

Working Together - Early Help and Preventative Services and Specialist Children's Services

Early Help and Preventative Services came together in April 2014 to ensure a more effective and integrated approach to early help. The services include youth justice, troubled families, pupil referral units, attendance and inclusion, open access and targeted work in children's centres and youth hubs and individual child and family casework with a range of families requiring early help support.

Early Help is available to provide additional support, where appropriate, for children in need, those with a child protection plan and children and young people in care. For children and young people whose needs are just below the threshold for statutory social care, there is the support of an Early Help Assessment and Plan.

Access to Early Help is intended to be straightforward and timely, and should follow a process of notification, assessment and care planning with defined actions and outcomes. All Early Help interventions are expected to be time limited and monitored carefully to achieve a positive outcome.

From **Monday 2 February 2015**, the Early Help contact number is:

03000 419222

For information on the notification process for Early Help, and the Kent Family Support Framework, which has replaced the CAF, please see the Early Help webpages – www.kelsi.org.uk/earlyhelp.

We all work to the Kent Inter-Agency Threshold Criteria for Children in Need and this framework informs decision making regarding the circumstances in which to provide EHPS support or whether thresholds for referring a child to Specialist Children's services are met.

"The Eligibility Criteria and threshold matrix identifies the level of key vulnerability factors such as domestic abuse, mental health problems, substance misuse etc. It is emphasised that the level of vulnerability will be different in each case. The framework assumes that it will usually be a combination of criteria that will determine the level of concern, rather than any one factor" Kent LSCB

In order to bring our work together in relation to decision making about referrals and the use of thresholds, the **Early Help Triage process and the Central Referral Unit** are being combined, to ensure a more joined up and integrated approach. This will provide greater clarity about pathways and decision making.

More generally, Early Help cases include youth justice out of court disposals, youth justice statutory cases, step down from SCS or prevention of the need for statutory social care intervention, children and young people experiencing attendance or behaviour difficulties at school or older young people who are not in Education, Training or Employment. Casework and other targeted provision also includes additional support through the Troubled Families Programme, Children's Centres and Youth Hubs, and through a range of commissioned services.

Early Help works closely with Social Care professionals to reduce the referrals to SCS, reduce the number of looked after children and reduce the number of families requiring statutory social care interventions

At present the Service is consulting on a re-structure, to align service delivery to a single District model, with an Early Help Manager for each District covering all services for 0-25 year olds. Full details about the restructure can be found on the KNet pages at the following link: <http://knet/Change/Pages/Early-Help-and-Preventative-Services-restructure.aspx>

EHPS typically includes the following provision and support to children, young people and families who are **open** cases to SCS:

- The provision of information to allow Social Workers to ensure families have access to targeted support opportunities available in children's centres, youth hubs, outdoor education and involvement in youth participation and youth fora groups.
- Involvement in specific targeted work, for example offending behaviour work, groups for young people who are NEET and also to support the development of children under 5 to develop speech and language skills, physical development, social skills.
- Support to improve school attendance or to access Education, Training and Employment
- Prevention work for young people displaying anti - social and offending behaviour and statutory supervision of youth justice interventions
- Parenting programmes and family support, including access to the Troubled Families programme
- If the family meet the Troubled Families programme criteria EHPS can support SCS to achieve the troubled family outcomes such as employment for adult members of the family, reducing anti-social behaviour or improving attendance and behaviour at school
- Access to volunteering opportunities with Early Help services for young people and adults

To access EHPS support for cases that will remain open to SCS please contact the relevant District manager, the details of which are at the end of this briefing.

Casework should be undertaken by a minimum number of people and EHPS support is available to ensure clear outcomes in the care plan are achieved, and the support complements the casework undertaken by SCS.

In addition to the support available to those children and young people on open cases, Early Help provides support for **“step down” cases where safeguarding concerns have reduced but ongoing support is required**. Cases that step down will be supported and monitored through an Early Help Plan and each case will be managed to ensure referral to SCS is unlikely. Our monthly activity data will record and track all these cases.

All families that are allocated for casework will have an identified key worker who will undertake an assessment with the family and will agree a strengths and goals based action plan. **To access ‘step down’ support from EHPS, please contact the relevant District manager, the details of which are at the end of this briefing.**

For partners who wish to access EHPS services, a notification form can be sent to earlyhelp@kent.gov.uk. The notification form can be accessed on Kelsi by following this link: www.kelsi.org.uk/earlyhelp.

Area and District Lead Managers for Early Help

<p>North Kent - Stuart Collins County Role: Health & Safeguarding stuart.collins@kent.gov.uk 03000410519</p>	<p>Dartford – Tim O’Brien tim.o'brien@kent.gov.uk 03000413099</p>
	<p>Gravesham – Mark Walsh mark.walsh@kent.gov.uk 03000419385</p>
	<p>Sevenoaks – Christine Kiely christine.kiely@kent.gov.uk 03000414270</p>
<p>East Kent - Nigel Baker County Role: Youth Offer (Duke of Edinburgh, Youth Participation and Outdoor Education) nigel.baker@kent.gov.uk 03000415803</p>	<p>Canterbury – Rob Jobe rob.jobe@kent.gov.uk 03000414624</p>
	<p>Swale – Dan Bride dan.bride@kent.gov.uk 03000411732</p>
	<p>Thanet – Sharon McLaughlin sharon.mclaughlin@kent.gov.uk 07824707374</p>

South Kent - Louise Fisher County Role: 5 – 11 years louise.fisher@kent.gov.uk 03000414791	Ashford – Helen Anderson helen.anderson@kent.gov.uk 03000410657
	Shepway – Julia Easton julia.easton@kent.gov.uk 03000419073
	Dover – Bryony Khadaroo bryony.khadaroo@kent.gov.uk 01303256857
West Kent - Nick Fenton County Role: 0 – 5 years nick.fenton@kent.gov.uk 03000416084	Maidstone – Hema Birdi hema.birdi@kent.gov.uk 03000411407
	Tonbridge & Malling – Karen Coffey karen.coffey@kent.gov.uk 03000412523
	Tunbridge Wells – Sarah Gow sarah.gow@kent.gov.uk 03000418162

Patrick Leeson
Corporate Director
Education and Young People’s Services

Florence Kroll
Director
Early Help and Preventative Services

Andrew Ireland
Corporate Director
Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

Philip Segurola
Director
Specialist Children’s Services