role is to support families to be self-reliant and to take control of their own outcomes.
4. The voice of the family and especially of the child, is crucial and must be sought at every stage of an early help offer.
5. Intervening early prevents longer term, more costly and more damaging problems later.
6. There should be a clear expectation about referral to statutory services where the needs of the child or family indicate that this is appropriate.
7. A whole family approach should be adopted, whilst keeping the child or young person firmly at the centre of any support;
8. Assessments should be made in a timely way and should lead to the provision of well-coordinated support to children and families; where ever possible in their local community.
9. Our early help offer should be clear and well understood so that children and families experience a seamless transition between services

Where Early Help fits

Early help is part of a seamless response to the needs of children and families in Trafford which is outlined across four tiers. Early help must be seen in the context of this overall approach to working with families.

The TSCB has published multi-agency threshold criteria which outlines the partnership approach to different levels of needs and provides a context for the early help offer.

The table below illustrates the continuum of need which recognises that for some families, at some points in their lives, they may require more support than universal services routinely offer.

Trafford Threshold Chart (updated December 2017)

1	Universal and prevention	Children whose needs are met by universal services; for example GP, school or health visitor	Single Agency Referral Form (SARF) to improve access to preventative services and referring child/young person to specific service to address individual need.	SARF
2	Vulnerable / Targeted and co-ordinated / Early Help	Some children have specialist input by a single agency such as speech therapy, physiotherapy or housing	Early Help assessment to co-ordinate a multi agency response to multiple unmet needs for the child/young person.	Early Help Assessment
3 (Low)	Early Help/ Specialist	As the complexity of a child's needs increase then the Early help Assessment should be completed and a multi-agency plan of support developed.	Early Help assessment to access the early family support pathway; co-ordinating a multiple agency response to multiple, unmet needs for the family.	Early Help Assessment
3 (High)	Complex	If the child's issues continue to escalate or interventions are not working and it is felt the child's needs cannot be met without the intervention of social care.	Consideration of consultation with MARAT to determine whether a referral for social work assessment should be made. This is done via the Early Help Assessment	Statutory or specialist assessment
4	Acute	This includes children for whom adoption is the plan, those who are in the care system, children subject to Child Protection Plans and those who are in the criminal justice system as well as those with the highest level of complex and additional needs. At this level children's social care will be the lead agency and the threshold is met for statutory involvement of agencies.	Existing referral processes to social care (MARAT) and other specialist and intensive provision such as MST, SEN Statutory Intervention, CAMHS Tier 3&4.	Statutory or specialist assessment

Level 1 - Most children at this level will be healthy, safe, access appropriate education or play activities, be engaged citizens of the community and have aspirations for their future. They will be supported through the care of their families with the support of universal services (schools, GP's, etc) and as such will be considered to be in Level 1.

Level 2 – Children with emerging needs, who are not achieving all their outcomes or where there are low level concerns that can be met by a Single Agency Assessment and Plan or an early Help Assessment.

Level 3 – Children with multiple or complex needs who require targeted services through a multi-agency Early Help assessment or other specialist assessment such as EHC Plan, CSE Measurement Tool etc. This level has two stages, initially the child should be supported through an early help approach, if the issues continue or escalate then consideration should be given to a formal social work assessment to ascertain if there should be a statutory response.

Level 4 – Are the children and young people who present with acute needs or risks. These children require a social work led assessment and a statutory response.

Support to agencies doing Early Help

We have an agreed Early Help Assessment Form for agencies to use if they do not have their own documents. (Link: [Early Help Assessment Form](#))

We also have an electronic record keeping system that allows Assessments and Interventions to be logged and co-ordinated between agencies. If anyone needs support with the Early Help Module (EHM) they can contact the Liquid Logic Support Desk provided by the Council on (0161) 912 2922 or by e-mail at liquidlogicsupport@trafford.gov.uk.

We have created a group of 'Early Help Champions' who are practitioners that act as positive advocates for the Early Help approach. They will provide support to colleagues in their own area of practice in the form of telephone advice or face to face support. To find out if you have access to an early Help Champion e-mail morgan.adams@trafford.gov.uk

Useful Information

Links to TSCB Early Help Documents:

- [TSCB Threshold document](#) to make it easier to refer to.
- [Threshold Charts](#)
- [Early Help Assessment Form](#)

Other Early Help information:

<http://www.tscb.co.uk/procedures/early-help-and-multi-agency-working.aspx>

Trafford Service Directory:

<https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/home.page>

Useful contacts:

Service	Contact number	Email address or website
Trafford Safeguarding Children Board	0161 911 8687	morgan.adams@trafford.gov.uk
Early Help Hub - Stretford	0161 912 5020	StretfordCCandEarlyHelpHub@trafford.gov.uk
Early Help Hub - Partington	0161 912 2122	PartingtonCCandEarlyHelpHub@trafford.gov.uk
Trafford Talkshop - Sale	0161 912 2453	talkshop@trafford.gov.uk
Early Help Panel	0161 912 5020	earlyhelppanel@trafford.gov.uk
MARAT	0161 912 5125	www.trafford.gov.uk/worried-about-a-child
Trafford SEND local offer	0161 912 1053	www.trafford.gov.uk/localoffer
Youth Offending Service	0161 911 8201	yosadmin@trafford.gov.uk
Access Trafford Switchboard	0161 912 2000	www.trafford.gov.uk