



Early Help Pathways

Operational Guidance





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The background of the slide features a series of light purple silhouettes of a family. From left to right, there is a child, a woman, a man holding a baby, a child on a skateboard, a man on a skateboard, a woman holding a baby, and a young girl. A dark purple banner with the title '1. Introduction' is overlaid on the center of the image.

1. Introduction

“Intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families, or with a population most at risk of developing problems - **early intervention may occur at any point in a child or young person’s life**”

C4EO

Effective early help relies upon local agencies working together to provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child. Local authorities, under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, have a responsibility to promote inter-agency cooperation to improve the welfare of children.

Working Together 2013

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013) sets out a clear expectation that local agencies will work together and collaborate to identify those children with additional needs and provide support as soon as a problem emerges. Providing early help is far more effective in promoting the welfare of children – and keeping them safe – than reacting later, when any problems, for example neglect, may have become more entrenched. The importance of using a child-centred approach in following the child's journey is also emphasised. All services which are provided must be based on a clear understanding of the needs and the views of the individual child in their family and community context.

This guidance provides a framework for practitioners who are working with children, young people and their families; it aims to help practitioners identify when a child may need additional support to achieve their full potential and how to implement the Staged Intervention approach to supporting children, young people and their families. It seeks to link together the

processes and tools involved, to show how collectively practitioners provide a seamless and safe package of support to children young people and their families including those who are disabled or have special educational needs (SEN), giving them help at an earlier stage, avoiding crisis intervention later on.

The thresholds, and the basic approach to our four-staged framework, set out in **'Integrating multi-agency support for the needs of children, young people and families in Croydon: Early Help and Staged Intervention – An overview for practitioners'** (2011) remain the same and have been brought together within this document (Appendix 1). This guidance builds on the 2011 document and provides greater clarification of the processes and pathways involved in supporting children and families through early help. The early help pathways have been updated in the context of the establishment of the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub, the significant reorganisation of the Local Authority's Early Intervention Support Service and proposed reforms set out in the Revised Code of Practice for SEN due to be in place by September 2014.

Each of these directions highlight the importance of identifying children's support needs early so that parents and professionals can put the right approach in place quickly.

This guidance will help all practitioners to make decisions about, and understand how they can contribute to supporting children, young people and families at all stages of intervention.

This guidance describes the early help pathways for all children and young people aged 0-19 (or 25 for young people with SEN or disability) and align with more detailed guidance available for specific age groups such as guidance on Family Engagement Partnerships for families with children aged 0-5.

2. Principles of early help



All practitioners working with, and on behalf of, children, young people and families have responsibility for ensuring everything possible is done to prevent the unnecessary escalation of issues or problems. Children, young people and their families must be offered help when needs and/or concerns are first identified and, as a consequence of the early help offered, children's circumstances improve and, in some cases, the need for targeted services is lessened or avoided. The offer of early help begins with universal and increased personalisation of services to meet the needs of children, young people and their families.



The guiding principles are:

- high quality early identification and intervention for all children who need it, as well as effective integrated support for children with the most complex needs
- preventative approach: we aim to work with families to enable them to **build resilience** and improve their capacity to help themselves
- ‘early intervention may occur at any point in a child’s life’ (Centre for Excellence and Outcomes – C4EO)
- **children, young people and their families are listened to**, practice is focused on their needs and experiences and influenced by their wishes and feelings
- to achieve better outcomes for children, young people and families, we see early intervention and prevention as a **shared responsibility**, where agencies work together, jointly ‘holding the baton’ for children and families
- **safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility** and the welfare of the child/young person is paramount

Early Help and Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The principles of early help apply where a SEN is identified. Early years providers, schools and colleges will put additional and differentiated evidence-based interventions in place. These should be provided as part of a graduated approach, which includes regular reviews of the progress made and adaptations to the support provided as required. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) will use an appropriate educational assessment in order to identify needs and develop a Special Educational Needs support plan. If it is thought housing, family or other domestic circumstances may be contributing to the educational need, a multi-agency approach, supported by the use of the Early Help Assessment (CAF) may be appropriate. The SENCo and lead professional will work together to coordinate support for the child, young person and their family.

Throughout this guidance the term ‘lead professional’ refers to the person responsible for co-ordinating the actions identified in the assessment process; a single point of contact for children, young people and families with additional needs. This includes the SENCo, the lead professional or key worker of the support plan.

3. Staged intervention



Staged intervention is an inclusive approach, involving parents/carers, children and young people, relevant professionals and support services, which allows practitioners to make informed and proportionate responses to need. In the Croydon model, there are four stages: **Universal, Vulnerable, Complex and Acute**. Each stage provides a solution-focussed approach to meeting needs at the earliest opportunity, with the most appropriate and least intrusive level of intervention. It is an incremental evidence based approach - all relevant approaches at the lower stages have been tried before involving services that provide a more intensive approach. This may also be known as a 'graduated response'.

Our staged approach is designed around:

- **stages 1-3: Early help pathway**
- **stage 4: Safeguarding pathway (immediate child protection concern)**

If a child or young person is at risk of immediate harm – make an immediate child protection/ safeguarding referral to the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). If a practitioner believes the needs of a child/young person are so serious that they are at risk of significant harm they must contact the MASH on 020 8726 6400 (the same number is to be used to contact the Emergency Duty Team outside of normal office hours). If a practitioner considers a child/young person to be at immediate risk, call 999 immediately.

Stepping up

At each stage, before considering a higher stage of intervention, practitioners and lead professionals are to consider:

- what are the unmet needs of the child, young person and/or their family?
- what have we tried so far?
- what more can we do within existing resources?
- what has been the impact?
- what evidence do we have that we cannot bring about any further positive changes and a higher level or intervention is needed?
- what advice have I received from Locality Early Help or on www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk?

Stage 2 will involve identifying the most appropriate lead professional for the child young person and their family.

Stepping up from Stage 2 may involve transfer of lead professional to a Stage 3 service.


Stepping up from Stage 3 will involve transfer of lead professional to the Stage 4 service.

Stepping down

The objective at all stages of intervention should be to not only prevent escalation of need but to bring about the required changes that enable children, young people and their families to build resilience such that their needs can be met within universal provision. Therefore wherever possible a successful intervention should result in transfer back to universal services as opposed to a progressive transfer back through the stages.



Early Help Pathway

 I have concerns that a child or young person is not progressing as expected / I have identified that a family has a need for support and advice

What do I need to do to support this child, young person and/or their family?

- can I/my organisation make adjustments to meet the needs of this child, young person and/or family?
- do I have access to other resources?
- can I purchase/fund additional support or services?
- what expertise can I access?
- what systems do we have in place to respond?
- where do I need to go to get further advice and support within my local networks?
- have I looked at the information and advice available on Practitioner Space?
- **have I accessed the full range of services and support available within my local networks?**

Do I need to coordinate support (with consent) to meet the needs of this child, young person and/or their family?

Request for support from a single agency: I complete a referral to engage another service to meet the identified need

I will consider needs through an Early Help Assessment (CAF)/Special Educational Needs Assessment and organise a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting for all practitioners working with the family and agree with the family responsibility for the lead professional role

Review and assess evidence that outcomes being achieved?

Lead professional/SENCo to coordinate the services and agree with the family a support plan with clear objectives, outcomes, timescales and understanding of who is responsible for doing what

Yes

No

Lead professional/SENCo to work with TAF to review and reassess evidence that outcomes being achieved?

Yes

No

Develop a support plan with clear objectives, outcomes and timescales

Review and assess evidence that outcomes are being achieved?

Yes

No

Once outcomes have been achieved then:

- consider the need for on-going support and manage this within the current setting or
- close and continue provision of universal services



Stage One: Universal

Stage Two: Vulnerable

I think this child or young person is likely to suffer significant harm - contact the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team on 020 8726 6400

Key things I will be asked for:

- basic details of children and family including address of family and contact details
- details of concerns (explaining what the concerns are, date(s) of incident, if concerns are current or long term and support already tried)
- does the referrer have consent? (If not, why not?)

Lead professional is able to evidence that there continues to be complex and unmet needs despite increased levels of personalisation and multi-agency support offered

Lead professional/SENCo/TAF and Early Help Coordinator have a case discussion and agree an appropriate and proportionate response

Lead professional/SENCo makes a request for consideration for a Special Educational Needs Statutory Assessment

Lead professional/SENCo to continue to coordinate support with more intensive or specialist support

There is evidence that this child or young person needs immediate protection

Contact MASH immediately on 020 8726 6400

I need to complete a MASH Safeguarding Referral Form



Stage Three: Complex

Stage Four: Acute

The background of the slide features a series of light purple silhouettes of people in various poses, suggesting interaction and care. From left to right, there is a person's head in profile, a person leaning over another, a person kneeling, a person standing, a person holding a child up, and a child standing. The central text is overlaid on a dark purple banner.

4. Support and advice for practitioners on staged intervention

Support and Advice for Early Help (Stages 1-3)

Locality Early Help provide advice and support about early help. Providing early help can be complicated. The team of Early Help Coordinators and your named Locality Early Help School and Community Advisers can provide information, advice and guidance on all aspects of early help from the first point at which additional need is identified to 'stepping up' into support for complex needs. The team does not undertake case work.

This support can be accessed at any point of the Team Around the Family (TAF) process and could include:

- advice, face to face, on the telephone or by email
- guidance about the early help pathway/staged intervention
- support to identify universal and community services
- attend TAF meetings to provide support and challenge where necessary
- case consultation sessions
- information and identification about early help learning and development for individuals or staff teams

Locality Early Help will work closely with lead professionals and will have oversight of all Early Help Assessments (CAF). They provide support and challenge to ensure the early help offered results in an appropriate and proportionate offer of support which is effective and makes a positive difference. The relationship between the lead professional and their allocated Locality Early Help Advisor is critical to the success of early help and ensuring seamless transitions between stages of intervention.

Early help episodes that are not progressing in line with the support plan within 12 months, will be reviewed by Locality Early Help to consider with the lead professional appropriate next steps.



Locality Early Help can be contacted through www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk or earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk

Special Educational Needs Support and Advice (Stages 1-4)

The 0-25 SEN Service provides information, advice and guidance to practitioners in relation to children and young people with special educational needs.

The service consists of the Early Years SEN team (including portage), Education, Health and Care team, SEN Commissioning and the Tribunal team. The service provides support to children, young people and their families with complex special educational needs.



The 0-25 SEN service can be contacted on 020 726 6400.

Safeguarding Support and Advice (Stage 4)

The Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

is the Local Authority's 'front door' to manage all safeguarding referrals and to consider the most appropriate support available for families in need of help. The MASH team is made up of: Children's Social Care, Police Public Protection Desk, Health, Education, Youth Offending Service, Early Help and Youth Services, Probation and Housing.

MASH operates a safeguarding consultation line to provide safeguarding advice and consultation to professionals who would like to discuss the concerns they may have about a child/family. **This is for safeguarding advice only.**



The contact number for the safeguarding consultation line is 020 8726 6464. For all other enquiries use 020 8726 6400.

Resolving Interagency Disagreement

Appropriate staff for example lead professionals who may be unsatisfied by the outcome following consultation with either Locality Early Help or MASH should discuss their concerns with their line managers.



5. Stage One

Universal services for
all children, young
people and their families

**Good Practice:**

Practitioners should always seek to discuss their concerns with the child's family (and if appropriate, directly with the young person) to let them know what is going on and how you are trying to help. You will need consent to share information to access support. Families may also be able to explain, assist or resolve the issues themselves.

All children and young people need support in order to learn and develop. In the majority of cases, you will be able to meet the needs of a child or young person by personalising universal provision, but some require support which is additional to, or different from, what is normally provided.

Your offer of early help begins in Stage 1 with personalisation of services to meet the needs of children, young people and their families. Each universal setting or service has access to a variety of different sources of information, support and advice that you can use to meet the needs of each child. The type of action planning used and the way that personalisation of services is created will depend on which service you are from.



A child or young person's needs may be short term, and you may be able to address the problem relatively easily. For some children, their needs might be more complex and they may require access to additional support for a longer period of time – by stepping up to Stage 2.



For further information please see www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk



6. Stage Two

Targeted early help for vulnerable children, young people and families

“Children and families may need support from a wide range of local agencies. Where a child and family would benefit from coordinated support from more than one agency (e.g. education, health, housing, police) there should be an inter-agency assessment. These Early Help Assessments, such as the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), should identify what help the child and family require to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989”

Working Together 2013

Consent

If you have tried to meet the child or young person's needs from within the full range of universal provision without progress/success you will now need to engage additional support from other services. In doing so you will need to decide whether the needs identified can be met by involving one other service or if multiple services may be required. If you have not already done so, discuss your concerns with the family (and young person as appropriate). You will need their consent to share information with another agency to access additional support.

If you decide the child or young person's need can be met from one other service and you have consent, you can refer to them directly. If you decide the child or young person's needs require support from more than one service and you have consent you will need to undertake an Early Help Assessment (CAF) with the family (or check if an Early Help Assessment (CAF) has already been initiated).



To check if an Early Help Assessment (CAF) has already been initiated contact Locality Early Help at earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk



Good Practice

If the family or young person will not consent to share information using an Early Help Assessment (CAF) or withdraws consent for early help, you will continue to support the needs of the child or young person and their family through ordinarily available provision and personalised services. This will provide future opportunities to engage them with additional support and also to continue monitoring for safeguarding concerns.

Early Help Assessment

The Early Help Assessment (CAF) is the assessment tool used to assess needs that are not being met through personalised or differentiated provision, where a child and family would benefit from coordinated support from more than one service.



For more help on how to assess need and complete the Early Help Assessment (CAF) contact the Locality Early Help at earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk



Good Practice

The Early Help Assessment (CAF) is a tool to engage with the child, young person and their family to effectively identifying needs, strengths and possible solutions working in partnership with both the family and other services. The Early Help Assessment (CAF) needs to be, proportionate to risk, and informed by research and by the historical context and significant events for each case. It is not a referral form!

Once you have assessed needs and strengths with the family, the Early Help Assessment (CAF) can be shared with the services that you think need to be involved to meet the needs of the child, young person and their family. By doing this the family do not have to repeat their story more than once and the services you have identified have a clear understanding of how their services can be of help.

Team Around The Family (TAF)

The Team Around the Family are the services you have invited to work together with the family to provide support. You will arrange a TAF meeting (within 6 weeks of completing the assessment) to establish a support plan and agree who is the best person to be the lead professional.



I don't know which services I need?

If you are not sure which service(s) to invite to the TAF meeting please visit

www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk for information about local services or contact Locality Early Help for advice at earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk

Lead Professional

A lead professional can be any adult who works with and supports a child, young person or their family. A lead professional can be from any agency or setting. The most important selection criteria is that they are best placed to coordinate provision to meet the child and family's needs, and have a good relationship with them.

Skills and qualities that practitioners in Croydon feel are important:

- strong communication and organisational skills
- availability
- access to resources (such as IT) and information
- impartiality
- ability to bring out the voice of the child
- committed to best outcomes
- confidence to challenge
- understanding of the Early Help Assessment (CAF) and review process.

The lead professional's role is to:

- develop a successful and productive relationship with the child, young person and their family;
- act as a single point of contact for the child, young person and their family;
- with consent, organise multi-disciplinary and multi-agency meetings and discussions;
- use the Early Help Assessment (CAF) to develop support plans based on the outcomes;
- co-ordinate the delivery of effective early intervention work and on-going support
- work in partnership with other professionals to deliver the support plan
- review and monitor the support plan and progress made regularly (every 12 weeks or termly for SEN support plans)

The lead professional is accountable to their own agency for their delivery of lead professional functions; they are not responsible for the actions of other professionals.

As the lead professional you will regularly review the support plan (at least every 12 weeks or termly for SEN support plans) and consider if changes need to be made or additional services required in partnership with the Team Around the Family. Where there is evidence that the support being provided is not achieving the desired outcomes within a reasonable timescale (using an appropriate tool to measure impact and progress) you will need to decide whether it is appropriate to do all or any of the following:

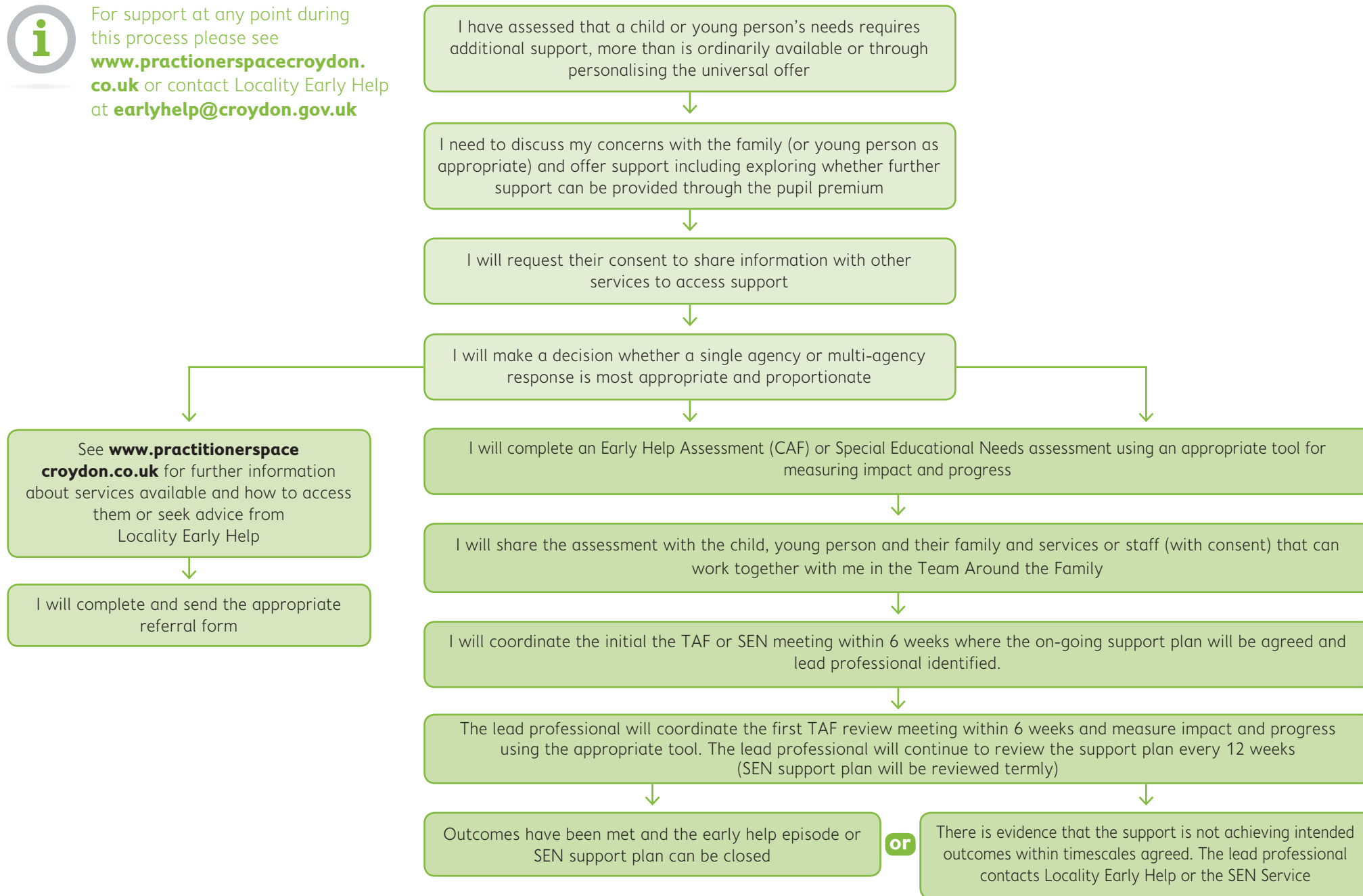
- amend the support plan
- engage additional/different services
- change the lead professional
- step up to Stage 3
- seek support from Locality Early Help

If you are not the lead professional but have concerns that need are not being met and risks to the child or young person are increasing, share your concerns with the lead professional, who will consider the situation and decide whether to convene an earlier TAF review meeting or escalate to a Stage 3 or 4.

Stage 2 Pathway



For support at any point during this process please see www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk or contact Locality Early Help at earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk



The background of the slide features several orange silhouettes of people. On the left, a man and a woman are shown in profile, looking towards the right. In the center, a man is kneeling on one knee, looking up at a woman who is standing and looking down at him. To the right of the kneeling man, a young boy is standing on roller skates. Further right, a woman is standing and holding a baby up in the air. On the far right, a young girl is standing and looking towards the center. The silhouettes are arranged in a way that suggests a family and a professional interacting with a child.

8. Stage Three

Targeted multi-agency early help and specialist support to meet complex need

'Stepping up' from Stage 2

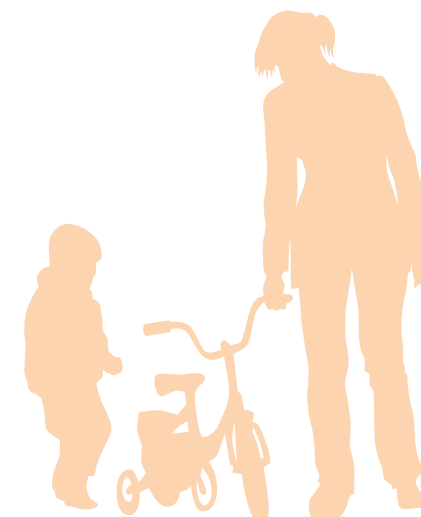
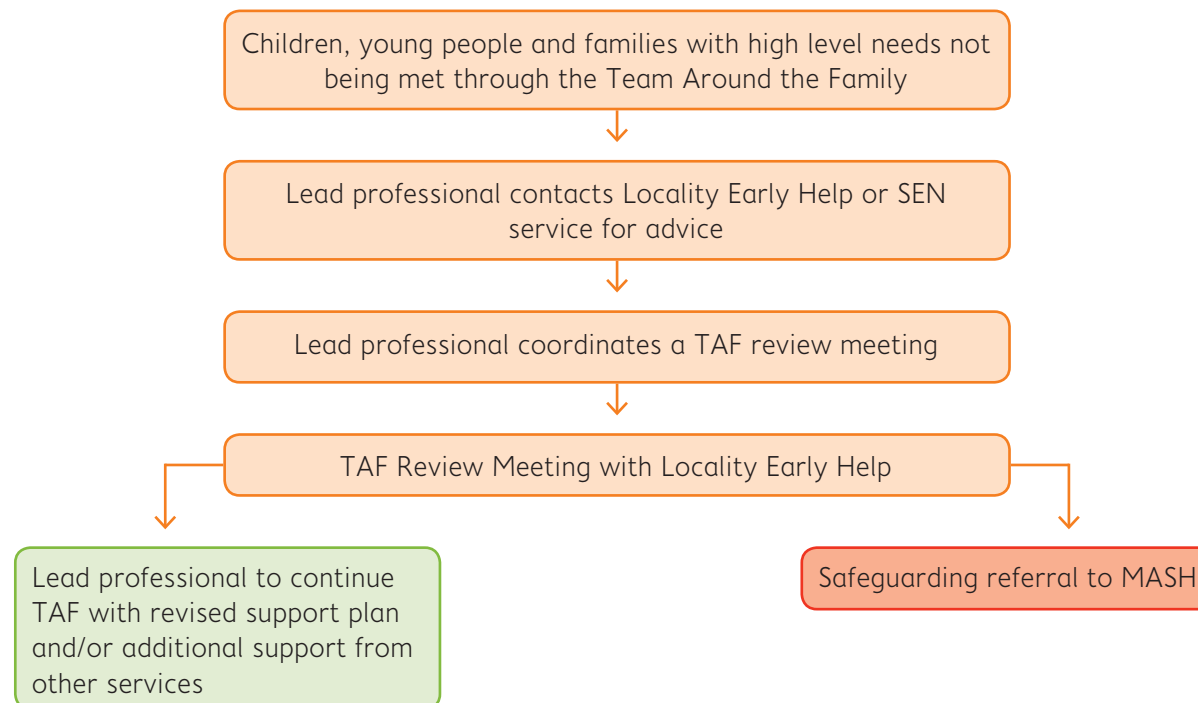
At Stage 3 the lead professional has assessed that a child or young person is not achieving outcomes with the support of the Team Around the Family or that their needs cannot be reasonably met through normally resourced local mainstream provision despite increased personalisation of service provision.

When you have concerns that the support provided by the Team Around the Family is not enabling progress contact Locality Early Help (or SEN Service as appropriate). Locality Early Help will work with the lead professional to identify the most appropriate and proportionate next steps. Locality Early Help will:

1. attend the review TAF meeting
2. review the current support plan with the Team Around the Family and make recommendations according to the needs of the family
3. make a decision with the lead professional and Team Around the Family as to the best course of action based on the needs of the child, young person and their family and support them to access appropriate services

In most cases it is expected that early help support will continue with the involvement of additional services. The lead professional may transfer to another service at this point.

Stage 3 Pathway



9. Stage Four

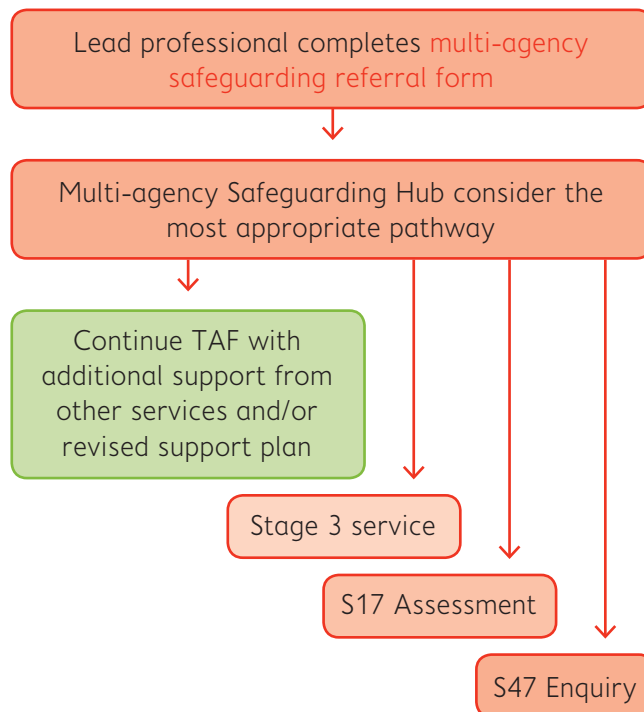


Provision for children,
young people and their
families with acute need

Child Protection/Safeguarding

At Stage 4 you have assessed that a child or young person is in need of **protection**. You will need to complete the **MASH safeguarding referral immediately**. You do not have to be the next TAF review meeting to make a safeguarding referral. You will submit the Early Help Assessment (CAF) and review documentation with the referral.

Stage 4 Pathway



MASH will consider the most appropriate pathway and inform you of the outcome following receipt of the MASH safeguarding referral and provide clear feedback.

At Stages 3 and 4 the Team Around the Family will continue to work with the family until the risk of harm has reduced such that the support can be ‘stepped down’.

Stepping Down from Stage 4

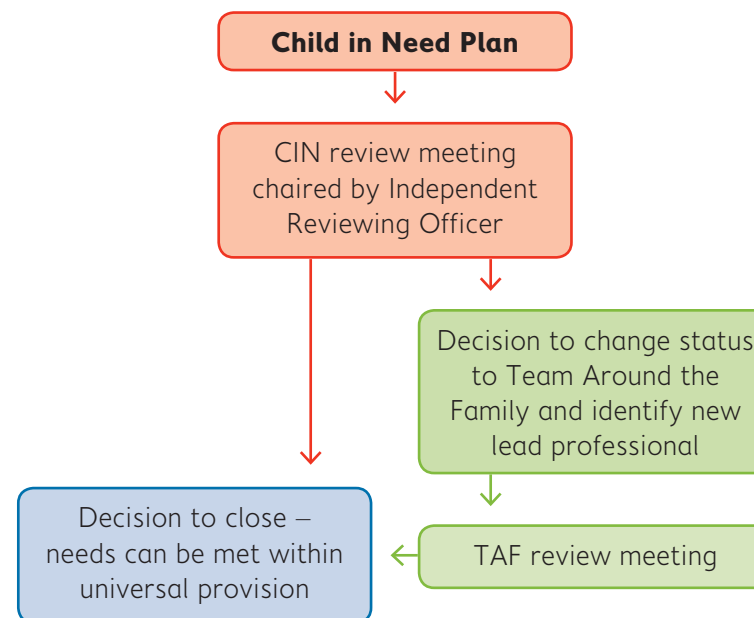
The objective at all stages of intervention should be to prevent escalation of need and bring about the required changes that enable children, young people and their families to build resilience such that their needs can be met within universal

provision. Therefore, wherever possible a successful intervention should result in transfer back to universal services – as opposed to a progressive transfer back through the stages. However it is acknowledged that in certain circumstances a gradual withdrawal of support is most appropriate.

The decision to step down will be agreed at the appropriate multi-agency meeting with the Team Around the Family. If it is agreed that there is a need for ongoing support at either Stage 2 or 3 a new lead professional will be identified at the meeting and a support plan agreed.

There are specific, separate processes for children with a Plan of Protection or who have become Looked After. These are described in Working Together 2013.

Stage 4 Stepping Down Pathway



	Stage 1 Universal	Stage 2 Vulnerable	
Level of Need	Early Help Children with no additional needs Children whose developmental needs are met by (personalising) universal services	Early Help These children have low level additional needs that are likely to be short-term and that maybe known but are not being met It is your professional judgement as to whether a single agency referral or coordinated multi-agency support is appropriate - if in doubt contact Locality Early Help for advice	
How do you assess need?	Your setting will have their own method for assessing need	Early Help Assessment (CAF) or Special Educational Needs assessment	
How do you access this stage of intervention?	At this level services are ‘open access’ or ‘universal’ meaning that they are generally available to all children and young people. Universal services are those such as schools, leisure centres, GP surgeries, youth centres, etc, and are accessible without either a referral or an assessment. Most universal services have websites containing their contact information – try searching online or www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk	1. obtain consent to information sharing 2. complete the appropriate referral form and submit as directed on the form 1. obtain consent to information sharing 2. complete an Early Help Assessment (CAF) or SEN assessment with appropriate consent 3. bring together a Team Around the Family (TAF) to identify a lead professional and agree a support plan with clear objectives, outcomes, timescales and understanding of who is responsible for doing what	
Who is responsible for providing support at this stage?	Universal services such as schools, leisure centres, GP surgeries, youth centres, etc	Universal services working with one other service	
Where do I get advice?	www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk	Locality Early Help at earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk	
		Locality Early Help at earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk	

Stage 3 Complex	Stage 4 Acute
<p>Early Help</p> <p>Children with high level complex needs likely to require longer term intervention from statutory and/or specialist services</p> <p>Child In Need: These children may be eligible for a child in need service from children's social care and are at risk of moving to a high level of risk if they do not receive early intervention</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Children with complex additional unmet needs and/or experiencing significant harm that require statutory intervention such as child protection or legal intervention. These children may need to be accommodated by the local authority either on a voluntary basis or by way of Court Order</p>
<p>Early Help Assessment (CAF) or the SEN Service will undertake an Education Health and Care Plan</p>	<p>Children's Social Care will undertake the assessment</p>
<p>The lead professional will contact the Locality Early Help at early help@croydon.gov.uk when there are concerns that the support provided by the Team around the Family is not enabling progress. Locality Early Help will work with the lead professional to identify the most appropriate and proportionate next steps</p>	<p>Contact MASH on 0208 726 6400 or in an emergency phone 999</p>
<p>Universal services working together with a range of services forming a Team Around the Family including Stage 3 services. The lead professional will be from the Stage 3 service</p>	<p>Universal services working together with a range of services forming a Team Around the Family. The lead professional role is likely to be a practitioner from one of the following services: Children's Social Care Youth Offending Service</p>
<p>Locality Early Help at earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk</p>	<p>MASH Consultation Line 020 8726 6464</p>

The background of the page features a series of light purple silhouettes of people in various poses, representing a family and children. On the right side, a man is lifting a baby, a woman is holding a child, and another child is standing nearby. In the center, a child is crawling. On the left, a child is sitting on the floor. The silhouettes are arranged in a way that suggests a family scene.

10. Learning and development

“There should be a culture of continuous **learning and improvement** across the organisations that work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, identifying opportunities to draw on what works and promote good practice”

Working Together 2013



There is a suite of training to support learning and development in early help and safeguarding practice.

The Early Intervention and Support Service (EISS) development framework aims to support professionals to be resilient practitioners whether they are in a key working role or are acting as the lead professional for a child, young person and their family. The framework encompasses a range of learning opportunities including e-learning, bite size sessions and taught days. The training is provided by practitioners from the service, by partner agencies and training organisations. Capacity building sessions can also be arranged for schools/

groups of schools to support those taking the lead professional role, this will be delivered by an Locality Early Help. The Early Intervention and Support Service framework is intended to compliment the offer provided by the School Improvement Service, Croydon Safeguarding Children Board (CSCB) and Public Health. There is a charge for some elements of training.



Please see **www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk** for further information and details of training currently available.



Please see the CSCB website for further information and details of training currently available.

11. Glossary



Child In Need

Under Section 17 (10) of the Children Act 1989, a child is a Child in Need if:

- he/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him/her of services by a local authority
- his/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him/her of such services; or
- he/she is disabled

Child Protection

Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Child Protection Conference

A Child Protection Conference is convened where children are considered to be at risk of Significant Harm.

Early Help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Effective early help relies upon local agencies working together to:

- identify children and families who would benefit from early help;
- undertake an assessment of the need for early help; and
- provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child. Local authorities, under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, have a responsibility to promote inter-agency cooperation to improve the welfare of children

Early Help Assessment (CAF)

An assessment tool that offers a basis for early identification of children and young people's additional needs, the sharing of this information between organisations and the coordination of service provision. Where it is considered a child or young person may have additional needs, with the consent of the child, young person and their parents/carers, practitioners undertake an Early Help Assessment (CAF).

The Early Help Assessment (CAF) should be used to engage with the child, young person and their family to effectively identify needs, strengths and possible solutions working in partnership with both the family and other services. The assessment should identify what help the child and family require and decide how best to support them, preventing needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.

The Early Help Assessment (CAF) needs to be, proportionate to risk, and informed by research and by the historical context and significant events for each case.

Education Health and Care Plan (EHC)

From September 2014, Government reforms mean that everyone aged 0 to 25 with SEN (who has been through the statutory assessment process) could have a single plan setting out all the support they will receive from education, health and social care and who is responsible for each part of the plan. This EHC Plan will replace the statement of Special Educational Needs.

Lead Professional

Where children receive multiple services, requiring support from more than one professional or practitioner, a lead professional should be identified.

The lead professional acts as a single point of contact that the child or young person and their family can trust, and who is able to support them in making choices and in navigating pathways to support.

The lead professional should co-ordinate services from differing agencies, ensuring children receive appropriate interventions when needed, which are well planned, regularly reviewed and effectively delivered.

A lead professional can be any adult who works with and supports a child, young person or their family. A lead professional can be from any agency or setting. The most important selection criteria is that they are best placed to coordinate provision to meet the child and family's needs, and have a good relationship with them.

In relation to Child Protection Plans, the lead professional is the Lead Social Worker.

Protective Factors

The positive factors in a child or young person's life. These could include strong family ties; appropriate and supported accommodation; good attendance at school/college/work; positive peer relationships.

Section 17

Under Section 17(1) of the Children Act 1989, local authorities have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are In Need; and so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

For this reason, the term 'Section 17' is often used as a shorthand way of describing the statutory authority for providing services to Children in Need who are not Looked After.

Section 47 Enquiry

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, a Section 47 Enquiry and Core Assessment are initiated.

This normally occurs after an Initial Assessment and a Strategy Discussion.

Section 47 Enquiries are usually conducted by a social worker, jointly with the Police, and must be completed within 15 days of a Strategy Discussion.

Where concerns are substantiated and the child is judged to be at continued risk of Significant Harm, a Child Protection Conference should be convened.

SENCo

Special Educational Needs Coordinator who has responsibility for co-ordinating provision for children with SEN.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

According to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2014) 'A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

xii. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions'

Where a SEN is identified, early years providers, schools and colleges will put additional and different evidence-based interventions in place. These should be provided as part of a graduated approach, which includes regular review of the progress made and adaptations to the support provided as required.

Special Educational Needs Support Plan

The new code of practice refers to an SEN support plan which documents the nature and level of provision for pupils identified with SEN in place and its impact. Schools can determine their own approach to record keeping but will be expected to show evidence of this support overtime. The plan should be reviewed on a regular basis and include the views of the pupil and parents. Plans for the use of support should relate to a clear set of expected outcomes, which will support pupils to achieve their potential and make a successful transition to adulthood. Progress towards these outcomes should be tracked and reviewed regularly, at least termly.

Stepping Down

Gradually decreasing support in accordance with need. Wherever possible additional support should aim to ‘step down’ to universal provision following a review of current provision – as opposed to a progressive transfer back through the stages.

Stepping Up

Gradually increasing support to meet needs. Support should be proportionate to need and incrementally ‘stepped up’ and based on needs identified through an appropriate assessment.

Support Plan

The support plan can be any multi-agency plan that is developed in response to need identified following an assessment. This may be the Early Help Assessment (CAF) or SEN assessment. The support plan sets out who will do what and when, and review dates. Plans must be outcome focussed and be reviewed every 12 weeks or termly for SEN support plans.

Team Around the Family (TAF)

Team Around the Family is a model of service provision in which a range of different practitioners come together to help and support an individual child and their family. Parents, carers, children and young people are involved in discussions and decisions about every aspect of their additional needs, planning outcomes and making provision to meet those outcomes. Practitioners must take steps to ensure that parents and young people are actively supported in contributing to assessments, planning and reviewing the support offered.

The model does not imply a multi-disciplinary team that is located together or who work together all the time; rather, it suggests a group of professionals working together only when needed to help one particular child. In this sense, the team can be described as a ‘virtual’ team; in practice, practitioners will find themselves working with a range of different colleagues at different times to support different children.

The model is based on the ethos that such flexibility is essential if services for children are to be able to meet the diverse needs of each and every child. Team Around the Family places the emphasis firmly on the needs of the child or young person and their family rather than on organisations or service providers.

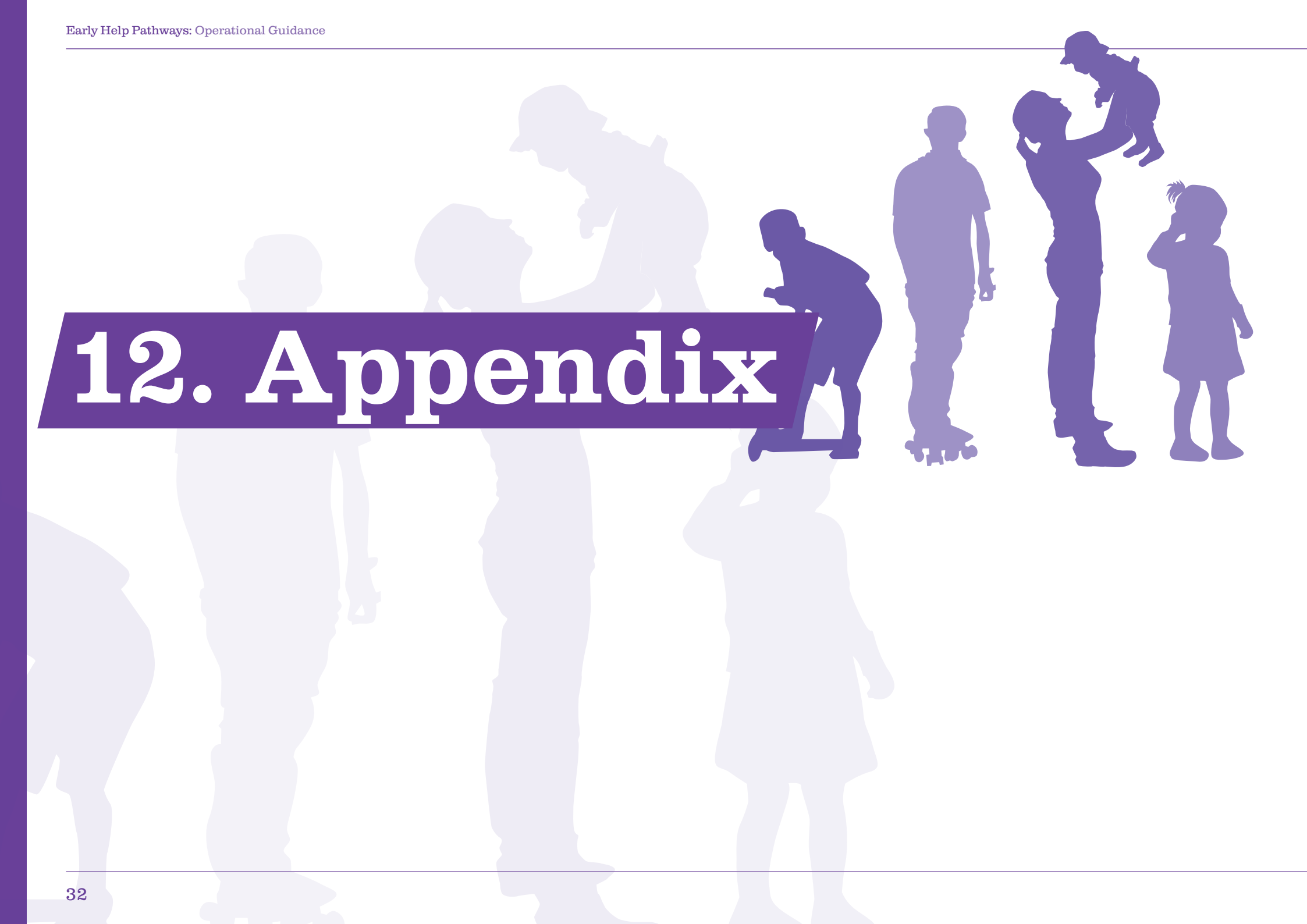
Threshold criteria

The term Threshold Criteria is used in relation to Care Proceedings brought by the local authority under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 if there is concern that the child concerned is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm attributable to the care being given to the child, or likely to be given if an Order were not made, not being what it would be reasonable to expect a parent to give, or the child being beyond parental control

Vulnerability

The risk that a young person might be harmed in some way, either through their own behaviour or because of the actions or omissions of others.

12. Appendix



Croydon Thresholds Document

Croydon Children and Families Partnership and Croydon Safeguarding Board have adopted the London Continuum of Need model which establishes a consistent approach for the Four Levels of Need (with a set of risk and resilience triggers) that corresponds to the appropriate Stage of Intervention:

Level 1 Children and young people are making overall good progress in all areas of their development. They are likely to have a protective environment where their needs are recognised and well met. These children require **no additional support beyond that which is universally available**.

Level 2a Children and young people **needing some additional support from a specific service without which they would be at risk of not meeting their full potential**. The support they need may relate to their health, educational, or social development. If ignored these issues may develop into more worrying concerns under level 2b or 3.

Level 2b Children and young people and their families have a range of needs. Multi-agency support is required to promote social inclusion, to reduce levels of vulnerability and/or to minimise risk-taking behaviours. If needs are not met then children's health, social development, or educational attainment may be significantly impaired. An Early Help Assessment (CAF) is required and the lead professional will coordinate services through a Team Around the Family (TAF).

Level 3 Children with complex needs that may be chronic and enduring and this may include children in need of safeguarding. These children will be those who are highly vulnerable or living in the greatest level of adversity. Only a small proportion of children will fall within this band (which includes children with a disability). The child or young person requires specialist assessment and support from services such as social care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Youth Offending Service and Educational Inclusion Support (including SEN).

Level 4 Children and young people with acute needs. This is the most urgent category which always requires an immediate referral to children's social care and/or intensive specialist services. There will be serious concerns about the health, care or development of a child. It may include serious family dysfunction, a child beyond control or a child who has been severely rejected including abandonment. Statutory intervention (child protection) will be required. This level also includes children with severe disabilities, looked after and fostered children and children who have been/are already on a Child Protection Plan.



LONDON CONTINUUM CHARTS

Level 1

No additional needs, only requiring universal service support

Features	Universal Example Indicators	Assessment Process
<p>Children with no additional needs</p> <p>Children whose developmental needs are met by universal services.</p>	Developmental Needs	<p>No Early Help Assessment (CAF) is required.</p> <p>Children should access universal services in a normal way.</p> <p>Key universal services that may provide support at this level:</p> <p>Education Children's Centres & Early Years Health visiting service School nursing GP Play Services Integrated Youth Support Services Police Housing Voluntary & community sector</p>
	<p>Learning / Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieving key stages • good attendance at school/college/training • no barriers to learning • planned progression beyond statutory school age 	
	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good physical health with age appropriate developmental milestones including speech and language 	
	<p>Social, Emotional, Behavioural, Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good mental health and psychological well-being • good quality early attachments, confident in social situations • knowledgeable about the effects of crime and antisocial behaviour • knowledgeable about sex and relationships and consistent use of contraception if sexually active 	
	<p>Family and Social Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stable families where parents are able to meet the child's needs 	
	<p>Self-Care and Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age appropriate independent living skills 	
	Family & Environmental Factors	
	<p>Family History & Well-Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supportive family relationships 	
	<p>Housing, Employment & Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child fully supported financially • good quality stable housing 	
	<p>Social & Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good social and friendship networks exist • safe and secure environment • access to consistent and positive activities 	
	Parents & Carers	
	<p>Basic Care, Safety & Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents able to provide care for child's needs 	
	<p>Emotional Warmth & Stability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents provide secure and caring parenting 	
<p>Guidance Boundaries & Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents provide appropriate guidance and boundaries to help child develop appropriate values 		

LONDON CONTINUUM CHARTS

LEVEL 2 - Low to Vulnerable

Targeted support

Features	Low to Vulnerable - EXAMPLE INDICATORS	Assessment Process
<p>2a Vulnerable These children have low level additional needs that are likely to be short-term and that maybe known but are not being met.</p> <p>2b Vulnerable Child's needs are not clear, not known or not being met</p> <p>Child with additional needs – requiring multi-agency intervention Lead professional and Team Around the Family</p>	Developmental Needs	<p>An Early Help Assessment (CAF) should be completed with the child to identify their strengths & needs and to gain support</p> <p>Programmes aiming to build self-esteem and enhance social/life skills</p> <p>Prevention Programmes Positive activities</p> <p>Key agencies that may provide support at this level:</p> <p>Universal and targeted Youth crime prevention services Targeted drug and alcohol information, advice and education, including harm reduction advice to support informed choices Health, education Childrens Centres & Early Years Educational Psychology Educational Welfare Specialist Play Services Integrated Youth Support Services Voluntary & community services Family support services</p>
	<p>Learning /Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • occasional truanting or non attendance • school action or school action plus • identifies language and communication difficulties • reduced access to books, toys or educational materials • few or no qualifications • NEET 	
	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slow in reaching developmental milestones, • missing immunizations or checks • minor health problems which can be maintained in a mainstream school 	
	<p>Social, Emotional, Behavioural, Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low level mental health or emotional issues requiring intervention • pro offending behaviour and attitudes • early onset of offending behaviour or activity (10-14) • coming to notice of police through low level offending • expressing wish to become pregnant at young age • early onset of sexual activity (13-14) • sexual active (15+) with inconsistent use of contraception • low level substance misuse (current or historical) • poor self esteem 	
	<p>Self-Care and Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of age appropriate behaviour and independent living skills that increase vulnerability to social exclusion 	
	Family & Environmental Factors	
	<p>Family and Social Relationships & Family Well-Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents/carers have relationship difficulties which may affect the child • parents request advice to manage their child's behaviour • children affected by difficult family relationships or bullying 	
	<p>Housing, Employment & Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overcrowding • families affected by low income or unemployment 	
	<p>Social & Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • insufficient facilities to meet needs e.g. transport or access issues • family require advice regarding social exclusion e.g. hate crimes • associating with anti social or criminally active peers • limited access to contraceptive and sexual health advice, information and services 	
	Parents & Carers	
<p>Basic Care, Safety & Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inconsistent care e.g. inappropriate child care arrangements or young inexperienced parent 		
<p>Emotional Warmth & Stability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inconsistent parenting, but development not significantly impaired 		
<p>Guidance Boundaries & Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of response to concerns raised regarding child 		

LONDON CONTINUUM CHARTS

Level 3

High or Complex level additional needs requiring integrated targeted support OR child in need (section 17)

Features	Medium Risk - EXAMPLE INDICATORS	Assessment Process
<p>Children with high level complex needs likely to require longer term intervention from statutory and/or specialist services</p> <p>Child in need: These children may be eligible for a child in need service from children’s social care and are at risk of moving to a high level of risk if they do not receive early intervention.</p> <p>These may include children who have been assessed as ‘high risk’ in the recent past, or children who have been adopted and now require additional support. If a social worker is allocated they will act as the lead professional.</p>	Developmental Needs	<p>An Early Help Assessment (CAF) can be used as supporting evidence to gain specialist / targeted support.</p> <p>The Early Help Assessment (CAF) may also be completed to support child moving out of complex needs</p> <p>Statutory or specialist services assessment (NB The Early Help Assessment (CAF) must NOT replace a specialist assessment).</p> <p>Key agencies that may provide support at this level:</p> <p>LA children’s social care Other statutory service e.g. SEN services. Specialist health or disability services. YISP Youth Offending Team. Targeted drug and alcohol CAMHS Family support services Voluntary & community services Services at universal level</p>
	<p>Learning/Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> short term exclusions or at risk of permanent exclusion, persistent truanting statement of special educational needs no access to books, toys or educational materials 	
	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> disability requiring specialist support to be maintained in mainstream setting physical and emotional development raising significant concerns chronic/recurring health problems missed appointments- routine and non-routine 	
	<p>Social, Emotional, Behavioural, Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> under 16 and has had (or caused) a previous pregnancy ending in still birth, abortion or miscarriage 16+ and has had (or caused) 2 or more previous pregnancies or is a teenage parent under 18 and pregnant coming to notice of police on a regular basis but not progressed received fixed penalty notice, reprimand, final warning or triage of diversionary intervention evidence of regular/frequent drug use which may be combined with other risk factors evidence of escalation of substance use evidence of changing attitudes and more disregard to risk mental health issues requiring specialist intervention in the community significant low self esteem victim of crime including discrimination 	
	<p>Self-Care and Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of age appropriate behaviour and independent living skills, likely to impair development 	
	Family & Environmental Factors	
	<p>Family and Social Relationships & Family Well-Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> history of domestic violence risk of relationship breakdown with parent or carer and the child young carers , Privately fostered, children of prisoners, periods of LAC child appears to have undifferentiated attachments 	
	<p>Housing, Employment & Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> severe overcrowding, temporary accommodation, homeless, unemployment 	
	<p>Social & Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> family require support services as a result of social exclusion parents socially excluded, no access to local facilities 	
	Parents & Carers	
	<p>Basic Care, Safety & Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> physical care or supervision of child is inadequate parental learning disability, parental substance misuse or mental health impacting on parent’s ability to meet the needs of the child parental non compliance 	
	<p>Emotional Warmth & Stability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inconsistent parenting impairing emotional or behavioural development 	
<p>Guidance Boundaries & Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> parent provides inconsistent boundaries or responses 		

LONDON CONTINUUM CHARTS

LEVEL 4

Complex/Acute additional needs requiring specialist or statutory integrated response OR child protection (section 47)

Features	High Risk - EXAMPLE INDICATORS	Assessment Process
<p>Children with complex additional unmet needs and/or experiencing significant harm that require statutory intervention such as child protection or legal intervention. These children may need to be accommodated by the local authority either on a voluntary basis or by way of Court Order</p> <p>Agencies should make a verbal referral to children's social care accompanied by a written referral.</p>	Developmental Needs	Additional services:
	<p>Learning / Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chronic non-attendance, truanting provision • permanently excluded, frequent exclusions or no education • no parental support for education 	<p>The Early Help Assessment (CAF) can be used as supporting evidence to gain specialist / targeted support.</p>
	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high level disability which cannot be maintained in a mainstream setting • serious physical and emotional health problems 	
	<p>Social, Emotional, Behavioural, Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • challenging behaviour resulting in serious risk to the child and others • frequently go missing from home for long periods • failure or rejection to address serious (re) offending behaviour • distorted self image • likely to be in Deter cohort of youth offending management • young people experiencing current harm through their use of substances. • known to be part of gang or post code derived collective • young people with complicated substance problems requiring specific interventions and/or child protection. • complex mental health issues requiring specialist interventions • young people with complex needs whose issues are exacerbated by substance use • in sexually exploitative relationship • teenage parent under 16 • under 13 engaged in sexual activity 	<p>Statutory or specialist services assessment (NB The Early Help Assessment (CAF) must NOT replace a specialist assessment).</p> <p>Key agencies that may provide support at this level:</p>
	<p>Self-Care and Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • severe lack of age appropriate behaviour and independent living skills likely to result in significant harm e.g. bullying, isolation 	
	Family & Environmental Factors	<p>LA children's social care</p> <p>Specialist health or disability services.</p> <p>Youth Offending Team.</p> <p>CAMHS</p> <p>Family support services</p> <p>Voluntary & community services</p> <p>Services at universal level</p> <p>comprehensive assessment and formulation of substance specific care plan</p>
	<p>Family and Social Relationships & Family Well-Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suspicion of physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect • parents are unable to care for the child • high levels of domestic violence that put the child at risk • children who need to be looked after outside of their own family 	
	<p>Housing, Employment & Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no fixed abode or homeless • family unable to gain employment or extreme poverty 	
	<p>Social & Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child or family need immediate support and protection due to harassment/discrimination and No access to community resources 	
	Parents & Carers	
<p>Basic Care, Safety & Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent is unable to meet child's needs without support 		
<p>Emotional Warmth & Stability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents unable to manage and risk of family breakdown 		
<p>Guidance Boundaries & Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent does not offer good role model e.g. condones antisocial behaviour 		

Acknowledgements

Inclusion, Learning Access and SEN

Linda Wright
David Butler
Deborah Johnson
Anne Moore
Anna Mansaray
Judith Lunnon
Rita Ali
Deborah Degnan

Early Intervention and Support

Dwynwen Stepien
Sarah Bright
Debby MacCormack
Chris Leigh
Laura McRoberts
Shelley Ingram
Christine Evelyn
Lucy Payton

Children In Need

Sukriti Sen
Aneesa Kaprie
Gareth Flemyng

Health Services

Sally Innis
Tina Hickson
Kevan Laybourn
Lynne Reay
Matt Beavis
Lynda Bartlett
Marie Davis
Melanie Baxendale
Linda Galvin

Schools

Linda O'Sullivan
Alison McHugh
Ginny Marshall
Lisa Shearsby
Carly Rushworth
Sue Loughlin
Linda O'Callaghan
Amber Allen
Carla Bowman-Vaughan
Elaine Duncan
Angela Barakeh
Jan Gallagher
Donna Johnson
Johanna Barter
Katheryn Hewitt
Lin Harris
Sue Brackenbury
Vicky Prigg
Jane Percy
Justine Wellington
Sarah Nickalls
Tracey Gordon
Virginia Marshall
Vivienne O'Byrne
Yvonne O'Brien





Excellent outcomes for children & young people

The Children & Families Partnership is operated by Croydon Council in partnership with agencies including CAYSH, Metropolitan Police and Victim Support.

