

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?



Shropshire Early Help's Practice Guidance



Welcome to the Early Help – Working in a Restorative Way guidance, designed for our dedicated partners and practitioners committed to supporting children, young people, and families in need of Early Help. Early intervention is key, and this guidance aims to assist you in identifying and addressing needs as they arise.

We are working with Mark Finnis, director of L30 Relational Systems to develop restorative practice in Shropshire.

This guidance aims to incorporate restorative practices into Early Help, ensuring a holistic and empathetic approach. It aligns with the principles in the latest Working Together document and emphasises that Early Help is not just a specific service but a collective approach.

WHAT'S INSIDE?



- ♥ Aim of Early Help: Learn about Early Help and how it is everyone's responsibility to help families.
- ♥ Restorative Practice: Discover how to use restorative practices in Early Help. These practices help build positive relationships that inspire meaningful change.
- ♥ Early Help Assessment: Fill out this form to understand the current needs of a child/young person and their family. Work together to map out their experiences, concerns, strengths, and areas of needs.
- ♥ Early Help Plan: Create an Early Help Plan with the child/young person and their family. Address identified needs from the assessment, and regularly review and monitor the plan for the safety and well-being of children and young people.
- ♥ Team Around the Family (TAF) Meetings: Find out what TAF meetings are and learn a standard way to conduct them, promoting collaboration and effective communication.
- ♥ Threshold Tool: Use this tool to identify the right level of support based on the needs of the child, young person, or family.

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WHO IS THIS GUIDANCE FOR?

This guidance is for all partners and practitioners who work with children, young people and families who may be requiring Early Help, it is about working in a helpful, caring, and restorative way to spot and deal with their needs as soon as they come up.



WHAT IS EARLY HELP?



Early Help is a team effort, not just one service. All agencies that work with children, young people and families are responsible for listening to their concerns and worries. They will work closely with families to make sure they get the right support at the right time.

Our goal is to strengthen our relationships in communities, where we all work together, combining our ideas with other services to help families in Shropshire.

KEY POINTS:

Nature of Early Help: It is not limited to a specific team but is an approach that unites professionals from different services to work with the whole family.

Flexibility in Delivery: Early Help can be delivered by one agency or multiple agencies, tailored to the specific needs of the child and family for a responsive and individualised approach.

Principles Guiding Early Help: Principles align with the Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023 legislation, emphasising collaboration, a strengths-based approach, considering the whole family, and intervening early. The New working together document (2023, 44) says:

'Early help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. It is not an individual service, but a system of support delivered by local authorities and their partners working together and taking collective responsibility to provide the right provision in their area. Examples of these include parenting support, mental health support, youth services, youth offending teams and housing and employment services'.

Inclusive Accountability: Early Help is everyone’s business, promoting shared responsibility for the well-being of children and families.

Safeguarding Priority: Early help is an important part of safeguarding children and safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. If, at any point, you feel a child is at risk of significant harm, please follow the Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership procedures.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EARLY INTERVENTION AND EARLY HELP:

Early intervention and Early help share the common goal of addressing issues at an early stage, but they differ in scope and focus.

‘Early Help’ refers to support for children and families to help identify and address problems before they arise or escalate. It is not a single service, but a network of non-statutory services and processes delivered by a local authority and partners including the NHS, schools, and voluntary sector organisations.

On the other hand, early intervention is a way of working with families whose needs require more specific focused support. It involves more targeted services designed to address identified concerns promptly. Early help is a broader concept encompassing various forms of support, while early intervention is a specific approach geared towards preventing escalation to specialist services.

Early intervention and Early Help both aim to tackle issues early on, but they have some differences in their focus.

In summary, this guidance encourages a collaborative Early Help approach, stressing the importance of working together to promote the well-being of all children and young people from the Early Years through to the teenage years, to support and safeguard.



THE EARLY HELP ASSESSMENT: WHAT IS AN ASSESSMENT AND ITS AIMS.

Early Help Assessment:

An Early Help Assessment is a tool we use to support our work with families and helps us to identify what families need help with and inform how we can work with families to make the changes they need.

We work with families using the Early Help Assessment tool to guide our conversations and find out what is working well and what additional support may benefit them. We focus on all those living within the family home and wider Family connections to develop a clear picture on what day to day life is like.

The Early Help Assessment is not a referral form for other professionals to complete to receive another service to support the family. The purpose of the assessment is to identify what help is needed and to inform a Family plan of support which can identify who may be able to support the family with these.

The Early Help Assessment can be shared with those who can offer additional help this will ensure that everyone can work together to make sure families get the right help at the right time and strengthen community connections.

You can complete an Early Help Assessment through our Early Help Module, or complete online following this link.

When we use a restorative approach in the Early Help Assessment, we focus on asking key questions to understand why there are challenges or concerns. The idea is to uncover the root causes, address any harm, and improve things for children, young people, and families. These questions are open-ended and don't blame anyone. The goal is to work together to find solutions instead of assigning blame.

HOW TO COMPLETE THE EARLY HELP ASSESSMENT FORM:

Step by Step-Early Help Assessments:

1. When completing an Early Help Assessment, we will work with family members to build relationships and involve them in every part of the process.
2. We will work with each child to understand what is important to them and place them at the centre of the assessment.
3. We will use different activities to help gather information and with families' agreement we will speak with other professionals that have more information that is important to include. This could include school, nursery, or health visitors.
4. We will talk about family history as this informs us of each child's life experience and include strengths and achievements.
5. We will focus on all members of the family and how their lives are, or have the possibility of, impacting on other household members.
6. We may use other types of assessment tools, such as an exploitation risk assessment, if we are worried about the safety of a family member.
7. We will include any other assessment that has already been completed, such as information collected in reports from education, health and care as part of an Education, Health and care needs assessments, to avoid duplication.
8. We will always include factual information in the assessment and where professional judgement, or opinion is included this will be clearly noted.
9. Assessments will be clear, informative, and not overly descriptive to ensure we can identify what each part means for the child/ren.
10. We will use the assessment to inform a family plan which everyone will work towards and where continued or more help is needed, we may need to revisit the assessment.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

Principles and ethos of working restoratively:

In Shropshire's Early Help, we believe in a simple and caring way of working - restorative practice. Restorative practice is a term used to describe behaviours, interactions and approaches which help to build and maintain positive, healthy relationships, resolve difficulties and repair harm where there has been conflict. It is a proactive approach - working WITH people, not doing things to them or for them and not just sitting back and doing nothing.

This approach helps us build good relationships with families and makes sure children are safe and families get the help they need. The processes used focus upon:

- ♥ removing barriers
- ♥ proactively promoting a sense of community
- ♥ understanding social responsibility and shared accountability

In Shropshire, we would like to support everyone to work in this way, so we can develop a shared language, a common approach and a system wide ethos. Early help is a way of working which is family led, jointly owned and created, achievable and builds sustainable change. It reduces the likelihood of dependency on professional services - and a restorative approach can help us achieve this together.

Our Beliefs:

Separating Behaviour from the Person: We think it is important to understand that everyone makes mistakes, but it does not define who they are. We focus on the behaviour, not the person.

Shifting the Balance of Power: Our goal is to let families take the lead in our work. We want to support them in making decisions and finding solutions that work for them.

Using Family Strengths: Families are strong, and we want to help them use their own strengths and resources to overcome challenges. We are here to support them, not take over.

Why Restorative Practice Works: When we work together with families, instead of making decisions about them on our own, we see better results for children and families. It is like a team effort, and research shows that it makes everyone happier and more likely to make positive changes.

RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS

Asking good questions is at the heart of restorative practice and these fall into three broad categories:

What happened?

Everyone has their own unique perspective on a situation or event and needs an opportunity to express this to feel respected, valued and listened to.

- ♥ What has brought us to where we are today?
- ♥ What happened next?
- ♥ What was going on?
- ♥ What was happening before?

Thoughts / Feelings

The thoughts and feelings are 'beneath the surface' and yet very important to understand.

Tell us more about...

- ♥ What were your thoughts?
- ♥ What were you thinking?
- ♥ How were you feeling?
- ♥ What do you think about it now?
- ♥ What else?
- ♥ At that point, what were you thinking/feeling?
- ♥ When that happened, what happened next?
- ♥ What has brought us here today?

Impact

To live in harmony together people need empathy and consideration, so they understand who is likely to be, or to have been, affected by their choice of action in any given situation and how.

- ♥ How do you feel now?
- ♥ Has anyone else been affected by this?
- ♥ Anything else to add?
- ♥ What has been the hardest thing for you?
- ♥ How do you feel about it now?

Needs

Unmet needs can be the underlying cause of inappropriate or harmful behaviour. It's important we try and help children and families identify what they need to help them move towards solutions.

- ♥ What will it look /feel like when it's better?
- ♥ What else needs to happen?
- ♥ What do you need to move on from this?
- ♥ If you can't do that, what can you do?

Ways forward

It is the people affected by a situation or event who are best placed to identify what should happen. They should actively be encouraged to explore what they feel would help them to move forward.

- ♥ When will it be done?
- ♥ Anything else to add?
- ♥ What would that look like?
- ♥ What will help you to move on from this?
- ♥ What do you think about what has been suggested?

What Happened

Tell us the issues that have brought us here today?

What happened next? When that happened what happened next?

And then? What were you thinking?

Tell us more about... What has brought us here today? What else?

What was happening before? What do you think about it now? What was in your head?

What were your thoughts at the time? How were you feeling?

At that point, what were you thinking/feeling?

How have they been affected?

How do you feel now? Tell us more about...

How have others been affected? How have you been affected?

Was anyone else involved? Who else has been affected? Anyone else?

Anything else to add? What has been the hardest thing for you? Has anyone else been affected by this?

Who has been affected by this

M Finnis, L30 Relational Systems

What needs to happen now

What do you think about what has been suggested?

How does that leave you feeling? Are you okay with that?

When will it be done? Anything else to add?

What would that look like? What do you need to move on from this?

What will it look like when it's done? What else needs to happen? Do you all agree with that?

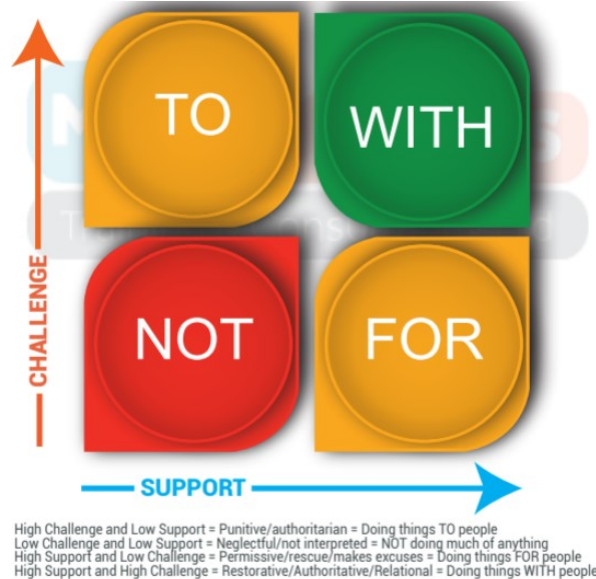
What will help you to move on from this? If you can't do that, what can you do? Tell us more about...



M Finnis, L30 Relational Systems

The Social Discipline Window:

This is a tool that can support us to think about how we work with families. Imagine a window with four ways of doing things. For us, the best way is a mix of high support and high challenge. It is like saying, "We're here for you, and we'll work together to overcome challenges." We try to avoid doing things "for" or "to" families too much.



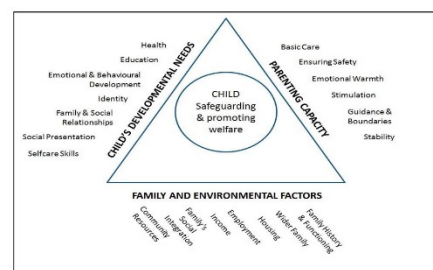
Adapted from Wachtel & McCloud, Restorative Justice in Everyday Life (2008) p124

In simple terms, restorative practice is about being supportive, setting challenges when needed, and working hand in hand with families. It is a way of making sure everyone feels heard and understood.

THRESHOLD:

To begin with, we consider the SSCP Threshold Tool which helps in identifying at what level a child, young person's or family's needs are at, to help us to identify the most appropriate response.

Levels of Need and Response



UNDERSTANDING FAMILY STORIES (GETTING TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED):

In the process of helping early on, it is crucial to hear and understand the stories of children, young people, and families. We want to know what has been going on and why they are here seeking help. It is not just about what is happening at home – we also consider things outside the family that might be affecting them or helping them cope.

When talking about their past, we should keep in mind that families have their own views based on good and not-so-good experiences in their lives and relationships with professionals. Everything we do is seen through these perspectives, whether we mean it that way or not. What we want to figure out is why the family needs support right now.

In the assessment, it is essential to record accurate information that shows a clear understanding of the family's current situation. Keep it brief, stick to the facts, and do not be judgmental. The goal here is for the family to feel heard and understood, not corrected. Focus on listening actively and understanding their perspective, rather than just responding.

Examples of questions to ask that support a restorative approach:

- ♥ What events or challenges led you to seek help today?
- ♥ Can you share with us what has been happening that brought you here?
- ♥ What difficulties or issues are you currently facing that led to this early help assessment?
- ♥ Can you tell us about the experiences or situations that made you decide to reach out for assistance?
- ♥ Is there anything specific that prompted you to seek help, and what do you hope to achieve through this process?
- ♥ Could you share your perspective on why your family needs support at this exact moment in time?
- ♥ When it was happening, what were you thinking, feeling and what did you want to do?
- ♥ Take us back to that time and share what was going through your mind?
- ♥ If we go back to a specific moment, what were your thoughts and feelings then?
- ♥ Help us understand what was going on in your mind during that time?
- ♥ How do you feel about things right now, in the present day?
- ♥ We are interested in knowing your thoughts and emotions at this moment.
- ♥ What thoughts and feelings are on your mind about what happened to you?
- ♥ We want to understand what you are thinking and feeling.

These questions aim to encourage open and reflective responses, allowing individuals to express their experiences and concerns in their own words.

THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS:

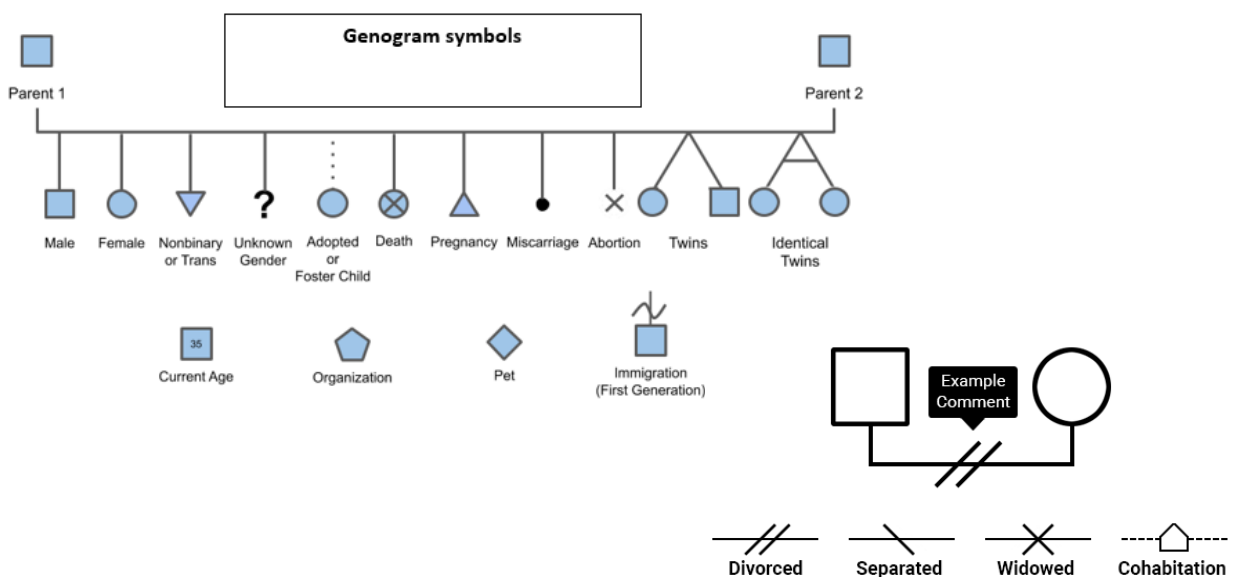
In our conversations with families seeking early help, we aim to gather insights from each family member to understand their unique perspectives. By hearing from everyone, including the child/children, we ensure that the assessment truly reflects each person's thoughts and feelings. This is important because it helps us assess any risks and plan the right kind of support.

We recognise the child's voice as central to our understanding, giving us valuable insights into their experiences. This not only helps us gather information but also builds emotional understanding within the family. Knowing how the family thinks and feels about what is happening in their lives is crucial for effective support.

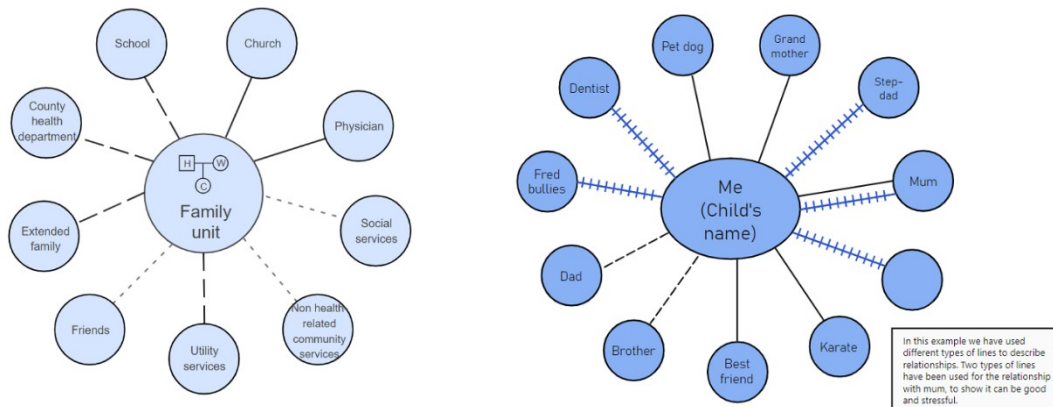
Additionally, we encourage exploring a timeline of thoughts and feelings. By looking at what the family felt before, during, and after events, we gain a deeper understanding. This approach helps us provide support that considers the family's emotions and experiences at each stage. Our goal is not just to collect information but to truly understand and support the unique dynamics within the family unit.

Genograms and ecomaps

A genogram is another way of describing a family tree and can be useful for establishing who is living in the home, who is in the wider family network, and whether there is contact or not. By creating and using genograms and ecomaps with children and young people, you can establish a lot about the circumstances the child or young person is living in, who is important to them and who may have parental responsibility for a child. Genograms use a common set of symbols and are built like a family tree.



This can be extended to include friends and the community by using a simple ecomap for the child or for the whole family:



ASSESSING THE RIPPLES: DESCRIBING THE IMPACT ON EVERYDAY LIVES.



Imagine when something not-so-good happens, like a stone being dropped into a pond. The ripples, or waves, spread out from where the stone landed. In a similar way, when something not-so-good happens to a person or a family, it creates ripples of harm.

These ripples touch different parts of their lives, kind of like how the waves affect the water in the pond. It might impact how they feel, think, and deal with things. It can touch their relationships, school, or daily life.

Understanding the impact of these ripples is like seeing how the waves affect everything around the pond. For children, young people, and families, knowing how certain events have changed their lives is important. It helps us see how their current worries affect their everyday routines.

When we describe these impacts in the assessment, it is like painting a picture of how the waves are affecting the pond. The more we can understand this impact,

the better we can be at finding solutions to help stop those ripples of distress from spreading further.

Here are some more questions to explore the impact:

- ♥ How have the experiences you have gone through affected your everyday life?
- ♥ We want to understand how these experiences have made a difference in your daily routines.
- ♥ In what ways have you personally been affected by what has happened?
- ♥ Help us see how these events have touched your life on a personal level.
- ♥ Can you share how others around you have been impacted by what is going on?
- ♥ It is important to understand how these experiences are affecting people close to you.
- ♥ Who else, besides yourself, has been affected by what has happened?
- ♥ We are curious about the broader impact on people in your life.
- ♥ What, in your opinion, has been the most challenging thing for you in all of this?

NEEDS

Think of needs as the essential tools to improve things for children and families. Before finding solutions, we must identify what each person requires, similar to understanding the essentials for a successful plan. Understanding what emotions are behind the behaviour is crucial in our assessment. Applying a solution-focused approach, when we help everyone recognise their needs, it not only promotes active participation but also contributes to planning for positive and lasting outcomes.

PROFESSIONAL CURIOSITY

Remember that questions are the key! Use your professional curiosity - explore and be proactively, try to understand what is happening within a family or for an individual, rather than making assumptions or taking a single source of information and accepting it at face value. This will help you to develop a holistic view of the family, their strengths and the challenges they may be facing.



Sometimes, children and families might not know what they need. Look and listen carefully during interactions and conversations for clues like "I need to be left alone" or "I wish the kids would stop treating me badly." These clues show they might need things like safety, respect, communication, and understanding.

Once we clearly know these needs, we can start figuring out ways to help. It is like making a plan to make sure everyone gets the right support at the right time.

Here are questions to support the approach of understanding and addressing needs:

- ♥ What do you think would make things better for you and your family right now? -*This helps identify immediate needs and concerns.*
- ♥ Can you share any challenges you are facing that make you feel uneasy or unsafe? -*This encourages the expression of safety and well-being needs.*
- ♥ Are there things you wish were different at home or in your daily life? -*This opens the door to discussing potential needs.*

- ♥ How would you like to see communication and understanding improve in your family? *-This explores the need for better communication and understanding.*
- ♥ Do you feel respected and treated the way you want to be treated at home and in other areas of your life? *-This helps bring attention to the need for respect.*
- ♥ Are there specific things you feel are missing or could be better in your current situation? *-This invites discussion about unmet needs.*
- ♥ Can you describe any moments where you felt safe, respected, or understood recently? *-This helps identify positive experiences and potential needs.*
- ♥ What support or changes would make your daily life more comfortable and enjoyable? *-This focuses on identifying needs for comfort and enjoyment.*

Remember, these questions aim to gently uncover needs and concerns, creating a space for open communication and understanding.

THE WAY FORWARD: FAMILY - LED SOLUTIONS AND STRENGTHS.

Now that we know what is going on, how it affects the child/children and family, and what they need, let's figure out ways to make things better together. It is crucial to involve the family in deciding what steps to take.

During the assessment, talk to them about ideas they have for solutions. Also, find out what the family is good at - what are their strengths? Think about and write down what is already going well for them. Explore what they have tried before and what made it work or not work.

Here are some questions to guide this process:

- ♥ What do you think could make things better for your family? *-This encourages the family to suggest solutions.*
- ♥ Can you tell me about the strengths or positive things your family has? *-This helps identify the family's strong points.*
- ♥ Are there moments when things are going well for your family? *-These highlights positive experiences and successes.*
- ♥ Have you tried anything before to improve the situation? What worked, and what did not? *-This explores past efforts and learns from them.*
- ♥ If you had the power to change something right now, what would it be? *-This encourages them to think about immediate changes.*
- ♥ How can we work together to overcome any blocks or barriers you have faced before? *-This focuses on finding solutions and overcoming challenges.*

Remember, involving the family actively in the decision-making process ensures a collaborative and effective approach to finding solutions.

USING SCALING QUESTIONS FOR FAMILIES:

Imagine if we could measure how concerned a family is about their challenges. Scaling questions help us do just that! It is like putting a number on how big or small the problem feels.

The question might be, "On a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is the best situation, and 1 is when things feel really tough, how concerned are you about the difficulties you're facing?"

So, if a family says 5, it means things aren't too bad, but there's room for improvement. If they say 2, it shows things are more challenging.

What is great is that this number becomes like a starting point, a baseline. Throughout the Early Help process, they can look back and see if the number goes up. Even if it goes up just one point, that's progress! It is like moving closer to the better situation they want.

And here is the best part - every step they take up that scale is a success! We celebrate the things they improved and look into what worked well. This helps us discover their strengths and the things that support them, making it easier to decrease their worries even more.

TAF:

A Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) is a friendly family meeting. It is a time for everyone who helps a child/children or young person/s, including their family, to come together and chat. Think of it as a big team working together!

The goal of the TAF is to share information and create a plan that focuses on solving problems and supporting the child/children and their family. This plan is special because it is not just made by one person — it's made by the whole team, which includes professionals from different areas. We call it a multi-agency meeting because it involves people from different agencies, like schools, health services, and more.

CHILD AND FAMILIES VIEWS:

At the core of a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting is the importance of gathering the views of the child/children and their family. It is crucial to ensure that the plan we create genuinely reflects what the child and family need and want, even if the child is very young or non-verbal.

In this family meeting, everyone, including the child, their family, and a team of professionals, works together like a big team. We prioritise including the thoughts and feelings of everyone involved, placing a strong emphasis on the views of the child and family.

Throughout the meeting, we keep things simple, friendly, and open, with a focus on amplifying the voices of the child and family. Their perspectives take centre stage in shaping the plan. We work together closely with parents, caregivers, and children to ensure that their ideas guide the decisions we make. By sharing information and discussing what's best for the child, we create a plan that truly fits their unique situation. The meeting is set at a time that suits the family, ensuring it's a brief and focused gathering where everyone, especially the child and family, contributes to shaping the best plan for them.

Summary of undertaking visits with the family and young people, direct work, or add after TAF. How do people do the do on the action plans. What direct work are other professionals completing with the family and how frequently?

In simple terms:

- ♥ Why?: We have this friendly meeting to talk, understand, and figure out the best way to help the child and their family.
- ♥ Who is there?: The child/young person, their family, and the professionals from different areas who work with them. It is like a big team working together!
- ♥ What is the plan?: We want to create a plan that helps the child and family, including professionals from different areas, who can work together to make sure it is a good plan.
- ♥ What is important?: The child and family's needs come first, and we all work together to find the best solutions.
- ♥ Who should be there?: The child (if suitable) and family should be there, and even if they cannot come, their thoughts and opinions are still considered. Also, professionals from different areas are there to help create a well-rounded plan.
- ♥ How?: We have a plan template, so everything is clear, easy to understand, and consistent every time.
- ♥ When?: The meeting is organised when it is helpful for the family, and it only lasts as long as it needs to.

THE LEAD PROFESSIONAL:

Lead Professional

A Lead Professional is a person, usually a professional such as a teacher, school support staff or health visitor, who is the single point of contact for a family when working in a Team Around the Family way. They will bring help to the family and reduce the need to tell their story multiple times.

The Lead Professional is usually the person that will undertake an Early Help Assessment with the family. They will work with the family to develop a unique family plan which will identify different roles other people have to support the family to achieve their own goals.

The Lead Professional will organise and co-ordinate Team Around the Family meetings, ensuring the child and their family understand what is happening at each point of the process. They will include their voices where absent or unable to use and encourage participation in decision making about what happens next.

The Lead Professional has a few important jobs:

- ♥ They set up and run the first TAF meeting.
- ♥ They help the family actively take part in the meeting.
- ♥ They invite the right professionals and ask the family who else they want there.
- ♥ They push the plan forward and focus on what is best for the family.
- ♥ They keep the meeting on track and ask another professional to make sure the action plan gets done.
- ♥ Everyone involved gets a copy.
- ♥ They give everyone a chance to talk.
- ♥ They make it clear who needs to do what.
- ♥ They check the plan when needed.
- ♥ They follow safeguarding policy and procedure if there are concerns.
- ♥ They remember they are part of a team and cannot do everything alone.
- ♥ If things are not going well, they might need to have another meeting. If a practitioner is not doing what they agreed on, the Lead Professional talks to them and finds out why. If it keeps happening, they might consider escalation their manager.
- ♥ They make sure they have everyone's contact details.
- ♥ They decide on a date for the next review at the first meeting and for the ones after that.

If there is a need to change the Lead Professional, it is important to talk about it with the family and the new professional before the review meeting. It is better to have these conversations outside of the TAF meeting.

Be considerate and supportive because families might feel uneasy or worried about the change. Plan a thorough handover between the current Lead Professional, the new one, and the family. This helps reduce any problems. Talk to

the family about any worries they might have, so they feel listened to and supported. Make sure they stay involved in the plan.

WORKING TOGETHER:



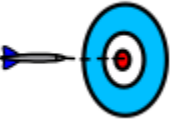
When working together on Early Help, it is crucial for professionals to communicate effectively. While it is good to challenge ideas for better support, too much can lead to conflicts. Make sure everyone understands each other's roles and expectations to avoid misunderstandings.




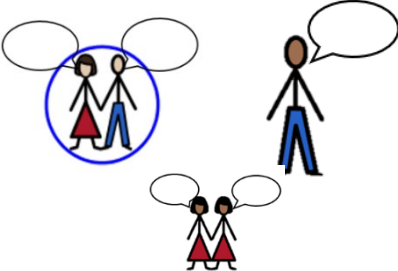



Start by having open and honest conversations early on, using a balanced approach of providing support and presenting challenges. Clearly set expectations through conversation and planning to create a positive work environment.

If you foresee issues or concerns with a professional's support, address them before meetings to prevent conflicts. If conflicts arise during a meeting, resolve them afterward instead of discussing them in front of parents or other professionals.

In cases of safeguarding concerns that Early Help cannot address, follow Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership procedures, and escalate if needed.

MEETINGS:

Agenda	
Welcome and Introductions: 	Make sure everyone, especially the child and family, knows who is here and what each person does. Use simple language, not complicated job titles. Start with a restorative check-in to build good relationships.
Expectations: 	Discuss what everyone should agree to – things like timing, breaks, and mobile phones. Always talk about confidentiality and sharing information. Encourage respect and sensitivity and discuss how people can challenge things appropriately.
Purpose of the Meeting: Keep it short and clear. Why are we here? 	What has Happened: Summarise information from the Early Help Assessment. Ask everyone to add their thoughts to get a better understanding of the current issues.

<p>Identify the Strengths and Needs of the Child/Family:</p> 	<p>Ask the family about their strengths and current support. Understand the family's needs from the Early Help Assessment so you can find ways to help.</p>
<p>Ways Forward:</p> 	<p>Get suggestions from the family and professionals on what help they think would be good.</p>
<p>Formulate the Plan (Main Part of the Meeting):</p> 	<p>Create goals to improve the child/family situation. These goals should address identified needs and be measurable so progress can be tracked.</p>
<p>Parents' Comments about the Plan:</p> 	<p>Talk about how the parent/carer feels about the plan.</p>
<p>Child's Views about the Plan:</p> 	<p>Discuss how the child/young person feels about the plan. If the child is not present, make sure their views are considered.</p>
<p>Set a Date for a Review:</p> 	<p>Agree on a date to come back and see how things are going.</p>
<p>Circulate the Plan:</p> 	<p>Make sure everyone gets a copy of the plan and understands what is expected of them. Children should also get feedback at a level that makes sense to them about what has been agreed.</p>

EARLY HELP PLANS:

Collaborative SMART Family Planning for Positive Change:

Let us work together to create a plan that really helps your family. It is important for everyone to be involved so that the plan is realistic and meaningful for you. You know your family best, and your input is crucial in deciding the steps we will take and the goals we want to achieve.

Family Name: _____ Date of our plan: _____ Date to review: _____
 Children's names: _____ Parents' names: _____
 Who else is involved: _____

Situation		Understanding		Actions	
What the family see are the issues?	What happened in the past?	What are our family strengths?	What changes need to happen?		
Any other issues from professionals?	What is happening now?	How we will do this-who, what, by when			
Who has been affected and how?	What keeps the issues going?	What could happen if things don't change	What will it look like when things have changed		

We will set clear and achievable goals together, making sure they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely (SMART). This means the goals will be clear and easy to understand. We will also agree on the time it will take to achieve them.

SMART

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable and Agreed
- Realistic
- Timely

GOAL SETTING



Plans should focus on understanding what needs to happen, what support will be provided, and who can contribute to making positive changes. Everyone's roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined. The plan should encompass all areas of need identified in the Early Help Assessment. This involves regularly reviewing and assessing our plans, exploring alternative steps, and evaluating the levels of risk. If you are concerned.....



Talk to families - their ideas and concerns are valuable, and we want to hear them. Remind them that if they ever feel that something is not right or if they have a different perspective, we want them to share it with us. We are here to support them, and we will also offer our insights to make sure the plan is effective and beneficial for their family.

During the meetings, the main focus will be creating the TAF plan – a clear and straightforward plan that avoids using confusing language. Together, we can make sure it is a plan that works for the family and helps them to achieve their goals.

RECORDING:

This template, provided with this guidance, is designed for recording key details from our family meetings. Our primary goal in these meetings is to create a solution-focused action plan. It is crucial that the voices of the child, young person, and family are actively heard during the meeting, guiding the actions we take. If you require assistance, please reach out to your Strengthening Families Team. We are here to support you.

REVIEW:

Reviewing Progress: A Checkpoint within 4 Weeks of the initial meeting is recommended and every 12 weeks after that.

We review to ensure that the services provided are effectively meeting the needs of the child, young person, and family. During this review, we will consider the following:



The focus of this meeting is to objectively assess progress, keeping our eyes on the plan and evaluating developments since our last meeting. Any new actions identified will be agreed upon and added to the plan, prioritised based on need.

Our plans are designed to support families and build resilience. We acknowledge that crises can occur, affecting plan progress. Instead of trying to fix the problem outright, let us validate the challenges faced by families. Explore barriers and work together to find realistic solutions. It might involve adjusting actions to make them more achievable or increasing them to reflect a bigger change. Throughout, remember our goal is working with families, not for them to empower them to bring about change.

If there is no noticeable change or success for families, consider these questions:

- ♥ Have the family met their goals and is it appropriate to end support and step away?
- ♥ Is the family ready to make these changes, or should this be revisited in the future?
- ♥ Are we facilitating change or creating dependency on support?

If you find yourself feeling stuck, we recommend discussing this with other professionals. Please consider the integration consultation (information below). We are here to work collaboratively and find the best way forward for the family.

ENGAGEMENT, NON-ENGAGEMENT AND HARD TO REACH FAMILIES:

Effective engagement is crucial to work with all families, it is important to remember family engagement is not a one-off event, i.e. getting through the front door to get the family to sign the family agreement to access Early Help support, it is a choice to continually work together with the services around them throughout the Early Help process, towards positive outcomes for the children, young people and their parents and carers. Some families may find it difficult to access support, this shouldn't be confused with non-engagement as families might be feeling overwhelmed with service involvement, so it is essential that their action plan is realistic.

Non-engagement can present itself in a variety of forms and this can vary from person to person, and family to family. Non-engagement may be due to the family feeling resentful, find their changes too difficult or painful or feel that they do not need support. Families might avoid phone calls, ignore letters, and they may pretend not to be in when Early Help Services conduct a home visit; they may also cancel meetings at short notice or cut them short.

Non-engagement can be categorised into the following;

Ambivalence: can be displayed when a family is consistently late for planned appointments or cancelling appointments; changing the subject during discussion to avoid dealing with issues. Ambivalence can be common and doesn't necessarily mean long-term non-engagement. It can occur due to the family being unclear about what is expected of them or because of previous poor experiences with services.

Avoidance: can be displayed when an individual/ family are avoiding or failing to turn up to appointments; being unavailable for planned visits or cutting visits short. Avoidance is often associated with a lack of trust;

Non-compliance: actively sabotaging implementation of the Early Help plan either through actions or omissions.

Confrontation: can be displayed when an individual is challenging professionals, disputing facts, provoking arguments, extreme avoidance (not answering the door when obviously at home), dismissive body language.

Refusal: can be displayed when families will not meet with their workers or refuse permission for a child to be seen on their own.

Hostility: threats or actual acts of violence against workers: this includes intimidation and behaviours deliberately used to keep professionals at bay, or to have the effect of keeping professionals at bay. This this will only apply to a minority of families that we work with but is the most difficult and challenging of the hard to engage behaviours to work with and professionals may find themselves seeking to avoid difficult or challenging interventions with the family, either consciously or unconsciously. Parents/carers and young people may have previous experience of getting their way through violence and intimidation. They may also use, or threaten to use, complaints systems to change or control professionals. Hostile behaviour is often a distraction technique.

Where families are hostile or hard to engage practitioners must ensure they do not develop low expectations of what can be achieved (Laming, 2009:23). If as a practitioner, you became fearful during a visit you should discuss this with your manager. Think how a child or young person may feel in this situation. Being 'seen' does not mean a child is safe. Ask yourself: 'what's it like to be this child?' Ensure also that you ask them this when you see them on their own.

Disguised compliance: can be displayed by a family / individual when they are giving an outward appearance of cooperating to avoid raising suspicions and to minimise agency involvement. Parents and carers may minimise concerns raised by practitioners or deny that there are any risks facing children. Parents and carers can develop good relationships with some professionals whilst criticising or ignoring others. This can divert attention away from the parents' own behaviour. Parents and carers displaying disguised compliance may manipulate professionals and situations to avoid engagement or intervention. Some parents and carers may say the right things or engage 'just enough' to satisfy practitioners and change in one area of the plan is not matched by change in another area, or change may only occur because of external agencies / resources and not the parents / carers efforts.

Persistent failure to keep appointments is also a feature of disguised compliance. Children are sometimes 'coached' to suggest that all is well and in some cases a child's report of the family situation conflicts with that of the parent/carer.

Sometimes practitioners are over optimistic about parents' and carers' progress and ability to care for the child or their promises to engage with services. Practitioners may rationalise parent's behaviour, for example seeing a failure to engage with services as a matter of 'parental choice' rather than non-compliance. Practitioners in case reviews tended to accept information from parents and carers as fact without displaying appropriate professional curiosity and investigating further. [Learning from case reviews: disguised compliance \(nspcc.org.uk\)](https://www.nspcc.org.uk)

If you have a concern around non-engagement or disguised compliance then we suggest you talk this through with the other professionals, utilising supervision with your manager, discussing the case at the Intergration Panel, or speaking with your Locality Development Officer (LDO).

ENDING EH SUPPORT:

The end of Early Help Support can be a daunting thought for some families. They have come to know and trust the team that have worked with them through challenging times and may be worried about what will happen when that team is no longer there.

After support, planning is a key element to successful, sustainable change for families and if managed well this can empower families to access support within their own communities. For the most part, there are a wide range of voluntary and community sector support right where families need them and helping them to engage with these may give them the confidence to access in the future should things get a little tricky again.

Families may also need a continuum of support from some of the services they have worked with during the Team Around the Family process. It is important for families to know who these people are and how to contact them, Family Exit plans are a tool used for just that. They can be developed with the family before the end of Early Help Support, it is an opportunity to talk about what went well and celebrate their achievements and also to detail who and where to find further help if they need it. The families can take these away with them, so they have them at hand when needed.

To manage challenges and conflicts, engage in restorative conversations within or across agencies, encourage manager-to-manager discussions, and follow a complaint resolution process. These steps promote a collaborative and positive approach to Early Help, ensuring the safety and well-being of children and families.

SAFEGUARDING:

Child Protection

If there are safeguarding concerns that cannot be met through an Early Help approach, they should be escalated in line with local safeguarding procedures. If you feel a child is in immediate danger, please call **999**. If you are worried about a child, please call First Point of Contact on **0345 678 9021** for advice and support.

Additional Early Help Support

For further information, guidance, and support with the Team around the Family process, please contact The Strengthening Families Team, **01743 253921** or ShropshireStrengtheningFamilies@shropshire.gov.uk

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

As part of the development of the Early Help offer in Shropshire, we are keen that all partners and practitioners feel supported to work with families and improve their outcomes. It is important to understand that our Workforce Development Strategy is more than a training delivery plan, it also identifies how we will understand and plan for the future requirements of the whole early help workforce and how we can all work together to improve outcomes for children.

The aim of the Workforce Development Strategy is to develop and support a highly skilled workforce who share common values and who understand both their and others' contribution to the lives of children, young people and their families and how these interact. We would like to develop the Workforce Development Strategy collaboratively with partners via the Locality Networks.

To see what training is on offer and to book a place, please

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS LEAP INTO LEARNING](#)

0-5 TEAM:

The Early Help 0-5 Team is a dedicated team who work closely with other professional teams to support our youngest children and those expecting families. We have strong partnerships with those working with families with children under the age of five including, Health visitors, Early Years settings and Midwifery. We have developed pathways with these partners to ensure those

families who are seeking more help than what they already have from these partners can get the support they need at the earliest point.

The 0-5 Team offer includes opportunities to drop-in to talk to a dedicated Team member about anything they may be struggling. Families can drop into their nearest Family Hub, contact Shropshire's First Point of Contact (FPOC) or explore our website for hands on digital information.

The 0-5 Team can also provide more focused support to those families needing more specific help. This would include a Family's Early Help Assessment and plan. These tools will help us provide the right support to meet the needs of the family and may include working with others.

YOUTH SUPPORT TEAM:

Shropshire Youth is the collective name of Shropshire Youth Support Team and Information Advice and Guidance Team (IAG)

Shropshire Youth Support Team is a team of locally and nationally qualified JNC Youth Workers who predominantly deliver Detached Youth Work within identified communities where there are higher levels of disadvantage. Detached Youth Work uses the principles and practice of informal education to engage young people in a constructive dialogue about their needs, interests, concerns and lifestyles to support them in their personal and social development. Detached Youth Work is delivered on the streets, within parks and green spaces, shopping centres and other spaces and places where young people chose to congregate in their free association time. The support the team give to young people is individualised to their personal or group needs and is based on voluntary engagement.

The team also deliver personal and social education programmes within all schools setting based around the needs of young people in Shropshire. These programmes enable young people to develop effective relationships, assume greater responsibility and keep themselves safe. They currently deliver three different workshops and programmes within schools, these include Below the Belt and masculinity programme for young men, EmpowerHer, a programme for young woman to develop self-esteem and confidence by delivering social action projects with their school communities. I Chose Me is a healthy relationship workshop for young women.

The team is constantly attracting new funding and projects to develop the work with young people in their communities including Holiday Activity Funding to provide Pop Up Youth Spaces which uses contextual safeguarding to keep young people safe within their communities and Safer Streets Funding which allows Youth Workers to be available to young people in Shrewsbury Town Centre offering Harm Reduction and Stay Safe Work.

The IAG (Information Advice and Guidance) works with NEET young people (Not in Education, Employment or Training) across the County.

Referrals predominantly come from Family Support Workers, Compass, Social workers, SEN Team, Schools, Colleges when young people have left course early,

Elective home education service, Education Access Service case workers, parents and young people themselves.

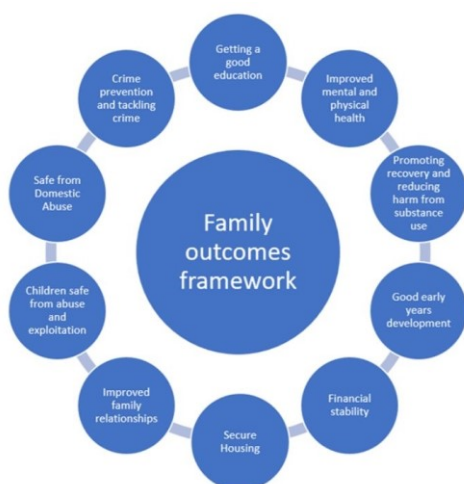
The Service delivers impartial careers IAG to 16–18-year-olds who find themselves NEET. This allows those young people to explore their post 16 options. The team also offer practical support to create CVs, support with job search, help with completing job or college applications and can help with visits to providers. They can also offer bespoke support such as, travel training. Advice and support are offered flexibly according to individual preferences and need, working via telephone, video calls, text, face to face, home visits and working in community venues.

After delivering careers guidance and offering practical support the young person is assisted in moving forward into their preferred post 16 option e.g. Training programme or traineeship, college course, apprenticeship or voluntary work plus other options. Some YP (young people/person) are not ready to move forward due to physical ill health or mental health issues e.g. anxiety, depression or borderline agoraphobia are common. These young people are regularly monitored and engaged with when their health/mental health allows. Referrals to other services such as social prescribers or Enable are also made where appropriate.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES PROGRAMME:

The Supporting Families Programme is a government initiative that launched in 2021 and builds on the previous Troubled Families Programme. The programme aims to support families to become empowered to become resilient over time and build connections to their local community. In Shropshire, the programme supports to join up local services and create a strong multi-agency partnership who will work together to understand local trends, predict emerging needs in the area and identify and respond to those needing extra help.

The benefits of the programme will be felt across Shropshire, as the pressure on Social Care will be reduced as we begin to rebalance the system, enabling families to access support at the earliest opportunity and not intervening at crisis point, this delivering better outcomes for families.



There are four key principles of the Supporting Families Programme; early intervention, whole family working, multi-agency working and measuring outcomes and data.

The National Supporting Families Outcome Framework (National Supporting Families Outcomes Framework) specifies 10 outcome headlines and under each outcome are descriptors of the family needs that make up the eligibility of the programmes criteria. To

be eligible for the Supporting Families criteria each family must demonstrate a minimum of 3 criteria.

To achieve a successful claim against the programme, the family will have been supported by a lead professional, there will be an Early Help Assessment taking into account all the family member's needs, and an action plan to address all the problems faced by the family which will detail the support provided by the services around them and evidence the outcome. Sustainability checks are then completed at 6 months following the closure of the support.

The Early Help System Guide provides the national vision and descriptors for a mature Early Help System. Each year Shropshire completes a self-assessment against the Early Help Systems Guide to assess the current position of our Early Help System and uses this to support prioritisation of system transformation activity for the coming year. The Programme offers a results payment for each family, when Shropshire can evidence a successful family outcome. Some other local authorities have Earned Autonomy status where they receive their funding up front to deliver their Early help services.

The Early Help System Guide vision has 5 descriptors and to achieve Earned Autonomy, a score of 5 is required in each area;

- ♥ Family Voice and Experience
- ♥ Workforce
- ♥ Communities
- ♥ Leaders
- ♥ Data

[Supporting Families Early Help System Guide](#)

FAMILY HUBS:

Family hubs are dedicated warm open access spaces for families. Families can drop-in to meet members of the Early Help Team to have a conversation about things that may be troubling them. They can also stay for while, catch up with others, have a coffee and a chat and even speak to professionals from other services that may be able to help them.

Family hubs can offer help and support when families need it the most, within their own communities. They are a gateway to information, advice and guidance about the things that matter the most to families and the team can support them to access help from the right people at the right time. We work together with a range of other services including; health, education and the voluntary and community sector to provide an integrated offer with a balance of professional and community help.

Family hubs are built around the needs of the local community, if the Family hub cannot meet your needs we will adapt and change to make those services more accessible. With digital platform services available, we can link families to the information they need, support them to make necessary phone calls that have just been too difficult to do themselves or just be a listening ear when they need it the most.

Family hubs are not just for families, professionals can drop in to speak to a member of the team, to find out more information about possible support for those families they are working with or seek help on how to be the Lead professional, complete Early Help Assessments and develop Family plans. For more detailed peer support, professionals can link in with their local Integration Panels.

FAMILY HUB-SPOKES:

Shropshire Supporting Families through Early Help

Family Drop-ins

Free info, advice & support

Is your family struggling? Would you like some support but don't know where to start?

Why not come along to an [Early Help Family Drop-in](#). You can chat to a range of services who will help you to access the support you need. Services like:

- Early Help Family Workers (who can work with your family to provide support tailored to your needs)
- Parenting Support (for support around child development, behaviour, sleep and relationships)
- Services that can help with finance, housing, health domestic abuse and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Find your local drop-in here

Shropshire Council

Spokes come in all shapes and sizes. From information points at your local community centre, to scheduled appointment availability within your local schools and pop up information, advice and guidance sessions on the 'let's talk local' community bus. Living in a rural county come with it's own challenges and we recognise that it is not always possible for families to come along to one of the Family Hubs. We aim to provide an adaptive spoke service to ensure families can stay connected and have an equally accessible service, wherever they live in Shropshire.

INTEGRATION:

Integration teams in health, care and Early help are teaming up to support family wellbeing. They aim to work closely and respond quickly to the needs of families with children and young people. These teams are under pressure due to rising family crises, and they plan to work with families earlier to improve their lives and reduce the need for specialised services. Local leaders from the council and NHS are committed to working together for everyone to live their best life.

The teams are based on successful models from other areas and have shown positive impacts, such as improved outcomes for families, better communication between staff, and stronger connections to local communities. The Integration

Consultation Panels are available in various areas, allowing partners to present their work for families in need. The goal is to bring together multi-agency partners efficiently to identify and address family needs, reducing the risk of situations escalating. Staff are motivated to develop this new way of working, creating partnerships across the NHS, council, and community sectors.

The integration test and learn sites are exciting and positive, and the concept has been well received by the staff themselves who are highly motivated to develop a new way of working, re-creating partnerships across the NHS, council, voluntary and community sectors.

Integration Consultation Panels are currently available in the areas listed below with future teams planned as follows:

**Oswestry @ The Centre, Oswestry
Held weekly.**

**North Shrewsbury @ Harlescott Junior
School in term time and Sunflower
House in school holidays Held
fortnightly currently.**

Ludlow TBC From October 2023

**Market Drayton TBC From January
2024**

Bridgnorth TBC From April 2024

Roles and responsibilities of integration multi-agency consultation panel:

The Consultation Panel form should be used by all partners who would like to present the work they are doing with a family to the Integrated Practitioner Team where a joint approach may benefit that family.

The Integration projects, bring together multi-agency partners based within Shropshire. The teams provide an efficient means of considering and exploring how best to identify and meet the needs of the families, children, and young people, where their current situation is negatively impacting on them. The multi-agency approach reduces the potential risk of the situation escalating further by providing access or signposting to the right level of support in a timely way.

PARENTING:

The Parenting Team provides a variety of services to family across Shropshire depending on their level of need.

All our interventions are based on the Solihull Approach which is an evidence based early intervention tool, drawing on knowledge and research of early brain development and teenage brain development as well as the concepts of Containment, Reciprocity and Behaviour Management.

Parenting Practitioners offer the following:

- ♥ Parenting Help and Support Line
- ♥ Understanding Your Child and Understanding Your Child with SEND groups
- ♥ Sleep Tight workshops.
- ♥ 1-2-1 support for most vulnerable families

Play Practitioners work with families where the parents/carers need support with appropriately engaging, playing or interacting with their children to develop an nurturing relationship. They also support children and young people where gaps in their emotional development have been identified, due to trauma. The Play Practitioners are trained in the Solihull Approach, Thrive Approach as well as BUSS model and will utilise these approaches as appropriate.

LOCALITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS (LDO'S):

In Shropshire, we have one Locality Development Officer in each area; North Central and South and they are key to the delivery of the Supporting Families Programme. Our LDO's provide information, support and guidance to Early Help Partners with the use of the case management system, EHM and with managing the active episode of support for families. LDO's will support Early Help Partners to be a Lead professional to complete an Early Help Assessment with a family and they will support the lead professional to create a family plan and to chair a Team Around the Family Meeting. The LDO's also hold regular network meetings for Early Help Partners to get together in their locality and share information on services and other partner updates.

EHAST:

E-HAST was designed to address demand and capacity issues into Children's Social Care and to ensure parents and families access support and help to meet their needs at the earliest opportunity. E-HAST is a key team in providing a front door response to children, young people and their families, who are referred for Early help / Children Services. These families present with help and support needs.

The response may include a home visit/s to meet the family discuss the referral and/or liaison with partner agencies to ensure appropriate and timely support is in place to support the families' identified needs.

The areas of support might include parenting skills, response to child exploitation, children with additional needs, bereavement, child and adolescent mental health and physical wellbeing, family conflict including domestic abuse and/or risk of family breakdown. However, this is not a limited list the needs of the family take precedence.

The support and level of intervention/response aims to improve outcomes for children and families in line with local and national priorities and targets applying

the principles of working under the principle of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, which is guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children.

The Team is made up of Family Support Workers, Domestic abuse worker, senior lead practitioner and business support.

EARLY HELP EMPLOYMENT ADVISERS:

In Shropshire, we have two Early Help Employment Advisers, who are employed by the Department of Work and Pensions and support families in Shropshire in the following ways:

- ♥ Offer support for family members who may be eligible for disability benefits
- ♥ Refer family members to Improving access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT), Enable Supported Employment Services and Shropshire Recovery Partnership
- ♥ Visit families in their own homes, where they are unable to attend office bases
- ♥ Internet job searches
- ♥ Help with CVs
- ♥ Help with Job applications
- ♥ Interview skills and preparation
- ♥ General benefit queries
- ♥ Work experience opportunities
- ♥ Travel plans
- ♥ Training information
- ♥ Other information such as transport schemes

Signpost parent carers of children and young people with SEND to specialist services, such as Shropshire Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS), BEAM (Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service), SPECTRA Inclusion Support Team, Autism West Midlands (AWM) and the Parenting Team to help meet their child or families individually assessed needs.

Families must meet at least three of the Supporting Families criteria and either have an active Early Help Episode with assessment and plan or be open to CIN or CP, for the Employment Advisor to be able to support the family.

FIS, LOCAL OFFER, DIGITAL OFFER:



The Family information Service (FIS) is here to give families the info and resources they need to help their family life run a little smoother. We can help with anything and everything to do with family life, whether that's something for parents or something for

the children and young people. We are a free, universal service so anyone can use us. If you have a question, we are likely to be able to help find out information on services of support or resources, and we have some great tools for practitioners to be able to provide families with information themselves.

We can provide information on a wide range of topics, such as:

- ♥ Finding and paying for Ofsted registered childcare, including childminders, day nurseries, pre-school playgroups, out of school clubs and holiday clubs.
- ♥ Local baby and toddler groups
- ♥ Parenting support to understanding your pregnancy, or child/teen, their sleep, mental health
- ♥ Events, clubs, activities, and fun things to do in the school holidays, for all ages
- ♥ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- ♥ Family finances and the costs of living
- ♥ Family support such as relationships, bereavement
- ♥ Physical health and emotional wellbeing and mental health support
- ♥ Family relationships

There are several ways in which the FIS provide information, advice and support, including digital channels, face to face and through a dedicated helpline.

FIS telephone helpline

The FIS telephone helpline is available: -

Monday: 9am to 6pm

Tuesday to Friday: 9am to 3pm

Families can call the helpline and speak to a trained advisor who can undertake research and pull together tailored information, which can be emailed or posted out to the family.

The telephone number is **01743 254400**.

Email - The FIS has a dedicated email address to send through requests for information and enquiries. This mailbox is monitored throughout the day. The email address is ShropshireFIS@Shropshire.gov.uk

Online Family Information Request Form

There is an online family information request form which enables families to select topics of information they would like to help and support their family. This includes subjects such as

- ♥ Childcare and children's activities
- ♥ Family relationships
- ♥ Health and well being
- ♥ Support needs
- ♥ Safety
- ♥ Family Finances and homes

Each subject then has a wide range of topics which many families need information on. Parent carers can access the form here - [Shropshire Family Information Service \(FIS\) Information request form.](#)

Social media

You can find lots of useful info, events, activities and things to do on the FIS social media pages, so make sure you tell parent carers – and follow along yourself to keep up to date with news. You'll find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter/X

<https://www.facebook.com/ShropshireFamilyInfo>

<https://www.instagram.com/shropshirefamilyinfo/>

<https://twitter.com/ShropFamilyInfo>

Online Family Information Directory - <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/fis>

Our Family Information Directory features information about local, regional and national services, groups, events and activities. It is searchable via category, area, distance from a specific postcode and age. We can also curate specific lists for practitioners and families. Some of our most popular lists are:

- ♥ Parenting Workshops and Courses
- ♥ School Holiday Clubs
- ♥ Early Help and Community drop-in sessions
- ♥ Carer and Toddler groups
- ♥ Rhyme Time sessions at the Library

Check out our Linktree page for a full list of lists and links! -

<https://linktr.ee/shropshirefamilyinfo>

If you spot any records which are out of date or missing, please let us know by emailing ShropshireFIS@shropshire.gov.uk

FIS Information and Resources

Did you know that we have a wide range of resources that are available to both parents and professionals?

We have Information and Resources on a wide range of topics, such as: Anger, Healthy Eating, Mental Health, Sleep, SEND, and much more!

Resource Library

We have an entire Library of resources that are accessible on the Children's Services Early Help SharePoint.

You can find it on the SharePoint site under Resources > FIS Information and Resources.

If you have any resources that you think another practitioner or family would benefit from the send it over to us on email and we will include it in the library – email us at ShropshireFIS@Shropshire.gov.uk

Resource Packs

We also have useful Resource Packs around a variety of common topics many families face. They cover support services, tips, leaflets, books on the subject, and much more. Email us to see if we have a resource pack on a topic you or a family are interested in.

Please do share any useful resources with us that we might have missed! Email anything you think would be useful to ShropshireFIS@Shropshire.gov.uk

Keeping up to date with news

There's a number of ways in which you can keep up to date with news and information through our various electronic newsletters.

Don't forget to look out for the:

- ♥ Early Help newsletter (for practitioners and partners)
- ♥ SEND newsletter (for parent carers and practitioners)
- ♥ FIS newsletter (for parent carers and practitioners)

If you want to subscribe to any of our newsletters please email ShropshireFIS@shropshire.gov.uk

Out and about in the community

We love the chance to meet with parent carers in the community, and if capacity allows, we attend various local events and drop ins.

This can include:

- ♥ School coffee mornings
- ♥ Early Help drop ins
- ♥ Community drop ins
- ♥ Job Centre advice and support sessions
- ♥ One off family events

We have developed an events calendar which can be found here and lists events for families to get information and support...

SHROPSHIRE SEND LOCAL OFFER:



The Family Information Service also manage the SEND Local Offer.

[The SEND Local Offer](#) is a single place for information, services, and resources for children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and / or disabilities, their families, and the practitioners who support them. It's been designed with a family's needs at the heart of the process. There is a [video, an easy read document](#) and [promotional materials](#) to explain the Local Offer.

Having access to good quality information to help parent carers understand the world of SEND is really important when making decisions about their child's life. This is where websites such as this one can help.

The local offer website has two main sections. The first is the information section, where systems and processes are explained, such as how to get extra help at nursery or school, or who to speak to if you're worried about your child's progress. This section will introduce parent carers to services that might help a family, and help them to understand what support is available from a range of services across education, health and social care.

The second section is the [service directory](#). This is a comprehensive list of services, clubs, support groups and businesses that might be of use to a family. It provides a brief introduction to what's offered and contact details so that they can find out more. There's also a listing of events and activities that families might find of interest.

The SEND Local Offer on Social Media

The SEND Local Offer also has popular social media accounts for up to date news and information, so make sure you tell parent carers – and follow along yourself to keep up to date with news. You'll find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter/X

<https://www.facebook.com/sendlocaloffershropshire/>

<https://www.instagram.com/shropshiresendlocaloffer/>

<https://twitter.com/LocalOfferShrop>

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) is the business of everyone who provides Early Help. Work with families, children and young people acknowledges the strengths and needs of the child/young person and all members of their family with support focused on the removal of barriers. Parent carers of children

and young people need those supporting them to be empathetic and understand the challenges they face, responding with practical help and strategies.

Collaboration with a wide range of multi-agency professionals including colleagues from across health, education, social care and the wider community is key to providing the support children/ young people and their families need. We host regular themed SEND specific drop-ins at our family hubs and spoke venues across the county that allow parent carers to drop-in and chat with a range of multi-agency professionals.

The SEND operational lead in early help takes a central role in guiding practices, overseeing the work completed by early help professionals with families, ensuring effective support for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and actively contributing to the development and delivery of training programs to enhance the overall assistance provided.

