

## Continuum of need and response

Information for people who work with families

### Continuum of need

Most children and families will have their needs met with support from extended family, friendships, and their community and via access to universal services. Some children and families will require additional help and a very small minority will need intervention aimed at protecting them from significant harm.

The Children Act necessitates an assessment process where priorities of need can be identified. The purpose of this document is to establish a common language and definition across all levels of the continuum. The indicators listed are examples only and can never replace professional judgement, analysis and discussion. Where it is felt that a child, young person or families has needs that are beyond the remit of universal services alone, the continuum of need should be used as a means of identifying the level of need.

### Continuum of Need and Response

- Level 1 represents children with no identified additional needs. Their needs are met through accessing universal services.
- Level 2 represents children with additional needs that can be met by targeted support by a single practitioner or agency - universal services.
- Level 3 represents children with additional needs that can be met by targeted support by a multi-agency integrated support package - mainly universal services coordinating their approach.
- Level 4 represents children with significant additional needs that have not been met following a co-ordinated, multi-agency response from the Early Intervention Panel and for whom significant concerns remain. This is when Children's Social Care may become involved.
- Level 5 represents children with complex needs at the highest level of vulnerability which will be met by multi-agency support from specialist services. (Social Care will always be the lead professional when a child protection enquiry is necessary, S47)

### Levels of vulnerability and need

The following provides more information on the different levels and give examples of children and young people's needs. This is not an exhaustive list of needs. If you have any concerns about a child consult your immediate line manager and if necessary share information with the most relevant agency/organisation.

#### Level 1

Universal services are available to all children and young people. The most easily identifiable universal services that children and families will access are primary health and education. Most children will access universal services successfully and have their needs met via those universal services and their family, informal support systems and the voluntary sector.

#### Indicative examples of needs and circumstances:

- A new born baby is provided with the necessary post-natal care through midwifery services.
- A mother having problems with her child's sleep patterns or feeding difficulties has the child's needs met through health services or support from a local Children's Centre.
- Children have their education needs met through schools.
- All young people 13 plus have their need for careers information, advice, guidance and support from Careers Advisor.

## **Level 2**

Level 2 Children with additional needs, whose health and development may be affected without a co-ordinated and targeted response from services and an improved outcome would be likely if services were provided.

If the child's circumstances do not improve after maximising the workers own agency resources, the worker must consider other agencies that may have skills and knowledge that may be of benefit.

Consider seeking advice and guidance from the appropriate agency.

### **Indicative examples of needs and circumstances:**

- A child is struggling to communicate at nursery. Speech and Language Therapy services are accessed and the assessed need is met
- A learning mentor assesses that a young person has a problem with alcohol and drugs, therefore substance misuse services are accessed and the need met
- A housing officer assesses that a family with children has financial difficulties and accesses welfare benefit advice and the need is met
- A class teacher identifies a child's problems with accessing the curriculum and requests a service from another education professional for example specialist teacher, educational psychologist as part of SEN support
- A health visitor assesses a child as having additional health needs and refers to a paediatrician who meets the need
- An adult social care worker providing support for a parent with mental health problems assesses the young person in the family as inappropriately caring and refers to the Young Carers as part of the action plan for the family
- A child/young person is assessed as being at risk of being involved in anti-social behaviour by a youth worker who accesses positive activities and the young person is diverted from the risky behaviour.

Assessments of additional needs are best recorded on an Early Help Pathway which can be used to access additional services. The Early Help Partners Guidance booklet explains how the Early Help Pathway process fits in with Early Intervention / Help and the use of the Early Intervention Panel.

## **Level 3**

Children and young people whose health and development is being impaired by a range of unmet needs and where an integrated response from a number of agencies and support systems is necessary to achieve an improvement in outcomes.

Complete an Early Help Pathway after checking that one is not already open with the Early Help Team and consider if a referral to the Early Intervention Panel is required.

### **Indicative examples of needs and circumstances:**

- Children and young people who may be at risk of sexual exploitation through their own vulnerability or association with others who are believed to be victims of sexual exploitation.
- A family where the children have complex needs, there is no extended family or one of the parents becomes terminally ill.
- A young person who is displaying a range of anti - social behaviour or extremist views and or a poor school attendance.
- Parents capacity is compromised by drug and alcohol problems.
- A child displaying challenging behaviour due to them experiencing their parent's domestic violence or mental health issues.
- A child who continues to miss health appointments for any intervention.
- Children who have severe disabilities, health or specialist needs requiring a co-ordinated intervention from a number of agencies will require specialist assessments, including from social care.

#### **Level 4**

Children with significant additional needs that have not been met following a coordinated, multi-agency response using the Early Help Pathway and for whom significant concerns remain.

#### **Indicative examples of need and circumstances:**

All those examples described in level 3 where families have had the benefits of a multi-agency coordinated approach, where services have been provided and the impact of these reviewed, where a lead facilitator and multi-agency teams despite the appropriate services being provided, the concerns for the child remain or have escalated, and their outcomes remain poor.

#### **Level 5**

Children at risk or who have experienced significant harm. Children will have high level of vulnerability and a referral must be made to Children's Social Care immediately by telephone followed by a referral form within 48 hours. Where applicable a copy of the completed Early Help Pathway should also be provided.

The judgment about what constitutes significant harm is complex one; see Working Together (2018) for more detailed information. Therefore the examples of needs and circumstances are indicative only and an assessment by social care practitioners will be necessary to inform the judgment.

#### **Children and young people who need protection from harm:**

- Children, Young People and Unborn children at risk or who have been significantly harmed
- Children being abused including sexually and criminally exploited
- Children who have been abandoned
- A child/young person, who makes an allegation of abuse against a professional
- Children with a serious and persistent eating disorder who refuse treatment
- Children who have significantly, life threatening, self-harming behaviour / suicide attempts
- Children who make an allegation of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or indicate a future risk from FGM

## **Continuum of Need – A tool for Early Help**

The Early Help Strategy has been developed to deliver a co-ordinated approach to multi-agency locality working. This provides Calderdale Council and its partners a robust framework to ensure the delivery of efficient and effective services to families. The priority is to deliver intervention which is early and focused for children, young people (0-18 or 0-25 for a child with a disability) and their families who have been identified as being most at risk of needing support from a specialist service.

An essential part of successful Early Help is to identify the appropriate needs of an individual or family. Where a service has specific concerns, an Early Help Pathway should be completed before a referral to the referral to Early Intervention Panel is made. This will allow you and your service as the referring agency to gather as much information as possible to allow early and effective interventions to be agreed.

The Early Help Pathway is a key element of our strategy in delivering more effective, early intervention, as well as prevention. The Early Help Pathway and Continuum of Need are an important tool for the identification and assessment of children and young people considered to be in need of additional support.

Children and young people considered to be in need of additional support are most likely to be at level 2 and 3 of the Continuum of Need.

Whenever a practitioner working with a family identifies a potential unmet need for a child or young person and/or a family is requesting support, they should consider undertaking an Early Help Pathway. This will help the practitioner, work with the family, to identify key areas of worry and strengths, **help specify desired outcomes and identify key services.**

### **Assessment Expectations**

The Early Help Pathway should be completed by the Early Help Facilitator as early as possible after support needs are identified, and consent sought. The Early Help Pathway will help to facilitate earlier and improved partnership working with the parent/carer, child/young person's before needs escalate. The assessment should address worries about a child/young person's or family's well-being that are related to issues beyond your service/support. An Early Help Pathway should also help improve the outcomes for a child or young person where current intervention and support processes are not working. Lastly, it will be the case that an Early Help Pathway will generate an action plan which will require a multi-agency approach to meeting the family's needs.

### **I think an Early Help Pathways is required, what do I do now?**

Before you start the assessment process, please contact the Early Help Team to check if an Early Help Pathway has already been completed and logged by another professional. All Early Help Pathway activity must be logged with the Early Help Team. This is essential to ensure that only one Early Help Pathway is in existence for a child/young person or family at any one time.

Any practitioner who needs help to decide whether to complete an Early Help Pathway should contact the Early Help Team for advice and support by email: [earlyhelp@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@calderdale.gov.uk) or by calling **01422 392883 / 393661**

### **Early Help Pathway**

Calderdale's Early Intervention System is a secure consent-based IT system for storing and sharing information captured through the Early Help Pathway and other assessments leading to Child and Family Meetings.

The Early Help Pathway has been developed from the previous Calderdale Assessment Framework to help practitioners working with children, young people and families to explore additional support needs of children and young people and to work together to meet them.

## Request for Early Help Services

When your school/service/family identifies additional needs for a child or young person that your service cannot address alone:

- 1) Complete Early Help Pathway with consent
- 2) Forward completed Pathway to [Earlyhelp@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:Earlyhelp@calderdale.gov.uk)
  - a) If additional services are required refer to the Early Intervention Panel
  - b) If services are already supporting a family continue with the Pathway process to coordinate a collaborative response
    - i) Feedback to referring agency regarding decision
- 3) EI administrator confirms panel date
- 4) Early Intervention Panel meeting held weekly
- 5) Attend panel to present case if necessary
- 6) Early Intervention Panel agree appropriate response, allocate Key Worker/Service.
  - a) Early Intervention Panel agree high concern case and refers to MAST
    - i) Feedback to referring agency re panel decision to refer to MAST
- 7) Feedback to referring agency re panel decision
- 8) Panel review the case, identifying positive outcomes or barriers or cases that have not progressed despite intervention

### Early Help Pathway

The Early Help Pathway should be completed with each family member to record their worries and strengths and additional support needs. The Early Help Pathway also provides an opportunity for all services involved to share their worries and strengths for the family. Additional tools used to evidence further explanation of support required should also be included, such as Genograms, Eco-maps, Voice of the Child and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. Parental Signature/Young Person Signature when appropriate must be signed on the Early Help Pathway or an Early Intervention Panel Referral Form must be completed when requesting additional service response. This form is available from [www.calderdale.gov.uk](http://www.calderdale.gov.uk) search Early Intervention Panel.

### Early Intervention Panel

Once a referral has been made to the Early Intervention Panel will work to implement the Early Intervention Strategy and deliver early and focused interventions which are required.

### Key Functions of the Early Intervention Panel

The Early Intervention Panel work with services and key partners to provide positive outcomes for children, young people and families. To do this, the key functions of the panel is to:

- To receive referrals for multi-agency support at Tiers 2/3 of the Calderdale Continuum of Need, and allocate and/or refer to the appropriate lead agency.
- To support the development of programmes and activities for both individuals and groups, which enhance the early Intervention process.
- To monitor and follow up any barriers to delivery.
- To ensure child, young person and family engagement in assessment and decision making.

Full guidance is available on our website [www.calderdale.gov.uk](http://www.calderdale.gov.uk) search family support strategy.

### Contact Details

**Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST)**

MAST is the first point of contact for ANY CHILD PROTECTION concern. Telephone: **01422 393336**. [www.safeguarding.calderdale.gov.uk/report-concerns/](http://www.safeguarding.calderdale.gov.uk/report-concerns/)

### **Children's Assessment Team (CAT)**

The Children's Assessment Team receives all incoming cases from MAST and carries out Statutory Child and Family Early Intervention Single Assessments to determine what further level of Social Care support is required or appropriate service.

Telephone: **01422 393340**

[www.calderdale.gov.uk/socialcare/family/childprotection/index](http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/socialcare/family/childprotection/index)

### **Calderdale Emergency Duty Team**

Health and Social Care (Adult Services and wellbeing) and Children and Young People's Services provide an emergency service at nights and weekends, when their offices are closed - the Emergency Duty Team. The service is available to any adult or child who has social care difficulties that are causing a serious risk or concern that cannot be left until the start of the next working day.

Telephone: **01422 288000**

[www.calderdale.gov.uk/community/children/outofhours-support](http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/community/children/outofhours-support)

### **Calderdale Safeguarding Children Partnership**

Princess buildings,  
Princess Street,  
Halifax  
HX1 1TS

Tel: **01422 394074**

[www.calderdale-safeguarding.co.uk](http://www.calderdale-safeguarding.co.uk)

### **Contact Us**

General questions or to make a referral to the Early Intervention panel please use the contact details below for each locality team:

Tel: **01422 392510**

Email: [EIP@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:EIP@calderdale.gov.uk)