

A One Minute Guide to Early Help in Bath and North East Somerset

Reviewed: January 2024

Early Help means working in partnership with children, young people, parent/carers, adults and families within their communities to stay safe through promoting happy, healthy lifestyles, wellbeing and resilience. We will work together to identify emerging needs and inequalities at the earliest opportunity and ensure that help is available to support and empower individuals to address needs and prevent them getting worse. Early help and intervention is, therefore, about giving people the right help, at the right time, by the right service.

(B&NES Early Help & Intervention Strategy 2021-25)

Our vision is that Children, young people, parents, carers, adults and families are safe, healthy and resilient, and have the confidence and skills to thrive. Collectively, our communities achieve the best possible outcomes for all.

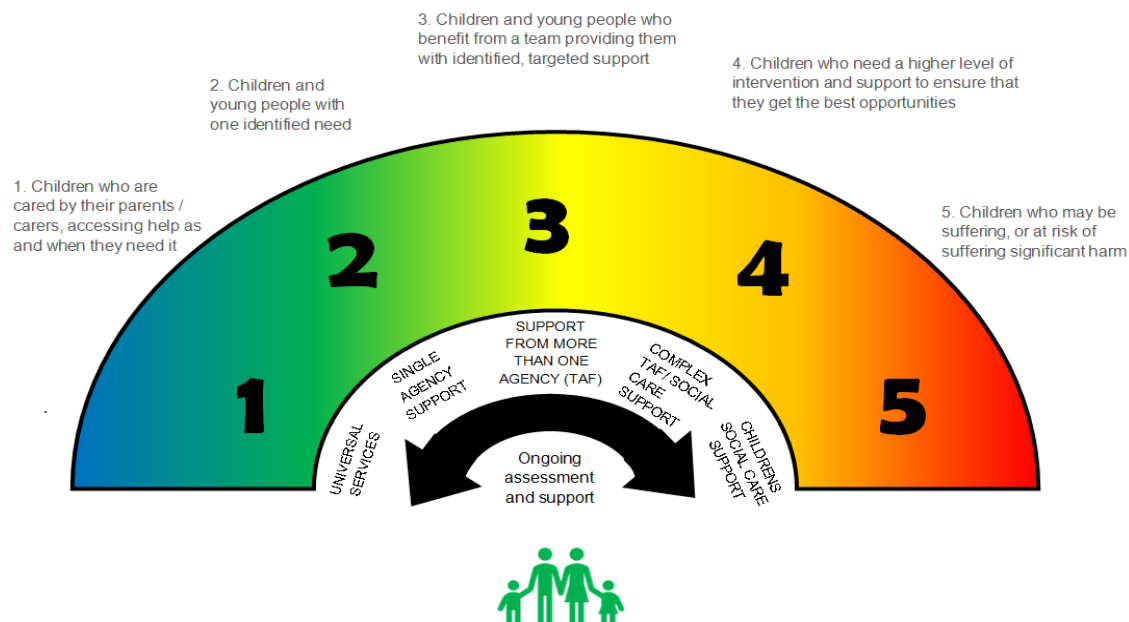
(B&NES Early Help & Intervention Strategy 2021-25)

For parents/carers, the local ambition remains that they take responsibility for understanding and meeting their children’s needs, enjoying their childhood with them and preparing them for adult life. Some parents/carers may benefit from additional support to do this.

Our Early Help Offer

Early Help is based on agencies working together to **identify** children, young people and families who would benefit from early help. The *Opportunities for Support- A guide to thresholds in B&NES* provides useful guidance to assist practitioners to identify the **most appropriate level of intervention and support** when deciding the best way to support a child or young person to ensure they are safe, and their needs are met. It is always beneficial to discuss the level of need and type of support required with the child, young person and their family, colleagues or your manager.

The thresholds should be seen in the context of the Continuum of Need diagram (see below), known locally as the ‘windscreen’. It shows where Early Help fits between universal services and statutory Social Care as part of the wider care and support system.



1. Early help targeted support

If a child, young person or family has a single need that can't be met through universal services (level 1 on the windscreen), you can make a referral directly to one of our early help targeted support services. Our free Early Help App has details of all of our services (including our commissioned early help targeted support services) and is available from the [Apple](#) or [Android](#) store, by searching for 'B&NES Early Help'.

It may help before you make a referral to:

confirm the child or young person need early help by checking the guide to thresholds document

confirm that the child or young person's needs are clear and are not currently being met

identify a service that will meet their needs (through searching the app according to the need).

2. Early Help Assessment

If a child, young person or family has more than one need, requiring support from more than one agency (level 3 on the windscreen), an Early Help Assessment (EHA), helps us to consider these and to bring together a team of professionals to support families to achieve positive change.

Anyone who works with children and young people can start an EHA in partnership with the child or young person and their family with their consent. This process serves to:

- assess the need for early help (see [early help assessment](#)). This will enable you to provide the right early help service/intervention. If you know what service is required but are unable to deliver that yourself, please refer to an appropriate service (see the Early Help App for a list of local services). If you are unclear as to what service is needed you can refer to EHAP (see below)
- provide targeted early help services and interventions to address the identified needs of a child, young person and their families and improve their outcomes
- identify a lead professional to support work with the child, young person or family.

For advice and support with completing an EHA, contact our Integrated Working team: **01225 39 50 21**.

3. Early Help Allocation Panel (EHAP)

If you are not sure which early help service is the most suitable, an early help request will be considered at our EHAP which meets every two weeks to ensure that the child or young person receives timely support from the most appropriate service. Referrals to EHAP should come via <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/report-concern-about-child> so that we are clear about the issues for the family, what is being requested and that the family has given consent.

The panel co-ordinates responses by reviewing referrals where needs are unclear and considering all referred through the "Request for Service" form and those requiring support that have gone through the Children Services front door and not met the threshold for a service and require a support. The multi-agency panel allocates them to the appropriate Early Help services provided or commissioned by B&NES. They offer an opportunity to discuss the best course of action or signpost to appropriate services.

Professionals, parents, young people and members of the public can also make a referral directly to the panel. If needed, a Key Worker can help a parent, carer or young person to access an identified service or, where appropriate, help to complete a Request for Service form.

Requests for help are processed on the basis of informed consent from the parent/carers or young person.

4. Early Help targeted support working alongside Social Care

If a child, young person or family need a higher level of intervention (levels 4 and 5 on the windscreen) or are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, children's Social Care may become involved. In this case, the Social Care team will carry out a single assessment and a plan will be put in place, with Social Care acting as the lead professional. A Social Care Child in Need or Child Protection plan can include asking an early help targeted support service to carry out a specific piece of work to meet one of the needs on the plan.

Equally, if Social Care has been working with a family and their level of needs has dropped so that Social Care will no longer be involved, a step-down plan will be put in place, which may identify an early help service as taking on the role of lead professional with the family.

You can contact the duty Social Care triage team on **01225 39 61 11** or **01225 47 79 29** to help assess whether a concern should be submitted as a 'request for a service' from Social Care or not. However, all professionals should now refer via the online portal:

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/report-concern-about-child>