

Affinity Early Help Service



Every family has its ups and downs. Being a parent/carer is hard work and there are no instructions. Sometimes, children/young people and their families may need extra support. Often these parents/carers turn to schools/academies for support. Early Help, helps children/young people and their families recognise what's going well for them, where they may benefit from extra help and who is the best person to support the family to make this happen. This may be through an Early Help Assessment (EHA). The Affinity Early Help service provides targeted support for children/young people and their families with proven results. The service could support your school/academy in delivering high quality Early Help family support that benefits the family and community along with your school/academy.



Affinity Early Help Services for Families

Get the right support for children/ young people and their families at the right time

Further information can be obtained by emailing:

Mark Hurst

Early Help Manager

mhurst@affinitylp.co.uk



There are times when children, young people and families need extra help. They will often turn to their school community for the help they require. Alternatively, a teacher may have identified the need for additional support but the situation does not meet certain thresholds. The Affinity Early Help Service could support the child/young person, their family along with the school.

What is Early Help?

Early Help is a way of getting extra support when a family, child, or young person needs it, but getting it as soon as difficulties start, rather than waiting until things get worse. **Our Early Help service** can provide this support and coordinate other services. Families in need of support will often confide in their school community first to seek the support needed. With the Trust Early Help service, your school would be able to refer the family straight away for targeted support. The service would complete an initial Early Help Assessment and an action plan with consent from the family. The service's Early Help Practitioners would then deliver targeted interventions working alongside the school through TAF's where the Early Help Practitioner will act as the lead professional. The service works within tier two of the threshold model. The service provides support and advice for the school/academy along with children and young people.

What sort of services or help can the Affinity Early Help service Offer?

It depends on what is needed for either the school/academy or the child/young person and their family. The service would agree support through the completion of an Early Help assessment followed by an action plan. This could include but is not exclusive too:

- Parenting support
- 1-1 interventions parents and children/young people
- Home Visits
- DV support
- Housing advice
- Benefits advice
- Referral to neurodevelopmental services
- Referrals to other supportive services
- Community groups
- TAF lead professional



Why is Early Help important?

Early help can prevent children/young people and their families from coming to harm. When families face problems, getting the right support, at the right time, is essential. It can be what stops a minor problem becoming a crisis. Unfortunately, we are not providing enough early help in the UK. The system is focused instead on helping children only once they are in crisis. This does not make sense. You would not wait for a health emergency before seeing your doctor.

Often the first port of call for any family struggling and in need of support is the school/academy their child/children attend.

Often county support is difficult to secure due to long waiting lists and a lack of capacity. This could result in the child/young person and their family waiting a great deal of time to gain the support required. By which time the issues they were facing could have escalated and now greater support is required to support them. The Affinity Early Help service could combat this for your school/academy, pupils and their families. The service could offer all of the above by reducing the bureaucracy, and delivering appropriate targeted interventions in a timely fashion.

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"I attended a three-month parenting course to help with my daughter's violent and harmful behaviours, alongside her CAMHS support. I learnt useful tips on parenting, challenging behaviour, and emotion coaching." - **A parent**

"The thing I found most valuable from my parenting course and drop in sessions has been forming a network with other parents in similar situations. I feel less isolated and have had a lot of help dealing with school and finding support for myself." - **A parent**

"Early help offered support for siblings caught up in their brother's behavioural and emotional challenges and helped us put in place a safety plan if we felt the family were at risk of harm." - **A parent**

"My experience of early help was of an individual relationship being formed with the whole family over time, so they had a good understanding of our family's needs resulting in effective signposting. The word "advocate" comes to mind." - **A parent**

"We did the EHA with a mum and daughter. Anxiety was affecting the daughter's mental health and school attendance, and the mum had mental health difficulties. Mum got support through Trent TPS and daughter had behaviour support services and Young Carers counselling, helping her worry less about her mum." - **School SENCO and safeguarding lead**

"We make early help referrals to provide families with additional support. The mental health of a young person may be impacted by issues such as poor housing, family conflict or parental illness. An early help practitioner can visit regularly, helping the family access relevant resources." - **Specialist Practitioner**

"A child was badly affected by his brother's mental health difficulties. The early help team supported the family to manage challenging behaviour and both sons had counselling and behaviour support. This prevented the situation escalating to social care and the family felt part of the process." - **School safeguarding lead**