



Gloucestershire's offer of Early Help

Ellwood Primary School will use the Gloucestershire Early Help systems and procedures to keep children safe. We will intervene as early as possible to prevent families and pupils reaching crisis point; to safeguarding all pupils.

Gloucestershire's Early Help Offer

The overall aim of early help is to support children, young people and families at the earliest possible stage of a problem emerging to prevent them from reaching crisis point and the need for statutory intervention.

The Gloucestershire Early Help Offer consists of:

1. **Early Help Hubs** - multi-disciplinary, six locality-based staff working together to support children and families and their needs
2. Access to clear and timely advice and information from the **Family Information Service** and **Children and Young People Service Advice Line** <http://www.2gether.nhs.uk/cyps> - for both families and practitioners
3. An integrated assessment process and tools - development of a common plan informed and shared by all agencies that provides children and families with clear pathways to relevant help and support
4. Effective partnerships - collaborative and cooperative multi-agency relationships that share resources and coordinate and allocate support
5. Targeted support - provision of whole-family, multi-agency action or intervention that meets a family's range of needs
6. Building community capacity - using and sharing local resources, volunteers and peer networks to improve family access to community support.

Whilst we have a key role as a provider of early help, taking a lead in the commissioning and delivery of services, the council is also a partner within a collective of multi-disciplinary agencies and organisations. We need to **work together to plan, coordinate and deliver services**, to help and support families when they need it most. We will continue to develop strong partnerships that understand the role each agency plays and the impact each service has on supporting children and families.

Gloucestershire's Early Help Offer is not a new or replacement service. It builds on existing teams and multi-agency partnerships within each district. The reshaped offer will provide **coordinated, locality-based help and support** to children and families at an early stage to meet their needs and prevent further escalation of problems.

We have been working to establish local partnerships across the six districts to manage a collective response to families. The overall aim of these **Early Help Hubs** is to ensure support is offered to vulnerable children, young people and families at an earlier stage to reduce the need for and provide step-down support from specialist services.

Local teams called **Families First Plus teams** have a key role in supporting these partnerships and will:

- ✓ Support the coordination and development of local partnerships to ensure they are fairly represented by all agencies supporting families, working to share resources, avoid duplication and identify opportunities to reshape services to meet local need; and
- ✓ Co-ordinate all requests for additional support on behalf of the partnership. Representatives from the partnership will meet regularly to decide which agency is best placed to respond and provide appropriate advice, guidance and support which is then monitored to ensure its effectiveness.



Early Help Hubs

We have established six **Early Help Hubs** across the county, one in each of the six districts. These are made up of integrated teams working within a local network of universal, voluntary, community and statutory partners and agencies. Each Hub works collectively and collaboratively to identify, coordinate and respond to a child or family's need at the earliest possible stage.

All members and partners of a Hub are engaged in work to prevent the escalation of problems or the deterioration of circumstances which could adversely affect the wellbeing of children, young people and families. We do this by bringing together a range of professional perspectives, sharing information and knowledge and strengthening family resilience. This helps support children and families deal with their struggles in a timely, informed and appropriate way.

Early Help Hubs:

- Provide information, advice and guidance to vulnerable children, young people and families, with difficulties they're experiencing at an early stage
- Co-ordinate requests for support received and ensures families are supported by the right agency at the right time
- Provide parenting and targeted family support services to families and children to prevent escalation of problems
- Provide advice and support to school, community based practitioners and lead professionals working with children and families
- Develop support plans for children and families stepping down from social care services.
- Provide regular opportunities for agency professionals to discuss and plan help and support being provided to local children and families, share and develop knowledge and skills and create tailored support programmes to address specific needs within the locality
- Work to agreed local governance, referral and allocation processes underpinned by a shared responsibility by all Hub partners for the wellbeing of children and families that come into contact with the Hub
- Support universal services (schools, health services, children's centres, youth support, housing etc) enhance the positive early help work delivered in local settings and to link up services and teams to provide a joined-up offer
- Have Early Help Co-ordinators and Community Social workers that will build community capacity by maximising the use of combined, local resources and support provided by voluntary and community organisations
- Have children and families at the heart of key decisions related to them from planning a multi-agency response to help families with complex issues to ensuring their voices are heard in developing local provision of services.

Parents, children, carers, professionals and practitioners can all access help and support from their local Early Help Hub.

Information about how to access Early Help Hubs is available here: [How to access early help and support](#)

If you believe a child or young person is at significant risk of harm, please contact the [Children's Helpdesk](#)



How to access early help and support

You can access early help information, advice and support from:

- www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk
- Provides easy-to-access, impartial information and advice on childcare, finances, parenting, education etc to parents, children, practitioners and partners. This information can be accessed online via the website, or by phoning 0800 542 02 02 / 01452 427362 to speak to an advisor on or by emailing familyinfo@gloucestershire.gov.uk.
- The Children and Young People Service Advice Line <http://www.2gether.nhs.uk/cyps>
- Provide emotional wellbeing help and support to children, young people, parents and carers. They can provide help with child developmental disorders, eating disorders, bipolar disorders, psychosis and other mental health problems. Their website is
- A range of local organisations, including schools, children's centre, health services and the youth support service.

Help and support for parents, children, carers, professionals and practitioners is available from your local Early Help Hub:

Locality	Email	Telephone
Forest of Dean	forestofdeanearlyhelphub@gloucestershire.gov.uk	01452 328048

If you believe a child or young person is at significant risk of harm, please contact the [Children's Helpdesk 01452 426565](tel:01452426565)

How requests for support received by Early Help Hubs are handled

The council and all agencies engaged with children and families recognise that early identification of need is crucial if we are to prevent problems escalating or circumstances deteriorating.

Agencies first deploy their own resources to respond to emerging needs identified in children, young people or their families. When additional specific needs are identified that are over and above what can be supported and/or an agency is helping a child or family living in a more complex or challenging situation, professionals can:

- direct refer to other local services e.g. Children's Centre, Youth Support, Domestic Abuse services etc
- complete a 'Request for Support' form and submit this to their local Early Help Hub.

The 'Request for Support' form identifies the needs and any difficulties of any child(ren) and their family where targeted support would help them to deal with these and to return to a more balanced family life. For the Hub to respond quickly, a '**Consent**' form needs to be completed by relevant family members confirming that information about them can be shared with Hub partners. This will then allow the Hub to plan and coordinate support from a range of agencies.

Practitioners from a range of services share information and agree which agency is best placed to respond to meet the child and family's needs.



Gloucestershire's offer of Early Help

They can pace their interventions if more than one type of support is needed and via the Hub they can access additional and specialist support with difficulties such as:

- Mental health
- Parental drug /alcohol misuse
- Domestic violence
- Housing issues
- Debt

This coordinated approach enables early help to be planned and delivered in a more holistic way. Families will be contacted by an agency that is taking the lead in providing and/or coordinating targeted support to avoid them being contacted by multiple organisations all wanting to help at the same time.

Early Help Team Roles We have recently integrated our Families First teams with existing Targeted Support teams in each district to form new Early Help teams (internally called Families First Plus) and to formalise our provision of early help within each locality Hub. We have defined new roles and functions within our Early Help teams to facilitate effective inter-agency cooperation and collaborative working.

Key roles of the team are:

Team Manager There are 3 team managers, each responsible for two districts; Gloucester & Cotswolds, Stroud and Forest of Dean, Tewkesbury and Cheltenham. Team Managers have a strong emphasis on building multi-agency relations, developing a joined-up approach to early help services and coordinating the provision of early help and support.

Assistant Team Manager There are 1-2 assistant team managers supporting each team manager for the districts they manage. Assistant team managers oversee capacity for partnership development and maintain a focus on quality and consistency of practice.

Community Social Worker Community Social Workers support professionals from a wide range of agencies feel more confident in their role supporting vulnerable children, young people and their families. They work in partnership with other practitioners in attending case discussions, Team Around the Child/Family meetings, local multi agency forums, joint home visits etc, supporting risk management and providing specialist perspective.

Family Support Worker Family Support Workers manage a case load of families, coordinate and deliver interventions and work collaboratively with multi-disciplinary partners to provide support to vulnerable families and prevent escalation of family problems leading to a referral to social care services.

Early Help Coordinator Early Help Coordinators support implementation of the local Early Help Agenda and promote engagement and development across all agencies. They provide practical support and advice to practitioners from all agencies regarding early identification and assessment of need, support planning and commissioning services, to ensure families receive appropriate and timely support.