

# EARLY HELP STRATEGY

2017-2020

The Early Help Strategy outlines our ambition for early help services for children and families, and the principles that guide us. This strategy sets a landscape which enables flexible, place-based responses to need in a safe and evaluated over-arching framework. Children, young people, families, communities and all multi-agency partners will make this strategy real themselves by setting local priorities and taking steps to meet need.

**Vision: "Children and young people are the heart of our city and of everything we do."**  
To achieve this vision all children and young people must be:

**Safe**

**Resilient**

**Achieving**

In order to be resilient we would want to see the following positive characteristics to be in place for all children and young people.

Basic physical care	Health	Parenting	Education and employment	Positive social networks & communities	Safe	Personal responsibility / independence	Aspirations and self worth
Reduction in homelessness Reduction in rent arrears	Increase rates of breastfeeding Improve engagement with HCS Reduce the number of inappropriate Emergency Department admissions (not A/E) Improve the dental health of children	Outcomes?	Improved attendance Reduced levels not in employment, education or employment	Reduced levels of anti-social behaviour	Reductions in incidents of domestic abuse. Fewer children in care and subject to child protection	Reduced dependency on services Increased volunteering	Outcomes?

By securing the positive characteristics outlined above we will not only ensure greater levels of resilience but also that children, young people and families themselves will narrow gaps in a whole range of outcomes between those that do well and those that are disadvantaged.

The Early Help Strategy sets out how we will achieve this by:

- Helping us to understand the differing needs of children, young people and families across our city.
- Ensuring that children, young people, families and communities have a voice in helping us understand need and how best to respond.
- Identifying which children need extra help so that no child will slip through the net.
- Making sure that early help is proportionate, timely and secures long term outcomes.
- Letting us know that we are making a difference.

## WHY EARLY HELP

*“Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early Help can also prevent further problems arising, for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care.”*

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015<sup>1</sup>

*“Support services seem to be very good once you can get into ‘the system’. There is little support for those just on the outside and it seems that in some cases support is only available once someone is at breaking point. It would be better to focus more on early intervention and prevention rather than cures”*

A York Mum.

*“When I was 9 and we ran away from me dad. That’s when you should have got me.”*

A young offender, asked about when early help could have helped him.

## DEFINING EARLY HELP

**Early help means intervening when children are very young to give them the best possible start in life. It also means intervening as soon as possible when a child of any age needs additional support and when early help can prevent more intrusive, and costly, later interventions.**

Underlying our definition of early help is a common understanding of levels of need which recognises that only a small number of children and young people in York will need the most intensive sort of **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, experience suggests there is a group of **vulnerable** children and young people who may, for a range of reasons, experience temporary difficulties in their lives. The fundamental purpose of this Early Help Strategy is to create an environment in which vulnerable individuals are identified and engaged with at the earliest point, so that they and their families’ needs do not escalate to requiring a statutory and costly intervention.

The Early Help Strategy seamlessly compliments a range of other plans and strategies so that there is a continuity of proportionate and effective arrangements at all levels of need.

Statutory  
intervention  
**Step up, step down**

Vulnerable /  
preventative

Universal

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

The three different levels referenced above are shown in the diagram on the right. For more information about levels of need and thresholds please visit [www.yor-ok.org.uk/thresholds](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/thresholds).

## OUR EARLY HELP STRATEGY

Many agencies have responsibilities for delivering early help but securing lasting positive outcomes can only come about by supporting communities and families to thrive and become more resilient.

An underpinning principle of the strategy is that services are provided or commissioned locally in the community, creating greater opportunity for collective social responsibility by partners and the community within the system. This will help to create the environment for community budgets and social investment from all partners and organisations in the community.

We want our early help arrangements to be:



## OUR COMMITMENT

These arrangements will ensure that we:

- **Understand our communities**
  - We will make the best of use of data and local intelligence to understand the differing needs of children, young people, families and communities across our city.
  - We will ensure that children, young people, families and communities have a voice in helping us understand need and how best to respond.
  - We will understand the local landscape for families and communities and the factors that can help or hinder when addressing identified need.
  - We will establish local governance arrangements to help inform our understanding and response to need.
  - We will bring this knowledge together in Local Area Outcome Plans that will set out the needs of our communities and our collective response to those needs.

- **Know which children, young people and families need extra help so that no child will slip through the net.**
  - We will ensure that children, young people and families can easily find and access proportionate and effective support when they need it.
  - We will share information safely and effectively so that the knowledge of all partners and communities can enhance the understanding of where children, young people and families need early help to address emerging issues.
  - We will ensure that we can identify families that will benefit from being brought onto our Family Focus programme (Troubled Families<sup>2</sup>).
- **Ensure that early help is proportionate, timely and secures long term outcomes.**
  - We will work to ensure early help tackles emerging need at the earliest opportunity in a proportionate and meaningful way.
  - We will work to build our early help landscape to ensure that the needs of our children, young people and families are met. This can range from working together, to joint commissioning, to pooled budgets and structures.
  - We will work collectively to improve the quality of our assessments to ensure that these can in turn support better quality interventions and outcomes.
  - We will ensure seamless links with arrangements at a higher level of need and ensure step-down and step-up processes are effective and lead to improved outcomes.
- **Knowing that we are making a difference.**
  - Our Local Area Outcome Plans will define a city-wide set of performance indicators that can help us to understand how outcomes for families are changing.
  - Our processes and practice will enshrine an outcomes-focussed approach in everything that we do.
  - We will ask our children, young people and families if they feel we are making a difference. We will fundamentally be able to understand that we are making a difference through reduced numbers of children needing higher level interventions such as being made subject to a child protection plan or taken into care.

## HOW WE DELIVER EARLY HELP

There are over 17,000 people that work in a paid or unpaid capacity with children young people and families<sup>3</sup>. To achieve the aspirations of this strategy we need to harness the coordinated power of this exceptionally broad and diverse workforce alongside children, young people and families themselves.

A key component of our early help landscape are multi-agency arrangements called Local Area Teams that will drive forward the early help agenda with partners and communities.

## LOCAL AREA TEAMS

Local Area Teams (LAT) are a key part of York's early help response to working with children, young people and families from pregnancy through to adulthood (the 0-19yrs (25yrs for disability) agenda). A Local Area Team

<sup>2</sup> The current Troubled Families Programme was rolled out in England in April 2015 and replaced the first programme which had been in place since 2012. Families on the current programme will continue to have at least 2 of the following identifiers; parents or children involved in crime or anti-social behavior, children who are not attending school regularly, children who need help; that is children of all ages, who need help, are identified as in need or are subject to a child protection plan, adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion or young people at risk of worklessness, families affected by domestic violence or abuse, parents or children with a range of physical and mental health problems.

<sup>3</sup> Workforce research to support York's Children and Young People's Plan [www.yor-ok.org.uk/cypp](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/cypp).

(LAT) is a multi-agency team covering one of three defined geographical areas of York. The purpose of a Local Area Team is:

- To prevent the escalation of needs which may require, if not addressed, statutory, complex and costly interventions at a later point.
- To reduce inequality of outcomes for our communities across York.

Local Area Teams are not just a set of Local Authority services. They are **multi-agency** and bring together all partners in a local area that exist in the lives of children, young people and families. This way Local Area Teams can bring together the full power of our communities to address need and build resilience. Over the course of 2017 we will be working with a number of multi-agency partners to develop and extend the model. Key partners that will align/co-locate with Local Area Teams include:

- Well-being workers
- Health Visitors / School Nursing service
- North Yorkshire Police / PCSOs
- Health providers
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Housing
- Community Links
- Local Area Coordinators

The landscape of early help is much broader and diverse than purely the co-located multi-agency services outlined above. Local Area Teams are very much all about early help but early help is not just about Local Area Teams. This strategy clearly sets out the need for all agencies and communities to work together in response to need in order to secure sustained and positive outcomes. This means that this strategy sets a common vision and purposed around early help for any organisation working with children, young people and family. For example the voluntary and community sectors, schools, childcare providers, colleges, universities, communities and families themselves.

## LOCALITIES

The map below shows how Local Area Teams reach across the city. Local Area Teams will have their office bases located at the three designated Children's Centres namely:

- Tang Hall
- Hob Moor
- Clifton

Officers are based in these locations but operate across the city either through supporting other practitioners or work directly with children, young people and families.



## STRATEGIC AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

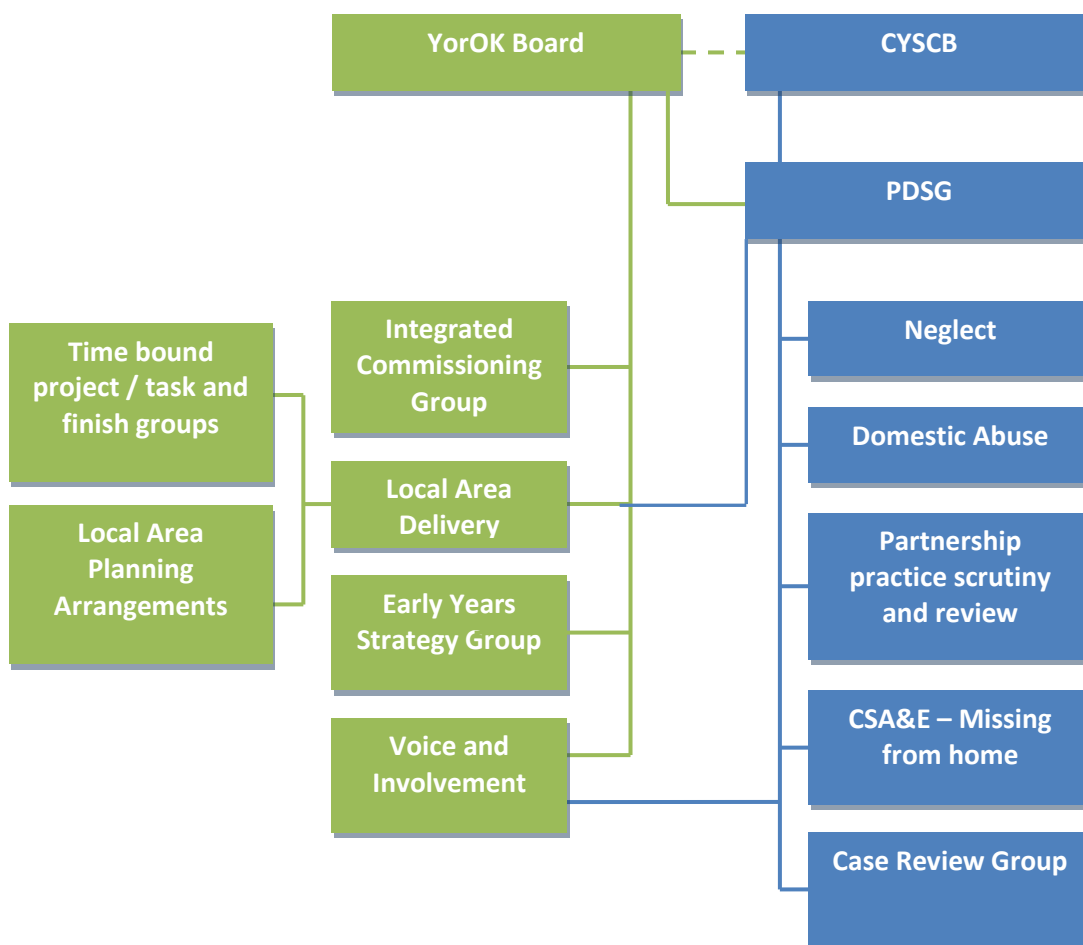
The Local Area Delivery Partnership is a city wide multi-agency board which is accountable both to the YorOK Board and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (via the Priority Delivery & Scrutiny Group (PDSG)).

In summary the purpose of the Local Area Delivery Partnership 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 Local Area Delivery Partnership has the following specific responsibilities:

- To oversee the production, publication, delivery and review of the Early Help Strategy.
- To support the continuous improvement of multi-agency early help arrangements across York.
- To provide governance oversight of Local Area Team arrangements.
- To support the development of, and review of, Local Area Outcome Plans
- 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 YorOK Board and LCSB.

The diagram below shows how the Local Area Delivery Partnership relates to other groups and boards.



## LOCALITY GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Local Area Advisory boards are locality wide multi-agency operational boards which are accountable to the Local Area Delivery Partnership and the Early Years Strategy Group. They bring together deliverers of early help across the locality.

The Local Area Advisory Boards will focus on the Local Area priorities, service delivery and the Early Help offer which will include the Children’s Centre offer, Troubled Families and Young Person’s offer. By creating these

locality arrangements we can root our approach to early help in local communities, enabling ownership and decisions to be taken at a community level.

Each Local Area Advisory Board has the following specific responsibilities:

- To provide advice and support to the key partners responsible for the operational delivery of the services for children, young people and families.
- To use knowledge and understanding of the needs of the community to inform the discussion about early childhood services delivered through the Children’s Centre offer.
- To steer partner organisations to work well together.
- To drive improvement in the Local Area performance and to participate in any Ofsted inspection of the Children’s Centres
- To identify priorities through effective consultation
- To agree service delivery objectives and to ensure that an ongoing local area plan and an annual self evaluation document is produced for each area
- To monitor progress through performance management;
- To ensure the services on offer meet local needs and contribute to improving children’s outcomes.
- To ensure that the local area team is working effectively to contribute to the wider improvements to outcomes described in the local Children and Young People’s Plan and Early Help Strategy.
- To ensure the full involvement of children, parents and the local community in the planning, design, delivery and review of the services.
- To support the delivery and evaluation of the ‘Troubled Families’ programme in the area

The diagram below shows how the locality governance arrangements relate to other groups and boards.

