

# A One Minute Guide to Early Help in Devon

## **What is Early Help?**

When a child/young person/family needs something extra, Early Help is the initial response offered by all services in contact with children, young people and families. This builds an understanding to address extra needs and prevent situations from getting more difficult for children and young people. The aim of Early Help is to build on people's capacity and resources to manage their own dilemmas, resolve their own difficulties and prevent further problems in the future.

**Early Help is not a designated team it is the way that EVERYONE works together to support the needs of families.**

## **The Early Help Assessment**

The Early Help Assessment is the tool used by all Practitioners in Devon to assess the needs of a family and individual family members. It enables information to be gathered about a family from a range of practitioners so their needs can be understood and the right support can be put in place. All Practitioners involved complete the relevant sections of the assessment, in consultation with families, and record this on to the Right for Children system.

## **Right for Children system**

Right for Children is an IT system that enables practitioners from a range of agencies to input and share information about the families they are working with, with the families consent. Training is not necessary, but awareness sessions are being held for practitioners to gain further information. Dates/venues of sessions and further information can be found at:

[www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org/workers-volunteers/early-help](http://www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org/workers-volunteers/early-help)

Any questions about the Right for Children IT System can be sent to: [rightforchildren@devon.gov.uk](mailto:rightforchildren@devon.gov.uk)

## **Team Around the Family (TAF)**

The family and relevant agencies working with them are known collectively as the 'Team around the Family' (TAF) (sometimes also known as the 'Team around the Child' or TAC).

A TAF meeting, engages effectively with the family and relevant professionals to produce a plan of coordinated support that enables a child or young person and their family to achieve agreed outcomes within specified timescales.

## **Lead Practitioner**

A Lead Practitioner is the person who, on behalf of the child, young person or family will coordinate the Early Help Assessment and plan. The person deemed most appropriate is usually someone who is a trusted adult/worker who wants the best for the child or young person. What is important is that where someone takes on the role of Lead Practitioner, this does not create a new burden as everyone should be committed to doing the right thing for the child/young person .

## **Request for Additional Services**

The Request for Additional Service can be used to access additional targeted support for families, where unmet need has been identified through an assessment. Practitioners are required to consult and use the [DCFP's Threshold Tool](#), and have started an Early Help Assessment on Right for Children, to get an understanding of the family's needs, before completing a 'Request for Additional Service'. Practitioners must complete as much information as possible on the Request for Additional Service form. Any gaps in information may lead to delay, or result in requests being returned.

Requests for Additional Service are discussed by multi-agency partners at weekly Early Help Triage meetings held in each of the four localities across Devon (North, South, East/Mid and Exeter). Multi-agency partners make decisions on requests and signpost to appropriate services. More information can be found at; <http://www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org/workers-volunteers/early-help/>

## **Where can I find out more?**

There are four **Locality Early Help Officers** in Devon that cover different areas. Their role is to offer support, advice and guidance to all Practitioners on the early help system. Contact details:

North Devon: [earlyhelpnorthsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelpnorthsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk)

Exeter: [earlyhelpexetersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelpexetersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk)

Mid & East: [earlyhelpmideastsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelpmideastsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk)

South Devon: [earlyhelpsouthsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelpsouthsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk)

**Pinpoint** is an online search tool that can be used to find up-to-date and accurate information about thousands of community services and groups available in Devon <https://www.pinpointdevon.co.uk>

**Practitioner forums** are held across the county, for practitioners from all organisations to attend, to seek support and advice about their work, listen to speakers from different organisations and join in themed sessions around specific topics i.e. mental health, domestic violence. Dates/venues can be found at: <http://www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org/workers-volunteers/early-help/>

**Local Alliance meetings** are held in four areas (North, South, East/Mid and Exeter) on a monthly basis. These are aimed at managers (or similar positions) who can champion Early Help, ensure change is embedded within their organisation and participate in discussions about local issues. Dates/venues can be found at: <http://www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org/workers-volunteers/early-help/>