

Children and Families Service

One Minute Guide



26th May 2020

Early Help Support for Children and Families

Introduction

As schools and settings start to plan for more children returning to education and many other front line services will be seeing more children than they have in the last few weeks, we thought it may be helpful to highlight some of the support that is available to the families, and yourselves, during these unprecedented times.

There will be many families who are already open to an early help plan but circumstances and concerns may have changed. There will also be other families who will start to ask for help, despite never needing help before. We need to ensure that, as a partnership, we can fully support these families' needs getting them the right help, at the right time by the right person.

Early Help Support

Providing 'early help' support is everyone's business, as it is part of our shared safeguarding responsibility that we all have for children and young people. It is therefore important that all agencies are able to recognise when a family may need some extra help to keep their children and family safe and understand the role that they have in this.

For many agencies, providing help and support for children, young people and their families will involve completing an Early Help Assessment. This will be completed with the family to understand what is going well, what people are worried about and what support the family needs to achieve their goals. Further information about Early Help Assessments can be found at [Cheshire East Live Well Early Help](#). You, or another professional that has been identified as working with the family, will then become the Lead professional and support the family to develop a plan and be involved in regular review meetings to check how well the plan is working.

If your organisation has access to the case management system Liquidlogic, an Early Help Assessment or Early Help Review can be loaded directly onto it. If not, the completed assessment or review needs to be sent to Cheshire East's Locality Support Officer Team inbox at EHB2@cheshireeast.gov.uk, where one of our Locality Support Officers will load the assessment/review for you. Support with initiating and completing the associated paperwork for Early Help Assessments and Early Help Reviews can also be accessed via the Locality Support Team. It is important that assessments and plans are kept up-to-date and recorded on the child's record. It is vital that our safeguarding front door team, Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS), know about all current support in place so that if they should get a call about the family you are working with, they can fully assess risk.

One Minute Guide

Locality Support Officers are also able to offer support with:

- Adding contacts onto Liquid Logic so that other professionals, ChECS etc. know who you are having contact with and how frequently
- Discussing with you if a child or young person may already be open to a lead professional and who their worker is
- The level/type of contact they are currently having/when their last contact was
- Current Early Help Assessments (EHA) that are ongoing
- Those young people that you feel may need some Early Help support but who do not currently have an Early Help Assessment
- Support on how to hold virtual meetings
- Mapping and writing worry statements and wellbeing goals

Locality Support Officers contacts details are as follows:

North: Kate Mitchell

Mobile: 07917 587561

Email: kate.mitchell@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Central: Steph Hill

Mobile: 07500 975497

Email: Stephanie.hill@cheshireeast.gov.uk

South: Kathryn Battams

Mobile :07773 227942

Email : kathryn.battams@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Safeguarding

The process for escalating any safeguarding concerns regarding a child or young person remains unchanged. If 'early help' support is not reducing risk, or if you have immediate safeguarding concerns, you need to contact the [Cheshire East Consultation Service](#) (ChECS) on **0300 123 5012 (option 3)** where you will be provided with support and advice for children and their families ranging from further early help and support through to safeguarding and child protection.

Prior to contacting ChECS it would be helpful if you have completed the following actions:

- Completed any relevant [screening tools](#)
- Have parental permission to make the call (if it is safe to do so)
- Have all key information to hand e.g. child's date of birth, full name, address, contact details and names of parents, full details of other children living in the family home, full details of the disclosure/concern/incident

One Minute Guide

If you need to contact someone out of hours and you believe it to be an emergency that can't wait, please call the Emergency Duty Team on **0300 123 5022**. Please also consider whether an emergency service is required, e.g. the police via 999.

For a comprehensive overview of how we and our key partners continue to safeguard children and families in Cheshire East during this time, please refer to the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership [Offer to Safeguard and Support Children and Families during Covid-19](#).

If you have urgent concerns about a vulnerable adult during office hours please call [adults safeguarding](#) on 0300 123 5010 or, for out of hours support, call 0300 123 5022.

It is important that we all recognise that some children may present differently over the coming weeks than they did prior to the lock-down; this does not necessarily mean that they have been in abusive situations; however, all professionals will need to be alert to the signs of abuse.

For some children, who have been at home during this period, there may have been concerns or issues due to family stress, domestic abuse or other forms of abuse or neglect.

Some children will already be part of a plan and hopefully the support for that family has continued despite lockdown, albeit via regular phone calls where face to face visits weren't deemed necessary. Other children may never have been on a plan or have been a concern for professionals previously.

Whilst at home it may have been safer for a child to say nothing and stay quiet or to think that that is just the way things are at home. They may feel it is safer to open up and talk about things once they are back in their school or setting or attending health appointments and away from home for part of the week. It is vital all children know their safe adults who can listen to them and support them and, how they can safely access those individuals.

If a child discloses anything, then the normal safeguarding procedures would apply and all staff should be reminded to pass any concerns directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in your establishment; as well as ensuring that they, as the person being told about or seeing the abuse, make a clear and accurate record using your agreed recording format.

Additional Support

There are also a range of resources and support that you can sign-post families to or can be accessed as part of a family's Early Help Plan.

One Minute Guide

The [Family Information Service](#) offers a free confidential and impartial information, advice and guidance service for families with children and young people aged 0-25.

Emotional well-being and mental health

It is highly likely that the mental health and emotional well-being of all children will have been impacted by the current situation. Re-establishing positive links between adults and children and children with their peers is extremely important.

Children will have had varied experiences of Coronavirus; they may have watched the news avidly and discussed it openly; they may have been “protected” from what has been happening and know very little. The children may well have misunderstood things or may believe things which are inaccurate; therefore it is important that they have an opportunity to talk about things in the safe, nurturing environment.

There are a number of resources and ideas available to support children with this;

[Coronavirus: resources for managing anxiety and improving wellbeing toolkit #4 : Mentally Healthy Schools](#) a toolkit of practical resources to help manage anxiety and improve wellbeing. It includes breathing exercises, self-care ideas, informative videos, emotional expression worksheets and strategies to address anxiety.

[Mental health resources for schools – Place2Be](#)

Mental Health Helpline - 0300 303 3972 for residents of Cheshire East: It is open 24 hours a day, seven-days a week for people of all ages including children and young people who need urgent mental health support.

For non-urgent help and general wellbeing advice, the CWP website [Welcome to CWP | CWP](#) contains information and links to resources to support people with anxiety, low mood, and worries relating to the current Covid-19 pandemic.

For children and young people there is also a dedicated website: [Home MyMind](#)

There are sources of support available for staff:
[COVID19 Mental Health Information Point](#)

Education Support: a charitable company which supports the health and wellbeing of all involved in education. Find out more information: [About us | Education Support](#) They also have a free helpline: 08000 562 561

One Minute Guide

Bereavement and loss

There will be children returning to schools and settings who have sadly suffered loss during this period.

The following guidance has been developed to support you in managing this:

[Coronavirus and Bereavement - Support for Schools Colleges and Settings.pdf](#)



Coronavirus and
Bereavement - Activiti



Coronavirus and
Bereavement - Suppor



Coronavirus and
Bereavement - Suppor