



GREENWICH
**Safeguarding
Children**
PARTNERSHIP

EARLY HELP STRATEGY

2019-2023



OUR VISION

All children in Greenwich, regardless of their background or circumstances, should have a happy and fulfilled childhood where they enjoy school and family life, learn, belong, grow and achieve so that they enter adulthood ready, willing and able to achieve their highest potential.

CYPP 2017-2020

INTRODUCTION

Greenwich Early Help Strategy sets out our arrangements for working together to build resilience, prevent and protect from harm and builds upon the good practice and existing strategies that already exist in Royal Greenwich. We will use these foundations to establish a new Early Help Strategy that is firmly embedded within the principle that **for children who need additional help, every day matters.**

DEFINITION OF EARLY HELP

Most children have needs that are met by their parents, wider families, support networks and universal services such as schools, early years, youth services, health and other community resources. Some children may need some additional support within these Universal settings. Other children and families with a range of needs may benefit from a Royal Greenwich Early Help Offer, either as a first support plan or following an intervention by Children's Social care or the Youth Offending Service or alongside additional education support

In Greenwich, early help means:

“That we ensure that needs are identified quickly and that support is provided as soon as a problem emerges. It can be required at any stage in a child’s life from pre-birth through to teenage years. The aim of early help is to reduce or eliminate the need for support and to promote resilience. Early help responses involve the actions that each and every professional working with children and their parents can take as a single agency and how professionals work together in a timely and responsive way, to promote wellbeing and positive outcomes for children and families.”



This definition is underpinned by the following principles:

- All children and young people have a right to grow up safe from harm, with opportunities to achieve to the best of their potential, and to enjoy life.
- Early help is everyone's business: it requires everyone to work together to put the child or young person at the centre of everything they do, in order to meet needs and improve outcomes
- Early help should be at the lowest tier appropriate to meet the needs of the child and prevent the need for specialist services.
- Children's Centre and school delivered support is an integral part of the early help offer.
- Professionals will establish good relationships with families: adopting a family centred approach, which promotes participation and co-design with children, young people and families.
- We will promote personal responsibility and resilience, not create dependency.

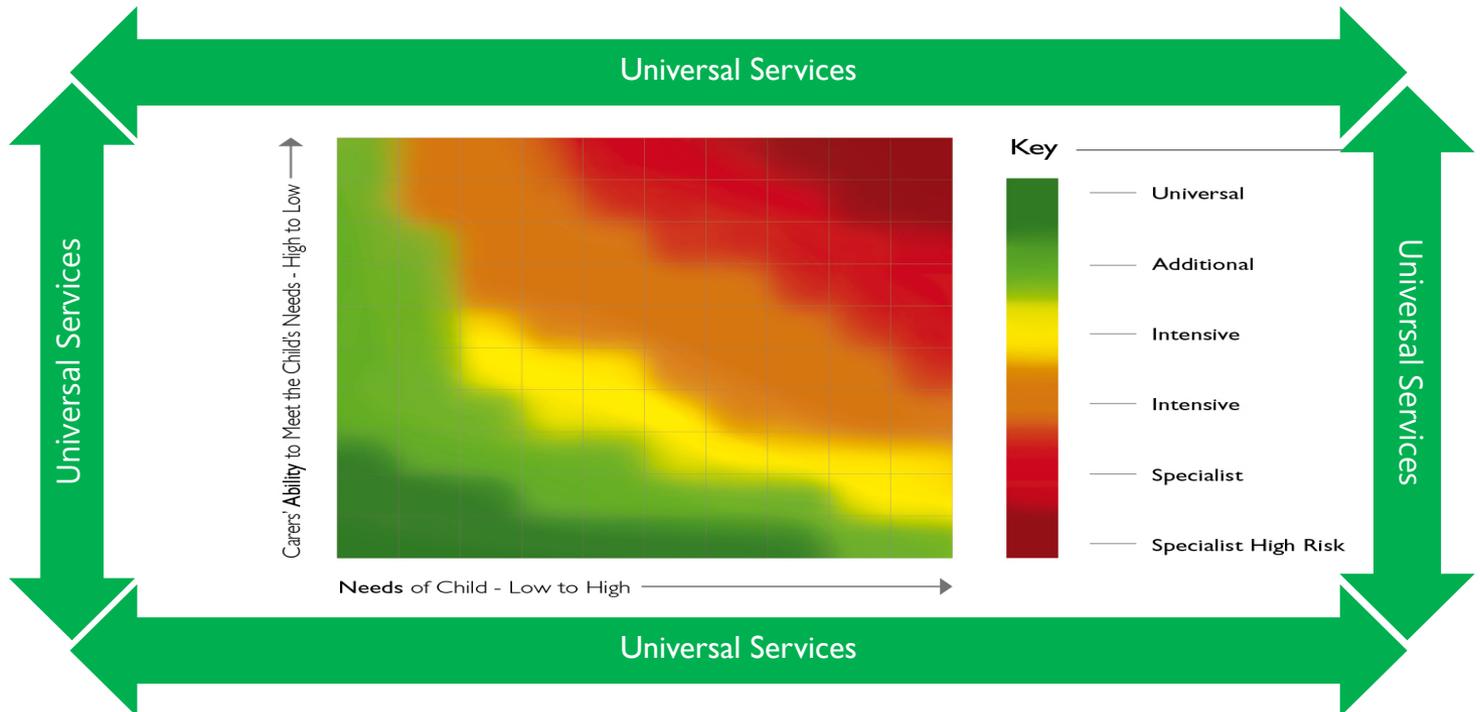
- Work will build on the strengths and positive elements of families' lives.
- Universal provision will support early help responses.
- We will involve as few professionals as possible, who can also prioritise support to make things happen.
- We will always keep a critical focus on the needs and safety of children and young people.
- Effective early help is outcome focused and evidence informed.
- We seek to leave parents, children and young people feeling that things have improved for them

It is important that early help services are not designed in isolation, but instead are part of a whole system approach. Early help is part of a continuum of responses from universal services through to acute.

Only a small number of children and young people in Greenwich will need the specialist statutory intervention set out in legislation. The vast majority will lead happy lives, with access only to universal services available to the whole

community. In between these two groups there are groups of vulnerable children and young people who may, for a range of reasons, experience temporary difficulties in their lives requiring additional support.

The diagram below illustrates this relationship; it shows the level of needs of all children and their families in Royal Greenwich with the continuum of responses. It demonstrates that some universal services, namely schools, GPs and health visitors will be involved with all children, including those who require specialist support .



This Early Help Strategy complements a range of other plans and strategies in Greenwich so that there is a continuity of proportionate and effective arrangements at all levels of need.

For more information about levels of need and responses contained with the diagram on the previous page please visit *Right Child, Right Service, Right Time*.



VOICE OF THE CHILD

Greenwich puts children at the centre of everything we do therefore it is essential to capture the voice of all children to meet their diverse needs. We believe that giving children a voice promotes self-esteem and self-worth. By giving children a voice through choice, opinion, feelings and emotions children can develop and learn that they are important and valued. Feeling valued plays a large role in how a child learns. This means that services delivering early help will ensure meaningful involvement of children in helping professionals to understand their lives and needs, in designing interventions, and in shaping and developing services. We are committed to involving all children and young people, including the very young, those with disabilities and those from marginalised communities.

HOW EARLY HELP IS DELIVERED

The responsibility for early help in Greenwich is shared among all partners. It depends upon:

- Excellent universal services (e.g. Voluntary and Community groups, Children's Centres, Youth Service, Health Visitors, School Nurses) that take responsibility for the delivery of meaningful, purposeful early help responses and 'go the extra mile' for families. This might include providing a service or support at the evening or weekend, undertaking home visits, being persistent in building the relationship, offering practical support, guiding to help overcome cultural boundaries or lack of confidence in accessing services.
- Leaders within all services who champion early help, good quality interventions, continuous improvement and learning from feedback.
- A competent workforce, provided with the appropriate skills to identify and respond to children and young people in a timely way.
- Robust supervision, management oversight and quality assurance.

MULTI-AGENCY WORKING AND COORDINATION OF RESPONSES

In *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, July 2018 the DfE sets out the framework for Early Help:

Effective early help relies on local organisations and agencies working together to:

- ***Identify children and families who would benefit from early help***
- ***Undertake an assessment of the need for early help***
- ***Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child***

TEAM AROUND THE CHILD

Often the needs can be met through a single agency, but there are times when it is helpful for professionals from different agencies to work together and agree a plan with a review timeline to make sure that the help they are offering is making a difference. This is known as a 'Team Around the Child'.

Children being stepped down from specialist services will often go into a TAC process to ensure the coordination of any early help services that remain involved. This may be necessary to ensure the continued reduction of risk or to meet any ongoing need.

EARLY HELP ASSESSMENTS

In Greenwich we do not dictate the form or structure of any assessment or planning tools that an organisation may use. Many universal services may continue to use the Early Help Assessments, however what is important to us is that the need and risk of children are assessed to inform the nature of intervention that will be provided. The fundamental principles should be that:

The assessment is clear to the child, their parents/carers and other professionals involved. The purpose is to identify strengths, needs and services in a structured way.

The assessment should be holistic taking into account the child's developmental needs, their health, their progress, the parenting capacity of carers and what the child needs in terms of family and community resources.

The assessment must take account of the culture and issues of diversity, particular to the child and family and should be done in a way that children and parents can engage in a meaningful way.



ROYAL GREENWICH EARLY HELP SERVICE

Sometimes, children young people and families need more help. They may have longstanding or entrenched problems and/or require intensive support but they do not require a statutory social work or youth justice intervention.

Royal Greenwich (RG) Early Help Service is a goal orientated service that will work with the full range of issues within a family to ensure the smallest group of professionals are involved in the child and family's life and that relationships can be built and nurtured. It works collaboratively with families, who will identify their own needs and goals.

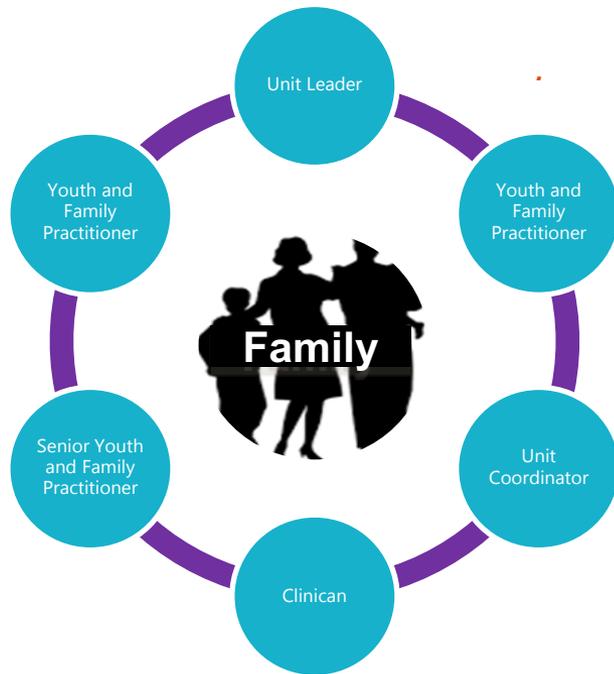
RG Early Help Service works with all members of the family and will work alongside other services already involved with the family by:

- Recognising that they are the experts about their problems but may need direction/ advice/information, including practical support, in the home or in the community;
- Having conversations that are curious but courteous;
- Treating families with respect, compassion, integrity, helpfulness and cooperation and that any commitments made are honoured;

- Meeting with families to understand and help them to recognise the views, needs, strengths and difficulties of everyone and how they work together as a family;
- Helping families recognise what they are doing well and how they might build on these to make their family stronger and their lives better;
- See families regularly so that they feel supported in putting new things in place
- Help families when they need support through difficult times.



The service works systemically with families, meaning that it sees the family as a system with individual parts that influence each other. The work undertaken seeks to help the individuals in the family to understand that the patterns that have developed through time are causing problems, which are maintained in the family system due to unhelpful dynamics and ongoing interactions in the relationships. Solutions are therefore created and maintained by the individuals within the system by changing how they communicate and interact with other members of the system. Systemic practice is underpinned by trauma informed and restorative practice.



Families are allocated within **Core Units** according to whether they live north or south of the borough. Units are groups of practitioners, supported by a clinician who drives and supports systemic practice and delivers interventions to families. Weekly practice meetings are an integral part of how Units make sense of a family's presentation and the best ways to intervene to support sustained change.

The following assessment tools are used to assist work with families in RG Early Help Service

- Genogram
- FIDO – frequency intensity duration onset
- Stakeholder aims
- Strengths and needs

The pathway to Royal Greenwich Early Help Service is through the Children Services Front Door.

Royal Greenwich Early Help Service is a key champion for early help, providing support to universal services through:

- Access to coaching
- Case consultation
- Practice development and support

Safeguarding Leads within early help organisations will guide and support their practitioners.

Information about community support and services for children and their families is available through our Families' Information Service (FIS) online preventions directory.

STRATEGIC AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Early Help Strategy Group is a multi-agency forum which is accountable to Greenwich Children's Services Strategic Partnership.

The purpose of the Early Help Strategy Group is to promote and ensure implementation of effective integrated multi agency arrangements and practices that will support the delivery of early help and intervention services for children, young people and families.

The Early Help Strategy Group has the following specific responsibilities:

- To oversee the production, delivery and review of the Early Help Strategy.
- To support the continuous improvement of multi-agency early help arrangements across Greenwich.
- To provide governance oversight of the Royal Greenwich Early Help Service
- To act as the steering group for the Pause Practice
- To review and improve the quality and effectiveness of early help arrangements.
- To support the delivery and evaluation of the Troubled Families programme.
- To regularly report on the early help agenda to the Greenwich Safeguarding Children Partnership.