



**Rutland**  
County Council

## **Families First – Rutland’s Strategy for Early Help**



## Families First – Rutland’s Strategy for Early Help

This document outlines Rutland County Council’s Early Help Offer and informs the approach we, with partners, take in working with children and families and the design of future services.



Our Early Help Offer takes into account national research and reviews by Frank Field, Dame Clare Tickell and Graham Allen, with regards to the importance of the early years and the impact of growing up in poverty on a child’s outcomes. Our offer also takes into account key messages from Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE 2013 (revised 2015) and the Munro recommendations 2013, as follows:

- preventative services will do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services
- co-ordination of services is important to maximise efficiency
- with preventative services, there needs to be good mechanisms for helping people identify those children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer harm from abuse and neglect and who need referral to children’s social care.
- reducing pressure on specialist services

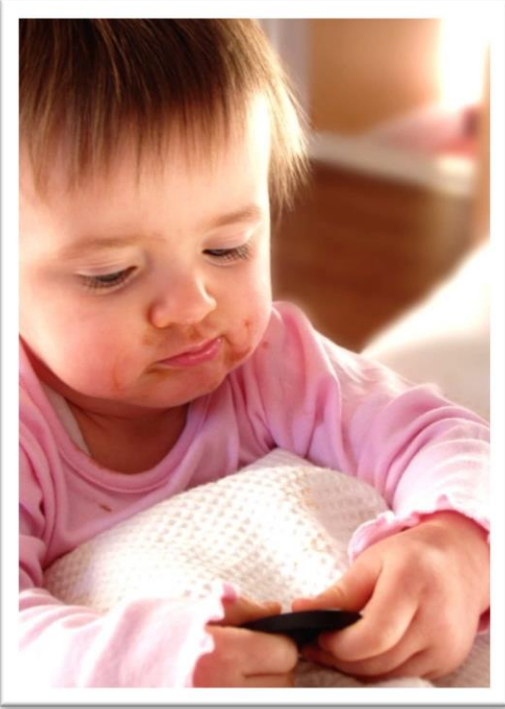
What we do know is that:

- There are 7,768 children and young people, 0 to 17 years, (20.7%) of Rutland’s population
- 8% of Rutland’s children live in poverty
- 5.9% of children in nurseries are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM)
- The academic achievement of children on FSMs is well below the national average
- 22.3% of pupils are eligible for support via the pupil premium
- 432 children and young people were identified as ‘children in need’ (13/14) as similar level to 12/13 and on target to be a similar figure for 14/15. A significant presenting issue is abuse and neglect.
- 144 young people (aged under 25 years) reported that they provided between 1 and 19 hours of unpaid care per week, 9 young people reported that they provided between 20 and 49 hours of unpaid care per week, 11 young people reported that they provide over 50 hours of unpaid care per week. This is a total of 164 young people providing unpaid care, 1.8% of young people. (2011 Census)

## 1. Introduction

### What is the Early Help Offer?

Rutland's Early Help Offer describes the need for help for children and families as



soon as problems start to emerge, or when there is a strong likelihood that problems will emerge in the future in relation to, for example, emotional and behavioural difficulties, risk of criminal activity or parental neglect of needs. The Early Help Offer is not just for very young children as problems may also emerge at any point throughout childhood and adolescence. The Early Help Offer includes universal services; such as schools, health visiting and GP services or adult learning programmes and targeted services; such as one to one family support in the home, or the Aiming High for disabled children service, designed to reduce or prevent specific problems from escalating or becoming entrenched.

### Key Principles

Rutland County Council and its partner's commitment to Early Help is central to the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan with Early Help cutting across key priority outcomes which are underpinned by a key set of principles, as set out in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) *Thresholds Document* (2014):

#### ***Principles underpinning early help and prevention***

1. We will understand the needs of children and their family so that the support offered is appropriate and can be addressed in the context of the whole family.
2. We acknowledge that parents and carers have primary responsibility for, and are the main influence on their children. Our role is to strengthen parenting capacity, whilst remaining clear about our duty to safeguard vulnerable children and young people.
3. The activities and services we offer to children and families will help to build and strengthen resilience.

4. We will focus on strengths in families and engage families with their consent so that they identify what they want to change and how they will help achieve this.
5. Practitioners will take a shared responsibility to provide a seamless service for families, ensuring there are clear pathways for those accessing our services, reduce duplication of assessment so that families do not tell their stories multiple times.
6. Our workforce will be supported to be multi-skilled and to be able to support a range of needs and approaches when working with families, for example adopting the principle of the Signs of Safety model of working with families to identify strengths and resolving challenges.
7. The services we deliver will be cost effective and utilise shared resource across partnerships.

### **Performance and Outcomes**

Rutland's Children's Trust will monitor whether the outcomes for children and their families are being achieved and will agree the key performance indicators which will help us to measure the impact our Early Help Offer is having.

These key performance indicators are set out in the *Early Help Scorecard* and include priority outcomes such as:

- Reduction in inappropriate referrals and re-referrals to social care
- Sustained engagement of families in our Children Centre services
- More young people and adults supported into training and employment
- Children and their families experience improvements in their life at the end of an intervention.

### **Key features of the Early Help Offer**

Rutland County Council provides the 'front door' through which parents and professionals can access additional support at any level, including early help advice and support.

The critical features of an effective Early Help Offer which have been identified nationally and on which Rutland's early help process is founded are:

- a multi-disciplinary approach that brings a range of professional skills and expertise to bear



through a “Team Around The Family” approach

- a relationship with a trusted Lead Professional who can engage the child and their family, and/or co-ordinate the support needed from other agencies
- practice that empowers families and helps them to develop the capacity to resolve their own problems
- a holistic approach that addresses children’s needs in the wider family and community context
- simple, streamlined referral and assessment processes that are easy to access for families and easy for partners to understand

Our Early Help Offer recognises the crucial role that all family members – not just mothers and fathers, but step parents, grandparents, siblings and other extended family members and carers – play in influencing what children experience and achieve as well as the consequences when families are in difficulty.

## 2. Identifying children and families who would benefit from early help

‘Working Together to Safeguard Children DfE 2013 (revised 2015), emphasises the importance of early help in promoting the welfare of children, together with clear arrangements for collaboration. Our Early Help Offer therefore puts the responsibility on all professionals to identify emerging problems and to take professional responsibility to ensure that if a family does not meet the thresholds for specific services, that action is taken to prevent the lower level needs escalating.



Key professionals working in universal services in Rutland are best placed to identify children or their families, who are at risk of poor outcomes. Alongside this, we utilise local intelligence such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and data collated in respect of our Changing Lives Programme, which is Rutland’s contribution to the national Troubled Families Programme.

Early Help in Rutland means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life, from the early years through to teenage years: **preventing the problems occurring**, providing targeted early help before any social care intervention or adding value and collaboration to a social care intervention: **preventing problems escalating**, and also ‘step down’ from social care where the aim is to prevent re-escalation and further statutory intervention: **reducing the severity of problems**.

### 3. Who can Access Support?

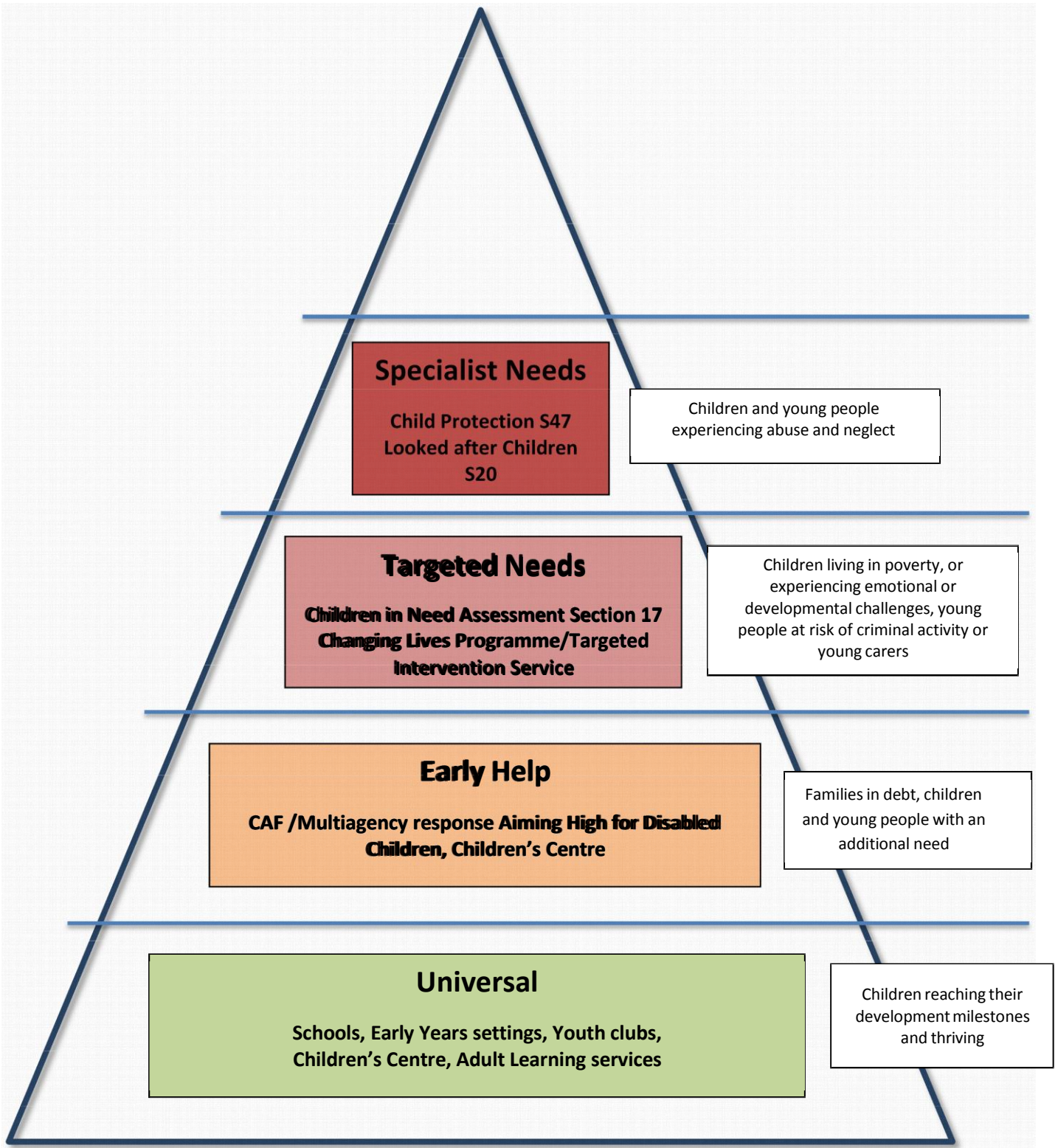
The provision of early help services forms part of Rutland's continuum of help and support to respond to the different levels of need of our individual children and families. In Rutland we describe these as follows:

**Universal need** - Services working with children and families, to promote positive outcomes for everyone; midwives, health visitors, schools and early year's settings, adult learning and community voluntary groups. Practitioners working in these services should identify where children and families would benefit from extra help at an early stage.

**Early Help and Targeted need** - Services focus on children, young people and families who may need support either through a single service or through an integrated multi-agency response, for example, housing, youth options, and community safety. They work with families where there are signs that without support a child may not achieve good outcomes and fulfil their potential.

**Specialist need** - Services, such as social care, adult mental health services, focus on families with individual or multiple complex needs, who are at risk of significant harm or significant impairment to their health or development, including where help has been requested through Section 17 - a child in need - and Section 47, where there is a need to investigate a significant safeguarding concern or where a specific disability or condition is diagnosed.

Our Early Help model is made up of a combination of services structured around the 4 levels of need, allowing children and families support at the right time and at a level relevant to their need:



This document should be read in conjunction with the LLR LSCB Thresholds document:

Thresholds for access to services for children and families:

<http://lrsb.org.uk/uploads/thresholds-for-access-to-services-for-children-and-families-feb-2015.pdf>

#### **4. How to access early help**

To ensure that the best possible support is provided to children and families, there needs to be an early assessment of need considering a child's developmental needs, family and environmental factors and parenting capacity.

In Rutland, this assessment is undertaken through usage of the Early Help Assessment, formerly the Common Assessment framework (CAF). For a full step by step guide to CAF see:

[http://www.rutland.gov.uk/health\\_and\\_social\\_care/families\\_first\\_in\\_rutland/caf\\_forms\\_and\\_documentation.aspx](http://www.rutland.gov.uk/health_and_social_care/families_first_in_rutland/caf_forms_and_documentation.aspx)

In some cases a professional will be able to identify a specific need, but may not be able to provide appropriate support. In this instance the Senior Intervention Officer (CAF/Early Assessment) will signpost the referrer to the appropriate services.

Where the assessment identifies support needs that cannot be met by a single agency or service, there needs to be a co-ordinated response with local agencies working together to support the family. The Team around the Family (TAF) model is used in Rutland to bring together a range of different practitioners from across the children and young people's workforce and sometimes from adult services. The members of the TAF develop and deliver a solution focused plan of support to meet the needs identified through the Early Help Assessment, with a lead professional identified to co-ordinate the support and act as the key point of contact for the family and agencies. Decisions about who should be the lead professional should be informed by the child and their family.

The Senior Early Intervention Officer is available to support practitioners in the lead professional role.

#### **5. Our success criteria and outcomes**

Our Early Help Offer is targeted at achieving our priorities for children and families as set out in the Children, Young People and Families Plan and the LSCB Business Plan 2015/2016. We have identified key actions that will help us to achieve these outcomes.

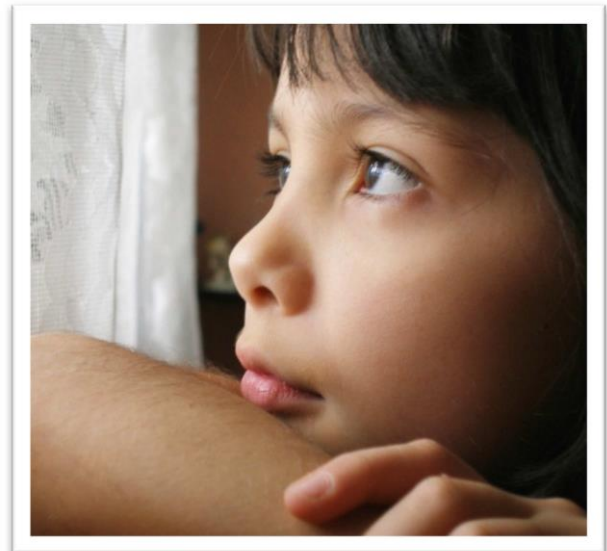


## Our Actions

1. We identify when children and families need help at the earliest opportunity through robust partnership working and shared intelligence. This will include developing robust front door arrangements.
2. We utilise our Changing Lives programme to create sustainable improvements by tackling the root causes of problems and the factors we know correlate toward negative outcomes for children and families e.g. unemployment, poverty, poor health, family breakdown and generational difficulties.
3. We provide a range of integrated services across early years and in to adulthood. These services will support prospective parents, children in early years, in teenage life and through into early adulthood.
4. We support children with additional needs and their parents and carers in a way that enables them to engage in positive activities in their community.
5. We work across children and adult services to adopt a whole family approach when working with families, ensuring our support recognises all the influencing factors on a child or young person's life.

## 6. Our Early Help Development Plan

Rutland County Council has a 'Families First' document that outlines the early intervention pathway and the CAF processes. The Council also has a document that describes the transfer process for cases that may be escalating to social care or that may be stepping down from social care. The LLR LSCB Thresholds document (2014) describes levels of need in families and the relevant responses that can be delivered by universal, early help or specialist services. In Rutland, the Early Help Strategy will replace the 'Families First' document and the other documents will sit beneath the overarching Early Help Strategy.



The Early Help Offer across the partnership in Rutland requires further development and there is now a greater need for ensuring that an Early Help Offer is co-ordinated and clearly understood by practitioners and managers in the Council and across the partnership, and for these activities to be robustly driven forward by the Children's Trust. This, coupled with the Local Authority being successful in achieving Phase 2 of the Troubled Families programme (Changing Lives), means that early help development should be a focus of attention within the partnership.

Rutland County Council and its partners have a set of priority development themes which are:

1. Building strong partnerships in and beyond the organisation
2. A new simpler Early Help Assessment and a clear pathway to early help services
3. Working across children and adult services to provide a whole family approach
4. A targeted youth offer that is contributing to safeguarding children and young people
5. Children and young people engaged and participating in shaping early help Services
6. A well trained integrated children's workforce
7. Creating sustainability by drawing on existing resources in the community.

## References

1. Working Together to Safeguard Children – A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (March 2013, revised 2015)
2. Field, F. (2010) The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults
3. Tickell, C, (2010), The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning
4. Allen, G (2011), Early Intervention: the next steps
5. Munro, E. (2011), The Munro Review of Child Protection ;Final report A child – centered system



## Referral Pathway to Rutland's Children's Services

For general enquiries about services for Children and Families

For information about services, organisations, events and activities, please visit the RCC Services Directory at

[http://www.rutland.gov.uk/education\\_and\\_learning/family\\_information\\_service.aspx](http://www.rutland.gov.uk/education_and_learning/family_information_service.aspx) where you will find information relating to services for:

- Families, children and young people aged 0-19 years
- Families with children and young people who have special education needs and disabilities (The SEND Local Offer)

Within 24 hours

Not Safeguarding



## Useful Contacts:

Rutland County Council  
<http://www.rutland.gov.uk/>

Rutland Family Information Service  
[http://www.rutland.gov.uk/education\\_and\\_learning/family\\_information\\_service.aspx](http://www.rutland.gov.uk/education_and_learning/family_information_service.aspx)

Rutland Children's Duty Team  
Email: [childrensduty@rutland.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:childrensduty@rutland.gcsx.gov.uk)

Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB)  
[www.lrsb.org.uk](http://www.lrsb.org.uk)

Thresholds of Access to Services for Children and Families in Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland  
<http://lrsb.org.uk/uploads/thresholds-for-access-to-services-for-children-and-families-feb-2015.pdf>

Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2015)  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419595/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard\\_Children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf)

NSPCC  
<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Citizens Advice  
<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>