

# What is Early Help?

Early Help is about ensuring that children and families receive the support they need at the right time. It is about giving families the support not just from their council but also our partners like health and schools to make sure you get all the support you need.

In Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, we aim to provide help for children and families when problems first start to emerge or when it looks like that there is a strong possibility that problems will emerge in the future. This means that we want to provide help as soon as we can so it is early in life or early in the identification and development of a problem.

We also recognise that some families will require additional help at various times of their lives and may need to access targeted services periodically to help them manage. Support is also provided within the arena of Early Help when families have received specialist support but need a reduced level of support to sustain and continue the progress made.

# What are Early Help Services?

It will depend on the needs of your family but could include:

- School nurse
- Youth worker
- Emotional Health and Well-being Practitioner
- Health visitor
- NEET support officer
- Caring Together
- Children's centres
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Family support worker
- Drug and alcohol support worker
- Evidence based parenting programme

# What personal information do we collect and who is it about?

We will collect information from you and your family to help us complete your Early Help Assessment. This will include information about you, your child and other members of your household. We need this to enable us to do the assessment of your child and your family's needs.

This information will include:

- Name, date of birth, address and contact details
- Identifiers such as National Insurance Number and NHS Number
- Ethnic group, home circumstances, language and health information
- National curriculum assessment results
- School attendance/exclusion information
- Details of any special educational needs for young people
- Relevant medical information for young people/parents/carers – only where appropriate – e.g. special educational needs or disability
- Physical or mental health
- Any additional personal information that is necessary to enable us to provide you with the correct service. In some circumstances this may require us to hold information on adults within the family. We may in some circumstances also check what previous services have been offered to you and your family.

Where we ask you for special categories of data then we ask for this because it will enable us to meet our statutory duties and to make sure we provide you with the right services.

# Why do we ask for personal information and what do we do with it?

Personal information is asked for during the Early Help process in order to ensure that the assessment captures current needs and strengths. This enables the worker supporting you to identify services who may be able to offer support for you and your family.

Both councils have statutory duties to improve the well-being of children and families in our area. Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the local authority to provide services to children in need in their area and Section 10 of the Children's Act 2004 places a duty on the councils to improve wellbeing and to work with partners to do this. The Department for Education has also published Working Together to Safeguard Children which puts an emphasis on identifying those who would benefit from early help.

In data protection legislation, we need to identify a legal basis for processing personal data. For the Early Help services, we do so because we need to process personal information to perform our public duties in line with Article 6 (1) (e) of the GDPR. We process special category data in line with Article 9 2(h) of the GDPR as it is for the provision of health and social care.

## Do we ask you for consent?

We use your information to deliver the early help services to you under our statutory duties. This means that we will not ask you for consent to use your information or share it with partners who will deliver those services. However we will explain what we are doing with your information, who we will share it with and importantly why. This means that there will be no surprises as to who is involved with you and your family. If you have any concerns about your information being shared then speak to your allocated worker - they will explain why it's necessary but also listen to your concerns to make sure that we work with you.

# How we use personal information to improve our services

There will be times when your information may be used for statutory or data reporting purposes. This is done to monitor the performance of the Early Help service, and to assess and improve the effectiveness of the available support services in the city. For example, in order to know how well we are doing at supporting families who are having difficulties, we share information on households who qualify for the national Troubled Families programme with a research institute called the Office of National Statistics (ONS). The ONS will compare progress made by households which have received our support with similar households who have not. The anonymized information they send back to us will allow us to improve our services.

## Who do we receive information from?

We receive information from all professionals that support children, young people and families across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. This includes schools, nurseries, health professionals, youth services, specialist support services, DWP as well as charitable organisations. We will always explain to you who is providing information and why.

## Who do we share it with and why?

We share information with the professionals and partners involved in providing your services. This includes colleagues in the council, schools, nurseries, health professionals, youth services, specialist support services, DWP, Cambridgeshire Constabulary as well as charitable organisations. We will always explain to you who is providing information and why.

In Cambridgeshire if you request help from an Early Help District Team, your information will be shared with colleagues in that team. If you request support from the Early Support

Pathway (0-5), your information will need to be shared with a number of external partners including health colleagues so that they can help identify what support would most benefit your family's needs.

In Peterborough, if you request support from one of the MASG (Multi-Agency Support Group) panels we will need to share your information with all professional who sit on the panel. The professional who has worked with you to collect information to create your Early Help Assessment will be able to talk to you about what additional support is available so that you can make an informed decision.

There may also be times when the people working with you may need to share information without your permission, e.g. when it is felt that a child or adult is at risk of harm or to prevent crime.

## How long do we keep it for?

All Early Help Assessment forms are stored securely by the council and retained for six years from the close of the matter. There may be other times when documents are retained longer in line with the retention schedule.

## Rights and complaints

You have rights under Data Protection and these are as detailed in our privacy notices.

[Cambridgeshire County Council privacy notices](#)

[Peterborough City Council's corporate privacy notice](#)

[Peterborough City Council's data protection rights](#)



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