



2023 - 2025

Wakefield's Early Help Strategy



Foreword

"I am delighted to introduce the refreshed Early Help Strategy 2023 – 2025 for Wakefield which sets out our vision and how we will ensure that our services support children, young people and their families at the right time and in the right place.

Most families in Wakefield are resilient but there are times when families face some difficult and challenging situations, it is at these times when our staff and partners in Family Hubs can help. The Early Help Strategy is about recognising that families might need some help and support from a number of organisations that are available to help families cope with the day-to-day pressures they face.

We would like to encourage our children, young people and families to have conversations when things are not going well, our staff and partners will help families to find their own solutions. By working with our families, we can work together to improve family life before things become more difficult.

Early Help is best thought of as an approach rather than as a service. It's something that we all collectively own and that we all will deliver together - it's not just delivered by Wakefield Council. A lot of organisations are already engaged in Early Help, whether they decide to call it that or not. This Strategy shows a lot of the really good work that is going on already across the district, we want to continue to strengthen and build on this work.

We want all our children and young people to be happy, healthy and safe, and by ensuring that we have fully inclusive, easy to find, accessible services which support the whole family we can help everyone to achieve their full potential."



Cllr Margaret Isherwood,
Portfolio Holder, Children
and Young People

Raising a family can have its difficulties and challenges, but just know that when you need support, there are people and places on hand who can talk to you to find the help you need.



Introduction

Early Help and Prevention

Early Help & Prevention in Wakefield is for everyone, but we also recognise that some children, young people and families may face greater challenges than others and we want to make sure more of our support is aimed at preventing problems from happening or from getting worse.

By working together with families and all our partners, we can ensure that support is friendly and non-judgemental and is available at the right time, in the right place and provides the right help at the earliest opportunity.

Early Help Services form part of our Continuum of Need, which guides the support children, young people and their families receive. Some families may have a combination of needs requiring different types of involvement from a range of services at the right time.

The national definition of Early Help:

“An approach for total support that improves a family’s resilience and outcomes or reduces the chances of a problem getting worse, offering community support, universal services and acute and targeted services which are combined in different ways depending on the local area”.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2020

Early Help Video

“Early Help is getting the right support at the right time, with the right people”

Emily Castle, CEO, Young Lives Consortium

The Wakefield Families Together Vision

Wakefield Families Together is a joint vision for Wakefield, one where children and young people tell us they are happy, healthy, and safe, and are thriving in their communities and where families and services work together to help them achieve their potential and dreams.

Wakefield Families Together is used as an 'umbrella' term to describe everyone working together to deliver Early Help services across the district. All partners are committed to the vision and are ambitious in how it is shaped, designed, developed and delivered. This builds the strong partnership approach to how we work with children, young people and families.

This strategy has been developed by the [Wakefield Families Together Partnership](#), engaging with children, families, partners and staff through workshops, consultation and feedback and builds on the values and principles of our vision for Early Help.

Our vision also directly links to [Wakefield's Children and Young People Plan 2022-25](#) which was co-produced by our children and young people and sets out how we will support the things that matter to them. These priorities are: identity, safety, their future, their health and education.



Good attendance, behaviour and engagement with education



Good Early Years Development



Children safe from abuse and exploitation



Families diverted from crime



Safe from domestic abuse



Secure housing



Good mental and physical health



Better managed substance misuse



Financial stability



Good family relationships

We will do this by...

Communicating well with each other and keeping everyone informed

Using joint tools and approaches for assessments

Having one lead worker, one plan

Jointly responding and evidencing that local need is being met by sharing data and information

Using restorative strength-based approaches

Helping families to help themselves through joined up delivery

Doing the basics right

Growing and developing community capacity

Principles of Early Help

We will challenge each other and other organisations and services to make sure we are living up to these principles.

1. Achieving positive outcomes for children and young people is at the heart of everything we do. We will put their needs first and work to ensure they are getting the opportunities they deserve.

2. We focus on prevention to stop problems before they happen or from getting worse. We identify needs early but also recognise that it's never too late for early help to make a difference.

3. We work with children, young people and families to recognise and build on their strengths. We will help families to develop their skills to solve problems and overcome challenges for themselves.

4. We take a trauma informed approach. We look to understand underlying concerns and causes and ensure any support is targeted to meet immediate problems.

5. We ensure children, young people and families receive the right help, at the right time in the right place. Our support should be easy to access, meet the needs of families supported by friendly staff who alongside you ensure you get the help you need.

6. We take a whole family approach and work across service and partners to build a team around the family, sharing information openly in a timely way so that families only have to tell their story once.

7. We listen to children, young people and families and act on their views and feedback. We will act as their advocates to ensure their voices and interests are being heard and understood.

8. We build on the capacity of local communities and local partnerships to help identify the needs of different local areas in Wakefield and ensure solutions are developed in partnership.



Wakefield in Context

Data taken from State of District Report January 2022 & Department for Education attainment figures 2022.

For more information about the Wakefield District please visit Wakefield [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

Population



Wakefield Population -

351,592

0-17yrs population

75,000

District overview



21%

of children in Wakefield under 16 years old live in low-income families (increase of 34% over last 5yrs) above national average of 19%

Wakefield is

54th

most deprived district in England (from 317 districts)

24%

of school age children in Wakefield are eligible for Free School Meals

32%

of children in the Wakefield district are living in poverty (estimates 2020/21)



Education



In 2022 **58%**

of children at the end of Key Stage 2 achieved expected standards in reading, writing and maths this is 1% below the national average.

66% of children in schools in Wakefield achieve a Good Level of Development by the end of reception (2022) this is 1% above national average

92.3%

of 16-17yr olds are engaged in education, employment or training

Health



People living in the most well-off areas of the district on average live

8 years

longer than those living in the poorest areas.

Less than half

of Wakefield's new-born babies are breast fed

In Wakefield childhood obesity is **rising faster** than elsewhere in the country in all age groups.

Where to find the right help and support

Wakefield Families Together helps to ensure that support and services meet the needs of local communities in six cluster areas of the district. Within each cluster there are a number of Family and Youth Hubs, Community Centres and Voluntary and Community sector organisations and wider partners, working together to offer a range of services and support to families.

ED Emergency Department

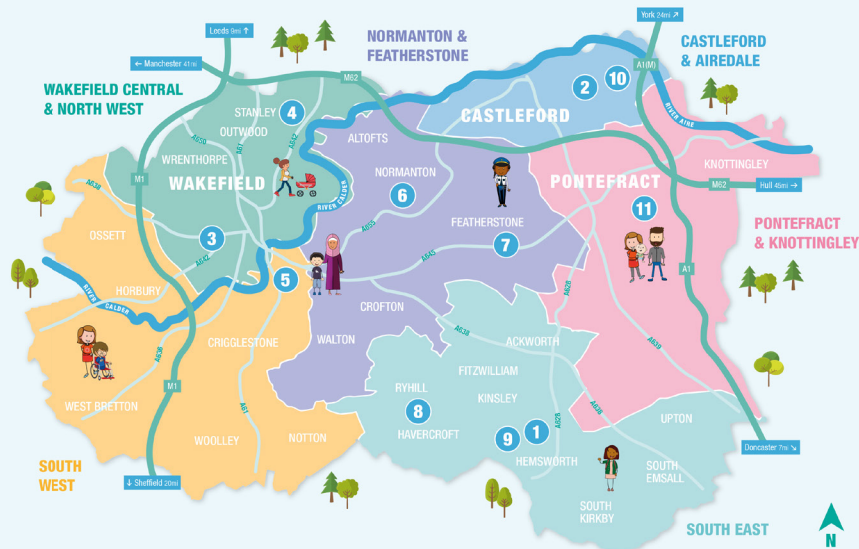
EIP Teams Early Intervention and Prevention Teams

CAMHS Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services

GPs General Practitioners



Family Hub and Youth Hub locations across Wakefield



- 1 **Platform One Youth Hub**
Wakefield Road, Hensworth, WF9 4AB
Early Intervention and Prevention Platform One Youth Hub Team.
f @WFYouthOfficial
- 2 **The Hut Youth Hub**
Karlshaw Avenue, Castleford, WF10 3ES
Early Intervention and Prevention The Hut Youth Hub Team.
f @TheHutAiredaleWMD
- 3 **Sunbeam Family Hub**
Lupset Crescent, Wakefield, WF2 8RH
Early Intervention and Prevention Sunbeam Family Hub Team.
f @SunbeamFamilyHub
- 4 **Stanley Family Hub**
Long Causeway, Stanley, Wakefield, WF3 4JB
Early Intervention and Prevention Stanley Family Hub Team.
f @StanleyFamilyHub
- 5 **The Castle Family Hub**
255 Barnsley Road, Wakefield, WF1 5NJ
Early Intervention and Prevention The Castle Family Hub Team.
f @CastleFamilyHub
- 6 **Butterflies Family Hub**
Wakefield Road, Normanton, WF6 1BB
Early Intervention and Prevention Butterflies Family Hub Team.
f @ButterfliesFamilyHub
- 7 **Oakhill Family Hub**
Hardwick Road, Featherstone, WF7 5JB
Early Intervention and Prevention Oakhill Family Hub Team.
f @OakhillFamilyHub
- 8 **Havercroft Family Hub**
Cow Lane, Wakefield, WF4 2BE
Early Intervention and Prevention Havercroft Family Hub Team.
f @HavercroftFamilyHub
- 9 **Cedars Family Hub**
Barnsley Road, Hensworth, Wakefield WF9 4PU
Early Intervention and Prevention Cedars Family Hub Team.
f @CedarsFamilyHub
- 10 **Kendal Drive Family Hub**
Kendal Drive, Castleford, WF10 3SP
Early Intervention and Prevention Kendal Drive Family Hub Team.
f @KendalDriveFamilyHub
- 11 **Pomfret Family Hub**
Rookhill Road, Pontefract, WF8 2DD
Early Intervention and Prevention Pomfret Family Hub Team.
f @PomfretFamilyHub

Early Help services can help you to...

Be happy

Families have a sense of purpose and belonging and have positive relationships with each other and those who support them. Parenting support services promote those positive relationships. Where a family's needs are identified, they are helped to access the right services for them.

Be healthy

Families are supported to adopt healthy lifestyles and access health services to improve their physical and mental health. Identifying and tackling health inequalities with partner agencies will ensure appropriate support is in place.

Be safe

The whole family is supported so that children stay safe from any harm and are in safe housing. Strong partnership and joined up working ensure understanding of the whole family's needs and provides a safe and responsive service.

Be hopeful for the future

Working in partnership with all education settings and employment support agencies, all children and young people are supported so they can regularly attend their education setting. Adults and young people supported and encouraged in their career ambitions. Families are supported to work and positively contribute to society.

Be independent and resilient

Families know where to go to ask for help and support and for information and advice to help them build confidence, skills and resilience to find their own solutions in dealing with life's challenges. Support is available to ensure they are financially stable can manage their money and are aware of services to help with housing and employment.

Help with Parenting

We know that parenting is a magical and rewarding experience which can also, at times, be challenging. Early Help across the Wakefield district will provide a range of universal and targeted parenting support including evidence-based programmes focusing on 'reducing parental conflict'. Parenting support helps parents and carers develop skills and techniques to promote the healthy development of babies and children.

This will include:

Making parenting support easy to access and available in Family Hubs, through local communities and online.

Publicising our range of support on our website and in schools, nurseries and across social media.

Ensuring those taking part in parenting support programmes feel safe and supported to share their experiences and learn with other families.

Working alongside parents and carers to shape the way services are delivered.

Delivering programmes and interventions that help parents and carers prepare for the arrival of their baby and support families to give children the best start in life.

Encouraging fathers and male care providers to take part in more programmes.

Providing evidence-based parent support for older children and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Helping parents and carers build the skills and strategies to support their children in preparing for school.

The offer of support and services starts with a strong Start for Life offer for parents during pregnancy and the first five years. It continues throughout a child's life and their transition into adulthood.

| | |
|--|--|
| Pre-birth to 2 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on the critical first 1001 days in ensuring all babies and children get the best Start for Life including breastfeeding and perinatal mental health support • Support to new parents through Maternity Services and Health Visiting with regular touch points during pregnancy and the first 2 years • Family Nurse Partnership, targeted home visiting programme for first-time young mums and families • Parenting support can be accessible through Stay and Play Groups and further support offered through more structured, evidence-based parenting programmes • Family Hubs provide a point of contact with any required Early Help support • Targeted Early Help to new parents who are identified as needing additional support (Early Intervention and Prevention support) • Early identification of any educational or health development needs may also lead to additional support at this age • Portage home-visiting educational service for pre-school children with additional support needs and their families • Library services including free library membership, books for children and adults, Storytimes, Bookstart, registration to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library • Leisure services utilise 50 things to do before you're five as a universal offer to support home learning • Leisure and parks services including story trails, toddler-parent swim, stay and play |
| 2 to 5 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with Early Help offer for most families will be through Family Hubs or Childcare providers • Services will continue to be available to all families through ongoing contact with health services • Focus of much of the support available with Family Hubs and Early Years providers is Early Years development and speech and language development with aim of increasing children's readiness for primary school • Continued parenting support available through Family Hubs groups and interventions • Support can be co-ordinated with other agencies and services by taking the 'Team Around the Early Years' approach • Library services including free library membership, books for children and adults, Storytimes, Bookstart and Imagination Library • Leisure services utilise 50 things to do before you're five as a universal offer to support home learning • Leisure and parks services including story trails, toddler-parent swim, stay and play |
| 5 to 11 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary schools become the primary point of contact for most children and families and the first point of support • Focus of much support on reading and literacy and good attendance and engagement in education • Targeted additional support provided by Schools/Early Intervention & Prevention Workers and/or School Nurses around health needs • Working jointly with schools and other agencies and services to provide a co-ordinated package of support by taking the 'Team Around the School' approach • Social, Emotional and Mental Health and behaviour support will be available as children move through primary school • Focus of support will move to children's readiness for Secondary school. Services available to families where other risks are identified at older ages, including Parenting Support • Support through health services such as GPs and School Nurses continues for all children • Library services including free library membership, books for children and adults, Code Clubs, Lego Clubs, board games and craft activities • Leisure services including Kids Clubs, Mini Champs, swimming lessons |
| 11 years+ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Help support starts to shift more towards the young person as they take greater responsibility for their own lives • Support will continue to have a family focus as parents/families are critical to this age and may be dealing with younger siblings as well • Available services where identified support required around adolescents at risk, healthy behaviours and support with Parenting • Mental health and wellbeing support and identifying those who may be at risk of not engaging in employment or training or moving to post-16 education • Library services including free library membership, books for children, young people and adults, chess and board games, family craft activities • Leisure services including Junior Gym, swimming lessons |
| Up to 18 years (25 years if there is a SEND need) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people are now likely to be receiving support themselves and parent/family may not be involved • Focus of any support will be dependent on problems facing the young person - Support available through Youth Hubs/Community based Youth Services/detached Youth Work • Support for young people in Post-16 education, training or employment choices and preparations for adulthood and independent living • Library services |

Measuring the outcomes and impact of Early Help

As well as what families tell us about the services they receive, we also have a shared outcomes framework which helps to tell us about what works and the impact that services are having and this pulls together a number of national programmes including [Supporting Families](#), [Family Hubs](#) and [Start for Life](#) and the local priorities identified in the Wakefield Children and Young People's Plan.

Our shared outcomes

We want children and families to;

- Be happy
- Be healthy
- Be safe
- Be hopeful for the future
- Be independent and resilient

How will we know we're making a difference? Families will tell us:

- ✓ They can get help easily, know what is happening and are involved in decision making
- ✓ Children talk about (we observe) what is different at home, that they feel heard and their wishes and feelings are acted on to make things better at home
- ✓ We worked together on family plans that they and their support network understand and can carry out with the right intervention

Data will tell us there is:

- ✓ Increased appropriate referrals dealt with at the earliest point by the right service/agency
- ✓ Decreased statutory intervention and re-referrals
- ✓ Increased number of children and particularly teenagers able to stay with their families and thrive
- ✓ Reduced school fixed term and permanent exclusions
- ✓ Improved school attendance

Using a framework that is the same across all early help services will make sure that everyone works in a consistent way to provide the best support for the family, that can be measured, reviewed, and improved.

Organisations who work with families in Wakefield will use a range of tools to measure the outcomes and the impact of the support that has been given to ensure that things have improved for the whole family. The tools that may be used include the Outcomes Star, [The Wakefield Resilience Framework](#) and [The Thrive Approach](#)

The 'voice of the family' is always encouraged to tell us we are making a positive difference in their lives and where we can improve service to meet their needs.

Workforce development and continuous learning ensures we build skills and knowledge and are able to react to the changing needs of our families and can support them in the best way that suits them.

Our Early Help Strategy has been developed within the context of broader policies and strategies. Other Wakefield strategies relevant to this document can be found at www.wakefield.gov.uk

If you need an accessible version of this document, please contact wakefieldfamilies-together@wakefield.gov.uk

**Find out more about the services
and support available for your family**



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