SOUTHEND BOROUGH COUNCIL
CHILDREN’S SERVICES

Service Directory

Early Help Family Support, YOS & MASH+
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Introduction

This directory outlines our approach and processes to provide early help interventions with children, young people and families before problems escalate. The concept of early help, or early intervention as it is sometimes known, reflects the widespread recognition that it is better to identify and deal with problems early rather than to respond when difficulties have become acute. It means providing support for children and families as soon as difficulties start to emerge or when there is a strong likelihood that challenges for the young person may emerge in the future. No-one would argue that prioritising early intervention undoubtedly increases the likelihood of success but this shouldn’t mean prioritising ‘early years’. Rather, it should be seen as intervening early in the life of a problem regardless of age. Impact isn’t greater or lesser dependent on age – it’s just different.

Early help includes targeted services designed to reduce or prevent specific problems from becoming entrenched.

Our strategy for Early Help and Family Support has its roots in ‘Success for all’. Children, young people and their families will be better able to realise opportunities to improve their lives. Families will be more self-sustaining and therefore less reliant on services provided by the professionals. By prioritizing the most vulnerable, and by intervening early, longer term, more costly and damaging problems will be avoided. We will be less embedded in family’s lives whilst sustaining the quality of our offer to children, young people and families.

We have created a single integrated system for identification, referral, assessment and monitoring of effective early help to:

- Provide help early to improve outcomes for children and young people and support parents to achieve the aspirations they hold for their children
- Reduce the number of children requiring intervention from statutory services
- Build the resilience and capacity of vulnerable families to support their children effectively in achieving positive outcomes;
- Work with children who are at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation, children associated with gangs and at risk of exploitation and children missing from home, care or education
- Address child poverty and worklessness through better targeting

Our aim is to improve the experiences of children, young people and families who are in contact with Southend Borough Council Children’s Services and to ensure they gain the support they need when they need it and at the earliest opportunity. Further information is available in the SBC Children’s Services Threshold Document.

All of the teams in the following guides are based in Civic 2, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea SS2
What is Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH+)?

Southend on Sea Borough Council, together with partner agencies, has established a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH+).

The MASH+ is now the ‘front door’ for all child protection referrals for children living in the Borough.

At its core is a team of experienced child protection professionals from Social Care, Health and Police, who are co-located at Civic 2.

In addition the core agencies within MASH+ can, where necessary, draw on the experience and knowledge of other teams, including Education, Probation, Housing, and a host of internal and external organisations.

Co-location enables a quick and co-ordinated response to referrals and better information sharing. This ensures that all key agencies are better able to assess risk and decide on the most appropriate course of action and provide the best possible service to children and their families.

Aim of the MASH+

The MASH+ aims to improve the experiences of children, young people and families who are in contact with Southend Borough Council Children’s Services to ensure they gain the support they need when they need it. This includes services to protect children at risk of significant harm.

The local authority has a range of early help services, coordinated through an early help assessment.

Where there are more complex needs, help may be provided under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (Children in need).

Where there are child protection concerns (reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) the Local Authority must make enquiries and decide if any action must be taken under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

The first step on this journey is now via referral to the MASH+

When to Refer?

If you believe a child may be a child in need (under s17 of the Children Act 1989), or is at risk of significant harm, you should refer immediately to the MASH+. This referral can be made by any practitioner.

When referring a child to MASH+ you must consider and provide sufficient information for the team to make a proper assessment of the risks. This should include any concerns which you have regarding the care the child is receiving, information on the child’s development needs and their parents’/carers’ ability to respond to these needs within the context of their wider family and environment.

It is important to remember that sharing information is an intrinsic part of any practitioner’s role. Each agency will have its own information sharing policy but it is important to remember that safeguarding is paramount and information can be shared with or without consent if there is risk of significant harm.

Any information will be held securely and only shared where appropriate.

Practitioners can contact both the MASH+ (Children’s Social Care) or Early Help Family Support Services (EHFS) and as they are co-located so the query will reach the person best able to respond.
How to Refer?

- Email referrals with a completed EHFSA to the MASH+ inbox – mash@southend.gov.uk
- Telephone 01702 215007 (option 1) to discuss your concern and/or for advice and information

If you are making a safeguarding referral you MUST phone and speak to a social worker. This will need to be supported by an email with a completed EHFSA the same day.

What happens next?

Within one working day of contacting the team we will make a decision about the type of response that is required and inform you of the decision within two working days. This will include determining whether:

- The child requires immediate protection and urgent action is required;
- There is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, and whether enquiries must be made and the child assessed under section 47 of the Children Act 1989;
- The child is in need, and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989;
- Any services are required by the child and family and what type of services; and
- Further specialist assessments are required in order to help the local authority to decide what further action to take

We may telephone you for more information.

We might visit the child and their family in order to obtain further information to inform our decision.

*Updated Jan 2019*
Our commitment

Our commitment at the Early Help Front Door is to provide children and families with help as soon as needs present themselves, regardless of age, to prevent those needs from escalating and requiring more intensive help and support later on.

As well as an EHFD Duty Manager, there is also an Early Help Family Support practitioner on duty every day between 9am and 5.30pm, who can be contacted on 01702 215783 to answer any queries and to take self-referrals from families. All requests are assessed looking at both current and historic issues for all family members and we are available for professionals and families to seek advice.

Referrals

Professional referrers are asked to send Early Help Family Support Assessments (EHFSA) to earlyhelpcontactpoint@southend.gov.uk, and we are more than happy to assist in the completion should this be required.

We will process referrals for most services appropriate to children, although health referrals such as The Lighthouse Centre need to be made by the parent via their GP. We will however send the EHFSA to The Lighthouse Centre for information for the paediatrician.

We ask that all assessments are competed as fully as possible with full details of the lead child, all persons living within the household, absent parents and other adults who play a key role on the child/ren’s lives. Please note that each assessment is for the family and there is no need for separate assessments for each child. Consent must be evidenced from the parents/carers.

Response times

We will respond to your email within 24 working hours and allocate the case to a team and/or send the assessment to an external service within 48 working hours. You will receive an email advising you which team we have allocated the case to and be copied into emails sent to external services. Therefore we can assure you that every referral we receive will result in one of the following outcomes:

- Alternative help suggested as no other concerns or issues within the family and the presenting issue is better addressed at a universal level with support from our community workers if appropriate;
- Family has emerging or multiple needs and will be supported through EHFS Family Support;
- Immediate safeguarding concerns about significant harm; referral discussed with MASH + team manager and referrer notified.

Early Help and Social Care

The Early Help Front Door now sits alongside the MASH+ Team meaning the two duty managers are able to discuss cases to ensure that every child and family receive support as and when it is needed from the most appropriate team within Children’s Services.

Updated Jan 2019
Adolescent Intervention Prevention Team (AIPT)

What is the Adolescent Intervention Prevention Team?

A team of multi-disciplined practitioners who have the training and experience to provide intensive statutory intervention and early help support, to young people who have been identified as being at significant risk of all forms of exploitation.

The team has a distinct focus on adolescent risk and the principles and approaches that most effectively address them, meeting adolescent’s needs and supporting them to avoid, reduce and recover from the risks they face.

This team provides intensive support to adolescents involved in, or at risk of exploitation including motivational interviewing and interventions that work with the drivers of adolescent development including risk taking. They also provide drop in services, outreach support, positive activities, parenting programmes, sexual harmful behaviour work, return from missing interviews, Children Missing Education checks and targeted teenage parent work.

As the team includes social workers they are able to hold cases identified as requiring statutory CIN or CP services. It also includes the Practice Lead for CSE//HBA/FGM/Forced Marriage.

Case work – Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection Plans

Referrals are received via the Early Help Front Door or via the MASH+; cases that are held within the statutory element of the service will have an allocated social worker and an allocated early help practitioner who will co-work each case. Cases held within the early help element of the service with have an allocated early help practitioner. The team adopt the relationship model of practice; the primary role is to build a relationship with the young person, underpinned by Restorative Practice. The advantage of this model of working is that if the level of need for the adolescent changes, it allows cases to be escalated/de-escalated with little to no disruption to the service offered to the child and reduces the need for several “transition points”. The service is needs led rather than threshold-based and young people coming into the team usually stay within the team allowing trusting professional relationships to be developed.

Street Engagement, Truancy Patrols, Joint Operations

The team attends all of the police Local Community Meetings across the borough and have strong links with both the local Police and the community safety teams therefore providing a strong evidence base of any incidents and patterns of youth Anti-Social Behaviour in the borough. With this information the team completes street engagement patrols to engage young people in known hotspots with the aim of diverting them to more positive activities and challenging the behaviour; the team also undertake joint deployments with Southend Police. The team have a range of tools available to them including Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Criminal Behaviour Orders and Civil Injunctions to target those identified as displaying the most entrenched behaviours. Operation Newcastle is undertaken, which is a truancy patrol in conjunction with Essex Police, where young people truanting from school are visited and taken back to school by the Police and Street Engagement Officers, and family members are offered advice and support in ensuring that their children attend school. The team also undertake joint operations in the evenings with Essex Police called Operation Red-Bull; these are aimed to identify, safeguard and engage children out on the streets late at night and disrupt any identified youth anti-social behaviour.
Internet Safety and CSE Workshops
The AIPT Team has staff trained as CEOP (Child Exploitation Online Protection) ambassadors and regularly complete workshops across the borough for teachers, professionals, foster carers, parents and young people educating them about the dangers of inappropriate online usage. One to one work with young people to explore how they use the internet and educate them in safer use is also available – access is via the Early Help Front Door with an EHFSA.

Knife Crime and Criminal Exploitation Workshops
The team have been undertaking bespoke educational programmes in schools on knife crime and CCE, exploring the dangers of carrying weapons, being involved in gangs and how county lines operate with a focus on how children can keep themselves and their friends safe. The team have produced two different programmes, one for primary aged children (year 5 & 6) and one for secondary aged children.

#SeeTheSigns
The team promote the #SeeTheSigns campaign, which is a local campaign by Southend Borough Council and Essex Police to educate the community on the dangers of county lines and child exploitation. The team manages a mailbox linked to this campaign and links the Knife Crime programme to this campaign we also complete some #SeeTheSigns awareness sessions with children and families jointly with Police when children are identified to have peripheral gang links. We also maintain the content on the webpage linked to this campaign.

Sexually Harmful Behaviour
The team have a number of staff trained in the AIM2 model of assessment and intervention as well training in online HSB and working with those under 12 years of age. We provide assessments and interventions for children demonstrating problematic or harmful sexual behaviours that are not involved in the criminal justice system.

Take 3 Parenting
Parenting programmes are facilitated during each school term using the Take 3 programme which has a proven success record.

The Take 3 Programme is a comprehensive evidence-based parenting programme for working with groups of parents of 10-18 year-olds, and especially with parents of at-risk or vulnerable young people. It has also been used extensively for one-to-one interventions with ‘hard-to-reach’ parents. Take 3 was originally created for use within the Youth Justice context and then developed over an eight-year period before publication in 2008, incorporating feedback from parents and facilitators so as to hone it down to ‘what works’.

Take 3 has two main aims:

- to improve relationships between young people and their families; and
- to improve young people’s behaviour at home, at school and in the wider community.
NVR Parenting

NVR is an 8 session programme with a concept which draws inspiration from those who have sought to bring about changes in society in a non-violent manner; Gandhi and Martin Luther King being amongst the most famous examples.

The programme aims to assist the parents and carers of children who are displaying challenging behaviours. The parents are guided through a set of core principles which are adaptable to many situations. This equips parents/carers with confidence and self-control and enables them to address these behaviours in an effective manner.

At the same time, the parent focuses on rebuilding the loving parent/child relationship, which may have been lost over a period of time.

How to access?

Referrals to this service are via Early Help Contact point earlyhelpcontactpoint@southend.gov.uk
Telephone 01702 534300

Updated Apr 2019
What does ‘Missing’ mean?

A ‘Missing’ child is a child under the age of 18 whose: whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the child may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another. And whose family or carers have reported them as missing to the police.

Which children and young people are we talking about?

Children and young people that go missing from their parent/carers at home and from care (looked after children). Some of the children and young people living at home with their parents are currently known to Children’s Services and others are not.

Link to Exploitation

Practitioners should be aware that when a young person repeatedly goes missing, this may be an indicator that they are at risk of, or already involved in, exploitation.

If a child is missing what should be done?

Parents and carers should take all reasonable and practical steps to establish the whereabouts and well-being of a child. If the child cannot be located, the child should be reported to the police.

Safe and Well checks and Return Interviews

On return, every child who has been reported as missing should have a Vulnerability check carried out by the Police. Within 72 hours of a child’s return a more in depth Return Interview is arranged by the AIPT. Independent return to home interview’s (RHI) are essential in providing the opportunity to enable young people to discuss their experiences of being missing outside their regular network of professionals. It should be clear however the RHI and the practitioners that offer these are not solely responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of the young person. The role and function of the practitioner who offers the RHI is to evaluate the ‘push/pull’ factors and risk, and then to escalate, signpost or support in accessing any necessary services. It is not the role of the practitioner completing the RHI to carry out casework with the identified young people.

Who are the key contacts and more information?

For more information please contact 01702 534300 and ask to talk to a member of the AIPT Missing team.

Updated Jan 2019
What is meant by Children Missing Education?

The DfE define a child missing from education as a child of compulsory school age who is not on a roll at a school or a child that has unauthorised leave for a long period of time from school and cannot be contacted. It is vital we identify and report children who may be missing education as these are children who are at risk and may be living a life of abuse.

Why is this area of work so important?

Children Missing Education can be linked to (but not always) to concerns about safeguarding, health, domestic violence, forced marriage, child sexual exploitation, child trafficking, female genital mutilation or behavioural issues. The law requires us to know where all children are and what school they attend even if they have left the country. Clause 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on the local authority to identify children missing education and a new section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (school attendance) requires all local authorities to make arrangements to establish (so far as is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are not receiving a ‘suitable education’.

What should all partner agencies, schools and parents do?

It is the responsibility of schools, health services and other partner agencies to act when they are aware of or believe that a child is missing from education. Reasonable enquiries should be made in the first instance and as much information should be collated as possible including names, addresses, contact details, emails, details of other family members, friends etc. Schools should act quickly to make all reasonable enquiries to try and ascertain the child’s whereabouts to prevent the child becoming CME. If the child’s whereabouts are still unknown, the school should complete a Child Missing Education referral form and email to the Early Help Single Front Door.

What is our role?

Our role is to make enquiries to locate the child and if the child is still in Southend, seek to engage the family in the process of getting the child back onto a school roll and attending school. Where we do not have an address for the child and investigations suggest that the child is living in another local authority, we inform the new local authority so that they can try to locate and engage the family. Also if it seems that the family have left the UK we aim to obtain some independent verification of this.

Who are the key contacts?

All referrals and enquiries should be sent to Early Help Contact Point
Email address: earlyhelpcontactpoint@southend.gov.uk

Updated Jan 2019
AIPT Teenage Pregnancy Support

Why this area of work is important

- Teenage Pregnancy can be linked to safeguarding concerns, domestic violence, substance misuse, child sexual exploitation.
- Teenage mothers are more likely to become socially isolated from their peers and then find it difficult to re-integrate into education and employment.
- Teenage mothers are 20% more likely to have no qualifications at the age of 30 than mothers giving birth aged 24 or over.
- Teenage mothers have three times the rate of postnatal depression of older mothers and a higher risk of poor mental health for three years after the birth.
- Children of teenage mothers have 63% more chance of being born into poverty and have a higher incidence of accidents and behavioural problems.

Pregnancy in school Age students

Pregnancy is not a reason for exclusion from school. Health and safety should not be used as a reason to prevent a pregnant pupil attending school. The school’s aim should be to keep the pregnant pupil or school age mother in learning. This means keeping the pupil on the school roll, even if she may not be able to attend for a period of time; keeping up to date with her progress and working with the Local Authority looking for a suitable time to re-integrate her into the school. If, exceptionally, a Head teacher considers that the school is no longer a suitable environment for the education of a pregnant pupil or school age mother, the pupil her parents, the LA and the pupil’s teenage pregnancy personal adviser should be involved in deciding the most suitable provision for that young person.

- If a young person thinks she may be pregnant and is not sure what to do. Advise them they need to have pregnancy confirmed either at G.P or Southend Sexual Health Service, Thamesgate House, Victoria Ave, Southend, telephone: 0300 303 2693, email: provide.southendsexualhealthservice@nhs.net
- A young person discloses they are pregnant and continuing with the pregnancy. If they are under 16 or there are safe guarding concerns, follow SET procedures and complete a safeguarding referral.

Support is available for all teenage pregnancies and young parents up to the age of 19.

What is our role?

Our role is to engage with young people and their family to encourage and support young parents to remain in education, employment or training. Offering practical and emotional support with further education, careers, childcare provision, budgeting, applying for benefits and housing, signposting to other support services such as Family Nurse Partnership and Children Centres.

What should all partner agencies, schools and parents do?

Refer teenage pregnancies to Teenage Pregnancy Personal Adviser via the Single Front Door using Early Help Family Support Assessment

For further information or referral for support

If Child Protection, send to: mash@southend.gov.uk
If Early Help Family Support, send to: earlyhelpcontactpoint@southend.gov.uk

For telephone enquires please call Teenage Pregnancy Personal Adviser Heidi Overaa 01702 534300
What is the Edge of Care Team?

A team of multi-disciplined practitioners who have the training and experience to provide intensive and rapid support when a family breaks down (including foster families) with the aim of keeping the family together. It has clear aims to:

- Support families whose children might otherwise be removed from their homes, to develop alternative solutions before such action is taken
- Support foster carers where there are identified risks of placement breakdown to stabilise the placement
- Support reunification back into the family after a period of time in care
- Support families whose children are on CP or CIN in order to prevent escalation into care
- Avoid escalation into residential care

Why does the team exist?

Southend Borough Council has seen a significant increase in the demand for its Children’s Services and concerns have been raised nationally that maybe Children’s Services are intervening too late.

The Edge of Care Team provides intensive support to vulnerable families with multiple complex problems, where there is or has been a strong possibility of a child or children becoming looked after.

Families who are supported by the team will often be at risk of legal action may have had multiple child protection plans and other services support previously, however positive changes may not have been sustained or evidenced in order to effectively reduce the risks to the children long term, leading to action to remove children from that environment.

Children who are already in foster placements may have significant needs that place additional pressures on foster carers that may ultimately lead to placement breakdowns impacting on the emotional resilience of a child by experiencing multiple placements.

The Edge of Care Team undertake reunification assessments to explore and evidence the potential of change, to assess if it is possible for children who have previously been removed due to risks present in the family to return safely to the birth family, and what support may be needed to make this successful.

By using a combination of solution focused, strength based and restorative interventions in a whole family approach alongside practical support offered to families and carers, the Edge of Care Team aim to reduce the risk of a child or children becoming looked after and support placements so that children can experience stability, safety, belonging and certainty within the home environment.

We need to find innovative ways to improve and re-design service delivery to achieve higher quality, improved outcomes and better value for money. There are some very real challenges however in determining a service that will support foster carers and families in a way which enables them to feel able to maintain difficult placements and improve both the quality of life and life chances for the children within them.

How do they work?

The Team is co-located at the EHFS & YOS Service, and builds upon the core elements of the service already in place, ensuring families access all the existing services and the Troubled Families programme. The team is available to support families 7 days a week between the hours of 08:00 and 23:00, reflecting
the fact that a family’s needs don’t stop outside of office hours. Practitioners work side by side with families; foster carers and their Social Workers, using proven methodologies such as motivational interviewing, solution focused, restorative, VIG, Social Pedagogy and brief solution focused therapy; supporting families to address issues that may result in the removal of their children.

**How do you refer?**

Access to the team for a child not yet LAC can only be made by social care professionals and should be via the Placement Panel Referral Form. Please indicate the referral is for the Edge of Care Team. Where support is required to a foster carer/Special Guardian, all referrals must be agreed by the Fostering team manager and discussed with the EOC Team Manager. All other cases must be referred directly from the Placement Panel.

Cases must remain open to a social worker throughout the intervention of the team which will be short term and targeted.

**Want to know more and key contacts?**

You can contact the team on 01702 212755

The Out of hour’s duty number is 07826 531079 or 07826 531518

*Updated Apr 2019*
Family Support

What is Early Help Family Support?

Early Help Family Support is a service that provides a family with additional support when needed.

We work with all members of the family using a “whole family” restorative approach. We aim to prevent escalation to statutory services and to ensure that families are empowered to sustain their change and improve their quality of life.

The Early Help Family Support team comprises of highly skilled Family Support Practitioners, Sustainability Officers, Community and Information Officers and practitioners seconded from DWP and Peabody.

What service does EHFS Provide?

An Early Help Family Support Assessment (EHFSA) is received through Early Help Family Support Front Door or a parent contacts the Duty Worker to make a self-referral. Attempts will be made to contact all referred families within 5 days to clarify the needs of the family and agree appropriate support.

There is a range of interventions available via the Family Support team and the type of intervention will be determined through discussion between practitioners and the referred families.

The interventions available include:
- Community Support
- Case Coordination and Planning (short term intervention)
- Intensive family support
- Specialised Parenting intervention
- Sustain and Support intervention

All referred families will be offered a package of support which best meets their needs.

Families will be able to participate in a full family assessment and planning meeting, alongside professionals, which will formulate an agreed needs based support plan for all the family.

The right intervention at the right time

Many families require additional support at some point in their lives. It is really important that our response meets the family’s needs at that time. We will listen to what the family are telling us and offer a service which reflects their needs, our range of different interventions is flexible and will aim to be led by our conversations with the people we work with.

It is understood that some families may require more than one intervention and our range of responses includes support for families who may need longer term sustainable support or an easy and quick route to speak to a practitioner for some advice and guidance.

All of our interventions feature a restorative approach. This method ensures that families can take responsibility for the changes they make and adopts a high challenge/high support ideology.

Intensive family support

For families with complex needs a longer term intervention is needed. Families will be allocated a Family Support Practitioner who will carry out an assessment with the family, taking in consideration the wishes and feelings of all family members. The practitioner will meet with the children separately to ensure their views are represented in the family plan. At the end of the assessment a planning meeting will be held with the family and professionals. The plan is reviewed every 8 weeks until the family and professionals are
happy the family outcomes are met. The Practitioner will use the Family Star assessment to help map the family progress.

**Case Coordination and Planning intervention**

Many families are able to manage the challenges their families face, they have all the skills but will require support from universal services to access the correct services. The Family Support team offers a 10 week intervention which aims to carry out a holistic assessment of family needs, again seeking the views of all family members. Following the assessment the allocated Family Practitioner holds a meeting with the family and all professionals to form an integrated family plan; this will give clear guidance to the family to where they can access support and highlight the responsibilities of the family and other professionals. The family practitioner can make any relevant referrals and carry out any necessary work with the family prior to ending their involvement.

**Specialist Parenting Support**

Many parents experience difficulty parenting their children and can often perceive a mental health or development difficulty with their child. This programme takes a non-judgmental view of the challenges of parenting regardless of whether a child has a diagnosis, is awaiting assessment or has potentially experience trauma. Aimed at the primary aged children the course enables parents to explore parenting in a supported environment. At the heart of the programme is a 5 weeks specially developed course which is supported by home visits to embed learning, practise new ways of parenting and allowing for sessions to be held with the practitioner out of a groups setting. As with all our family support interventions this is preceded by assessment and will include a multiagency planning and review meeting. The expectation is that family will be involved with this programme for 15 weeks.

**Empowerment Programme**

The Family Support team offers an Empowerment programme which can be accessed when a family are working with the team or as a stand-alone referral. The programme has been developed by the Family Practitioners and aims to offer parents a self-development opportunity. The programme focusses on attunement, communication and understanding of your own actions and the consequences this can have on others. This has proved a popular programme as it does not work on a deficit parenting model, allowing parents to make insightful judgements.

**Early Help Counselling**

Early Help Family Support team in conjunction with Southend Adult Community College is able to offer free easy to access individual counselling for adults. The service is completely confidential and ensures that adults with low level mental health needs are able to access a service which enhances their wellbeing and has a positive impact on family life.
**What happens when a family support intervention finishes?**

When a family support intervention finishes it is really important that the family and professionals are aware where they can access support and services in the future to enable them to sustain the positive changes they have made. For some families this need can be met by continuing work with a Support and Sustainability practitioner. This means the family will benefit from extended support, maintain regular contact with the team and know they can quickly access support should they need to. For other families access to universal services and information on specialised community provision may be the correct next step. Regardless of the best approach, all families and professionals should be clear when intervention ends and be confident this is the right decision; this clarity is provided by holding a closing family meeting where the next steps can be discussed and formalised.

**What does community support look like?**

The Community Support team works with the Youth Service to provide services at St Lukes Community Hub based at Cluny Square. At the Hub residents are able to access specialised support for housing, finances and benefits (supported by Peabody), use a free community gym, grow their own produce at Clinic Gardens allotment, attend a variety of youth groups catering for young people, drop in to use printers, computers or phones or access a group focussed on adult wellbeing (including community based counselling service). Southend residents can access ESOL classes at Trinity Church (Westcliff). The Hub supports other local organisations to extend its inclusive offer and currently hosts a Dementia group, Anxiety support group and a Welcome to the UK Group.

The community team delivers regular forums to local school and partner agencies to keep up to date with service provision in Southend and is currently supporting local schools with a family support drop service in 3 local primary schools and a Special Needs Secondary school.

The community team recognises that accessing services for the first time can be challenging and therefore offers a home visit and telephone support to encourage residents to access the right service to meet their need. This support can be vital to residents who have difficulty accessing support but are able to do so with encouragement and information.

**What if family support does not work?**

Sometimes the needs of a family change and can no longer be met by the family support team. When this happens it is important the family are aware that we are concerned about their progress and the need to look at alternative services for support. We have an established case transfer process for families where the children may benefit from an assessment from social care or a statutory intervention to support school attendance. Where possible the family support practitioner will continue to work with families whilst other assessments take place, allowing consistency of contact and clear assessments of need and how best to meet this.

Referrals to this service are via Early Help Contact point earlyhelpcontactpoint@southend.gov.uk

Telephone: Family Support duty number: 0170 215783

St Lukes Community Hub stlukeshub@southend.gov.uk

Website https://www.facebook.com/Stlukescommunityhub/

Telephone: 01702 463927

*Updated April 2019*
School Attendance - Statutory Responsibilities and Processes

Why is attendance important?

The right of children and young people to an education is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and in UK law. Evidence shows that excellent attendance is key for ensuring positive outcomes for children and young people. Missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and achieving poorer outcomes at both primary and secondary level. The association between poor attendance and poor outcomes is the reason why school attendance is one of Early Helps key priorities because improving attendance can be a gateway to improving the overall life chances of children and young people. All parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or through other appropriate arrangements. Where parents and carers are not fulfilling this responsibility, the local authority has a statutory responsibility to uphold the rights of children and young people to education. Where necessary, this includes taking legal action against parents.

What does Early Help do to support improved attendance?

The Early Help service recognises that poor school attendance can be both a cause and a symptom of more complex problems in the lives of children and young people. Where this is believed to be the case, targeted families will be invited to a Level 2 meeting where an early help worker will work with the family to understand the barriers to accessing education, and offer support to overcome them. However, in some cases the child and family may need support from a number of different agencies or in depth support to meet their needs and this support can be accessed and co-ordinated through an Early Help Family Support Assessment. Early Help and Family support traded School Attendance Service offers schools and clusters advice, training support and case work. At every step of the way, the aim of the Early Help services is to successfully return children to school and uphold the rights of children to access their education. Where additional needs or barriers have been identified, the Early Help service will always offer advice on support, and will only consider pursuing legal action as a last resort. However, statutory action can and will be taken against parents where necessary, and there is an expectation from government that we will use the legislation available to pursue this.

Holidays in term time

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 prohibits Head teachers granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Head teacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child’s educational progress. A pupil who takes 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in the year. 10 days absence also means the pupil will miss 50 hours of education. If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Early Help and Family Support Team who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

What are the possible legal consequences for parents whose children miss school?

There are a number of statutory options available to the local authority:

- Penalty notices, fines of £120 are available to the local authority to issue to parents. The local authority can prosecute parents in the Magistrates Court for non-payment of penalty notices, which can lead to a fine of up to £1000, a Parenting Order, and a criminal record.
- The local authority can apply to the Family Court for an Education Supervision Order, which means that the local authority can act directly on behalf of the child to ensure they attend school, removing some parental rights.

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The local authority can also submit a case directly to the Magistrates Court. There are two types of such prosecution and, if found guilty of the most serious offence, parents can face a fine of up to £2500 and/or a community rehabilitation order, or even a custodial sentence of up to 3 months. Revenue from the payment of fines is retained by the council to cover the costs of administering penalty notices, and of prosecuting parents who fail to pay their fines.

Where can I find further information?

Further information about Southend’s approach to statutory responsibilities and frequently asked questions can be found here: [http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/download/46/attendance_and_truancy](http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/download/46/attendance_and_truancy)

Further information about the support available to families to improve their children’s attendance is available from Early Help contact point

Telephone number: 01702 215783

Email address: [earlyhelpcontactpoint@southend.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelpcontactpoint@southend.gov.uk)

Children in Employment and Entertainment

What is meant by children in employment?

All young people who work or assist in a trade or occupation which is carried out for profit or non-profit (e.g. charities, public sector organisations) purposes are considered to be employed - even if they receive no payment for that assistance. By law, no child under 13 years may be employed. Children aged from thirteen to sixteen must have a work permit. The work permits are issued by Early Help services and it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that children of compulsory school age have a permit, and are working within the regulations. The Children and Young Person’s Act of 1933 provided the principal primary legislation, which remained largely unchanged for 65 years. More information about the rules and restrictions on children in employment can be found on the National Network for Child Employment and Entertainment website.

What is meant by children in entertainment?

Many children enjoy performing, whether in plays, films, advertising or on television and many parents enjoy supporting them. Some children also take part in modelling assignments and also paid sporting activities. Laws exist to protect children’s welfare and prevent them from being exploited, and in most cases children require a performance licence in order to take part in these activities. (Children & Young Persons Act 1963, Children (Performance and Activities) Regulations 2014). This applies to both amateur and professional productions. The licence states the conditions which must be observed to ensure the child’s safety. Regular visits are made by the Child Employment Officer to TV sets and studios, theatres in Southend and on location filming and photographic studios to check on the welfare of children taking part in these activities.

Why is this area of work important?

It is the responsibility of the local authority Early Help Services to ensure that children are not exploited whilst working or taking part in performances and that they do not miss out on attending school. Children must also be adequately supervised whilst taking part in these activities, and local authority officers carry out regular inspections to check on their safety and well-being. Chaperones are vetted and approved by the Council before they can be responsible for supervising children, and they all must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS; formerly Criminal Records Bureau, CRB) check as part of the process. It is also good practice to receive safeguarding training and general training around their role and responsibilities. Reports of children working illegally are taken seriously, and followed up with the employer who may be liable for a fine if they are found to employ children illegally.
How is this work carried out by Children’s Services?

This work is currently undertaken by Early Help Family Support Officers who are part of a team within Early Help Services. The team works closely with other colleagues in the South East region and nationally and often meets with regional representatives to discuss any issues, e.g. in relation to recent TV or theatrical productions or policies and procedures around child employment and children in entertainment. They also receive relevant information from the National Network for Children in Entertainment meetings. Over the years, the team regularly carries out child employment sweeps — these are spot checks to ensure no school age children are working illegally. They have also held awareness campaigns in across the town with employers and schools. The team has also taken part in initiatives promoting the national ‘Child Employment Week’ over the past few years. It should be noted that work experience for young people is organised by schools and academies; this is covered by separate legislation, and is not part of the team’s remit.

What should practitioners do if they have questions or concerns about children in employment or entertainment?

There is further information, advice and guidance available from the national network, including information about health and safety and risk assessments, through their website www.nncee.org.uk. However, this is a national resource and processes and procedures differ between local authorities. For information about licences, chaperones and employment permits in Southend, or to report suspected breaches of the child employment and entertainment regulations, please contact Southend Borough Council’s Early Help, Family Support Child Employment Officers.

Who are the key contacts?

Email childemploymentandlicensing@southend.gov.uk

Chaperone licences and information can be obtained online at http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/download/83/children_in_entertainment and any correspondence should be sent to Southend on Sea Borough Council, Business Support Team, Department for People, Floor 8, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend on Sea, Essex SS2 6ER

Updated Jan 2019
Youth Service

What does it do?

The Targeted Youth Service provides Positive Activities for young people, in areas of need across the borough, in centres, outreach community groups and detached settings.

These activities are provided predominantly for young people age 8-18 years after school, evenings and weekends.

Good youth work involves building positive relationships with young people, relationships that are based on mutual respect, integrity, trust and commitment. We offer opportunities for all young people to voluntarily engage in and encourage them to become valued partners in all aspects of our service delivery and development.

We support local communities, in setting up youth programmes in their areas, offering them training, access to resources, and qualified youth work staff, to support them.

We also provide access to Positive Activities during holidays during day-time and evenings, offering young people opportunities to take part fun activities, during their leisure time.

What is the Process for Referral?

Parents/Carers and young people can “refer” to the activities/programmes, by attending with friends or finding out by “word of mouth” and completing a membership form, with information regarding their address, dob., school they attend, and emergency contact details.

Professional referrers are asked to send an Early Help Family Support Assessment (EHFSA) to the Early Help Front Door at earlyhelpcontactpoint@southend.gov.uk. We ask that all EHFSA’s in respect to young people requiring targeted youth support are completed as fully as possible.

What’s on?

A full list of the programmes and activities available can be found in our ‘What’s on’ leaflet which is updated every quarter and available from Shoebury Youth Centre, St Luke’s Community Hub and Civic 2 or on request from:

Early Help Family Support & Youth Offending Services on the telephone number below or contact janicelyons@southend.gov.uk

Where can I find further information?

01702-534300, email janicelyons@southend.gov.uk

Targeted Youth Support, Civic 2, Victoria Avenue, Southend, SS2 6ER

Updated Apr 2019
Young Carers

Who is a Young Carer?

A young carer is defined as ‘a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age except where that care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work). This relates to care for any family member who is physically or mentally ill, frail elderly, disabled or misuses alcohol or substances’.

A Primary Young Carer is defined as: someone who has sole responsibility for emotional support/care tasks e.g. in a single parent family.

A Secondary Young Carer is defined as: someone who has a supporting role providing emotional support/care tasks e.g. helping to care for a sibling who is ill or disabled.

What is the Process for Referral?

Our Young Carers worker is part of the Early Help, Family Support and Youth Offending Service. They can be contacted on 01702-534300/01702-298495, email Eleanorlock@southend.gov.uk to answer any queries or to take any referrals direct from families.

Professional referrers are asked to send an Early Help Family Support Assessment (EHFSA) to the Early Help Front Door at earlyhelpcontactpoint@southend.gov.uk. We ask that all EHFSA’s in respect to Young Carers are completed as fully as possible with full details of the lead child, all persons living within the household, and information regarding their caring role, whether considered as a Primary or Secondary Young Carer.

What Happens Next?

We will respond to the referral within 48 working hours, and undertake a home visit/telephone call, and/or visit to the young person at school within 5 working days. If there is already an EHFSA in the system, the appropriate lead person will be contacted and information passed to them.

All young carers who attend our programmes (SYCAMORE/COOL/CHIL) are offered an assessment (Manual for Measure of Caring Activities and outcomes for children and young people). This Manual is intended to provide practitioners in the field of caring with relevant and accessible means for the assessment of caring activities and caring outcomes in children and young people. They can be used on a one-off basis for the purpose of assessment, or pre- and post-intervention to measure change and the impact of support. If used pre- and post-intervention, then practitioners working with young carers will be able to inform their funders and other partners about whether or not their work has made a measurable difference. The instruments can measure the extent and nature of caring and its impact on the emotional and social well-being of a young person.

What’s available?

We can provide access to SYC&MORE, COOL, CHIL young carers groups and access to trips/events during school holidays as well as more specialised assessment and family support through our Early Help & Family Support Teams, where a full family assessment will be undertaken.

Where can I find further information?

01702-298495 (Shoebury Youth Centre – email EleanorLock@southend.gov.uk
Or Email: earlyhelpcontactpoint@southend.gov.uk
Civic 2, Victoria Avenue, Southend, SS2 6ER

Updated Apr 2019
Young Person’s Drug and Alcohol Team is commissioned to provide treatment for substance misuse to young people under the age of 18 and young adults aged between 18 – 21 years old.

YPDAT aims to

- Engage and provide effective and timely interventions for young people who present with problems arising from substance use or misuse.
- Provide interventions to promote the health, social and educational well-being to those young people, which in turn will reduce risk posed by hazardous substance use, increase resilience and contribute to positive longer term health outcomes.
- Enhance the detection and screening of young persons in relation to substance use and identify those with direct problems at the earliest opportunity.
- Promote a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary approach within integrated service provision.
- To reduce stigma surrounding the use of services for young people who misuse substances.
- Provide outreach support for those ‘hard to reach’ young people.
- Ensure service users have clear exit strategy post treatment to reduce risk or representation.

Commitment

- YPDAT aims to provide specialist assessment within five working days from referral.
- Treatment plan will be agreed within 10 working days.
- Service aims to be easily accessible, young people will be seen at a time and venue which suits their needs.

Services provided

- Comprehensive substance use assessment.
- Psychosocial interventions.
- Referral for physical health assessment and health interventions.
- Referral to tobacco cessation programme.
- Awareness raising workshops.
- Brief Intervention.
- Group work programme.
- Easy access information and referral session.
- Support for hidden harm, those impacted by parent substance use.
- Awareness sessions in school.

For further details please contact

Young Person’s Drug & Alcohol Team (YPDAT) 01702 534300

Civic 2, Victoria Avenue, Southend, SS2 6ER

ypdat@southend.gov.uk

Updated Jan 2019
What is the Youth Offending Service?

Southend Youth Offending Service (YOS) was formed in 2000, in line with the Crime & Disorder Act (1998). The Youth Offending Service is a statutory agency which utilises a multi-disciplinary staff base including practitioners from the Probation Service, Health, Police, Education, substance misuse services and draws upon the skills of volunteers who provide a key ingredient to restorative justice. Southend Youth Offending Service aims to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people between the ages of 10-17 years. We work with children and young people who have been made subject to court orders and also offer interventions to young people who have been offered out of court disposals, such as Triage, Youth Caution or Youth Conditional Cautions.

Southend Youth Offending Service offers an extensive range of projects designed to meet the ever-changing needs of local children, young people and their families. Every young person will receive child-friendly interventions, benefit from an integrated service which ensures young people are safeguarded and assisted to reintegrate back into their local communities.

The intervention programmes used are based on restorative justice principles, encouraging the offender to recognise the impact that their criminal behaviour has had on their victims, on themselves, on their family, and on their community. The Restorative approach operates in partnership with Essex Police, and victims of the crimes committed are also directly involved where possible. Southend YOS achieves high levels of victim participation, which leads to better outcomes for both the young person who has offended and for the victim themselves.

What support does the Youth Offending Service Offer?

Southend YOS supports young people to change their behaviour by:

- Working with young people to develop positive relationships, increase levels of personal responsibility and make positive choices.
- Recognising and developing young people’s individual strengths, and believing in their capacity to change.
- Working with families, communities and other professionals to build networks of support; and
- Encouraging young people to understand the impact their behaviour has on victims, families, communities and themselves.

A wide range of interventions and programmes have been developed to help young people move away from offending by focusing on pro-social behaviours, managing emotions and providing alternative strategies for dealing with difficult or challenging situations. Young people are also encouraged to access support with substance use, education, mental and physical health or communication difficulties.

Roles within Youth Offending

YOS Case Managers will undertake a comprehensive assessment of each young person and their family, highlighting factors which increase or decrease the young person’s risk of further offending, risk of harm and safety and wellbeing, by identifying risks and positive factors in their lifestyle and current circumstances. This approach enables the practitioners to tailor the supervision to meet the needs of the young person, delivering effective interventions and making appropriate referrals to external agencies and partners.
YOS staff undertake work in the courts, sharing information with Magistrates and Crown Court Judges, submitting reports that outline the assessment of risk, personal circumstances and proposing sentencing options which are appropriate to the needs and risks of the offender and proportionate to the offence.

The YOS Victim Worker meets with victims of young people who are subject to supervision by the Youth Offending Service. A Restorative Justice approach enables victims to have their say and receive answers to questions they may want to ask whilst allowing young people the chance to repair the harm they have caused. One way of repairing the harm is by the use of reparation.

Our Reparation projects provide young people with the opportunity to either pay back to the victim directly or the wider community by undertaking unpaid work, whilst also developing new skills and in some cases working towards a qualification which can increase motivation and improve life chances. Such opportunities are assisting the elderly, undertaking community projects, volunteering in charitable organisations and completing horticulture projects in partnership with Southend Parks Dept.

**Where can I find further information?**

Contact Team Manager 01702 534300 or email marilynadams@southend.gov.uk

If you are interested in volunteering with the Youth Offending Service please contact: Jan Barton janbarton@southend.gov.uk

*Updated Jan 2019*