



Right Help,
Right Time



Early Help

One minute guide

What is Early Help

Early Help is the term used by agencies in Tower Hamlets to describe our approach to providing support to children, young people and their families as soon as problems start to emerge. When a child, young person or the family needs some extra support, Early Help is the initial response offered by all services in contact with children, young people and families.

Although research shows that the most impact can be made during a child's early years, early help is not just for very young children, as problems may emerge at any point throughout childhood and adolescence. Children and families are entitled to early help if and when they need it.

The purpose of early help is, through prompt and targeted interventions, to prevent issues and problems becoming acute, chronic and costly to the child,

young person, the family and the wider community. The aim of Early Help is to build on people's capacity and resources to manage their own dilemmas, resolve their own difficulties and to reduce the likelihood of the problem reoccurring in the future.

Early Help may be provided through an increase in the levels of universal services, or services provided or commissioned; this includes family support provided by Children's Centres, schools, youth services and voluntary sector services. Families are best supported where those who already work with them organise any additional support with local partners, as needed.

Our Vision is that 'Early Help in Tower Hamlets will work in partnership with families and young people to overcome difficulties, and to build the resilience that will equip them to address challenges and seize opportunities in the future.'

Debbie Jones, Corporate Director of Children's Services

Early Help is not a designated team it is the way that EVERYONE works together to support the needs of families.

How we do it – right help, right time

We use a range of engagement opportunities to identify appropriate support for children and their families. Anybody working with children, young people and families, including services for adults; for example mental health and housing, is responsible for starting conversations on their behalf.

Engagement opportunities include the phone calls and meetings that take place between those people working across universal, targeted and specialist services.

The best time for engagement is early in the life of the problem, when it is felt that the child's needs are not being met and something else is required to improve their life opportunities.

As children's needs are met and concerns are reduced, we continue to have quality engagement in order to provide appropriate support for the child and their family until that support is no longer required.

Universal, targeted and specialist services

Most children's needs are met by their family or universal services that is, those services that are available to everyone. These are provided as a right to all

children, young people and their families, including those whose needs are also met within targeted and/ or specialist (including statutory) services.

For those children and families who face more challenges and may have multiple needs, targeted services provide additional capacity and expertise to work with families to address their needs.

For children whose needs and circumstances are multiple, a coordinated multi-disciplinary approach is usually best, based on an Early Help Assessment (EHA), with a Lead Practitioner to ensure they receive all the support they require. A range of targeted services are available through the Early Help services in the local authority area.

When a child's needs cannot be met in universal or targeted services, practitioners can make a request directly to specialist services. This includes when a child is in need of help, and where it is believed that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

When concerned about a child

If you are concerned child that a child is at risk of, or is experiencing, significant harm, they must contact the Multi-Agency Safe Guarding Hub Team tel: **0207 364 5006 (Option 3)**, and MASH out of hours **0207 364 4079**.

For more information about Early Help, please call **0207-364-5006 (select option 2)** or visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/early-help