

Bury Children's Strategic Partnership

Early Help Strategy

2022-25



**FOR CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE**



Contents

	PAGE
1. Introduction	3
2. What is Early Help?	4
3. Why Is Early Help Important?	5
4. Early Help in Bury	6
5. Early Help Support In Bury	7
6. Delivering The Early Help Approach	8
7. Strategic Priorities	10
8. Indicators Of Success	12
9 Governance	14





1 Introduction

Just prior to the coronavirus pandemic we had started the journey of early help transformation. We were working towards our vision to develop an integrated neighbourhood early help offer. This would build on the assets of our communities as well as working more effectively as a partnership to deliver support at the earliest opportunity to families experiencing difficulties.

Using DfE innovation monies we worked with colleagues across Greater Manchester to develop and launch our Locality Teams with our Team Around the School offer at the heart of our new approach. However, for all of us, the pandemic delayed some of our progress as we needed to react to other priority areas.

Now, as we start to emerge from the impact of covid, there is even more urgency to work together effectively to recognise families who need help and to respond as soon as possible.

We have refreshed our Children's Strategic Partnership Board and have developed our Children & Young People's Plan 2021-24 setting out our vision and strategic intent to work together and with children and families to develop and deliver services.

The pandemic has been so challenging for many children and young people and their families. We are seeing the impact on their mental health and emotional wellbeing as well as levels of disruption to their education.

For many children it has impacted on their family life; hidden harms are perhaps now even more hidden - family conflict, domestic abuse, mental health, grief and loss, as well as the likely impact for some children of an economic impact not felt before.



JEANETTE RICHARDS

As a partnership it is vitally important that we reflect, review, and reinvigorate our commitment to meeting the needs of children and families earlier, while recognising the resilience and strengths we have seen in our communities during this time and making a commitment to work with and for them as we reform our approach.

The last year has shown us how important relationships are; we have looked out for each other, helped each other, and built on each other's strengths. We want all that we do to reflect those qualities.

This strategy sets out the vision and principles that underpin our approach and our commitment to work together and with our communities to deliver our priorities. It is underpinned by our Bury 2030 strategy and our LET'S Do It principles. So... LET'S do it for the children of Bury.

JEANETTE RICHARDS

Chair of Children's Strategic Partnership Board



2 What is Early Help

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 statutory guidance promotes and re-emphasises the need to support children and families at the earliest opportunity.

Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. 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.

Without Early Help family difficulties can become more complex and more severe, sometimes leading to child safety concerns, and the need for statutory children's social care intervention.

Early Help is our way of wrapping around a family as soon as difficulties emerge to prevent the need to refer to statutory services.

Working Together 2018 makes clear that Early Help is everyone's business, including all statutory and non-statutory organisations

and individuals working with and/or coming into regular contact with children, young people and families. It is not only the work of specific Early Help teams.

In Bury we believe all children have the right to grow up in their families and communities, to be safe from harm, nurtured, able to build resilience so that they can have the best start in life to become the adults they aspire to be. In this document when we refer to children we mean from conception to 19 years of age, or up to 25 years old for those with SEND or in the care of the local authority.

This document sets out our approach in Bury and our overarching commitment and strategic aim to respond earlier to the needs of children and their families to prevent the need for higher level statutory interventions.

The Right Help

The Right Time

The Right Person

The Right Place





3

Why Is Early Help Important?

Working Together 2018 clearly places a responsibility on all of us who work with children or who come into contact with children regularly to identify when difficulties start so we can promote early support and intervention. In short:

It's right for families Supporting families as soon as problems emerge means minimising adverse childhood experiences, stopping problems from escalating and reducing the need for intrusive interventions

It's right for communities Supporting families earlier means reducing impact on local communities, allowing all neighbourhoods to thrive, live without conflict, enjoy local spaces together

It's right for organisations Getting support to families earlier means reducing high demand into more expensive services. It's cost effective and allows us to direct monies into communities rather than react to high needs.

Most children in Bury are fortunate enough to grow up in a safe and loving home environment and to have numerous opportunities to pursue their ambitions and become adults who reach their goals and aspirations. However, for some children this is not the case, and we know that the impact of the covid pandemic has had an even greater detrimental impact on their wellbeing.



It's right for families



It's right for communities



It's right for organisations



4 Early Help in Bury

Our Bury 2030 strategy LET'S Do It! (Local, Enterprise, Together, Strengths) is ambitious and is all about reforming how we meet the needs of adults, children and families. It is underpinned by our commitment to building on the resilience of our communities. Our aim is to prevent concerns escalating and to build happy, healthy and

resilient communities. Early Help for children and young people is at the heart of this approach.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has supported all 10 Greater Manchester local authorities in the development of six principles and associated enablers of Early Help which have been shared, shaped and adopted by Bury's Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. These principles underpin our strategic intent and they reflect those of our Strategic Partnership Plan.





Bury has a continuum of need framework which identifies five levels of need.

Universal Service Most children are supported through level 1 of our needs and response framework, what we call **universal services**. These are the services offered to all children from midwives through to health visitors, GPs, schools, etc. For most children, together with their families and communities, this is all they need to thrive - **level 1**

Universal Plus Some children need more specific support in addition to universal services and sit at level 2 of our needs and response framework. This is usually through a single professional, such as a speech and language therapist - **level 2**

Early Help Some children live in families where there are more complicated circumstances, different needs and challenges, such as mental health, drug or alcohol use, conflict and even domestic abuse and they will need a more coordinated response. **We call this Early Help - level 3**

Family Help In some situations, despite the support of the Team Around the Family - children continue to be impacted by the challenges in their lives and the impact on their wellbeing continues to be a concern and potentially places them at some risk. In these situations, the Team Around the Family may need to step up the family to social care and ask that a child and family assessment is completed by a statutory social worker. We call this **child in need** and this support is accessed through a referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). As far as possible families being referred to the **MASH** should have been supported through an early help approach and they should consent to the referral being made. – **level 4**

Safeguarding and Specialist For a very small number of children either there is an immediate situation which places them at actual risk of significant harm, or despite them becoming a child in need there remain significant concerns that are potentially harmful to children. These children need to be safeguarded because there are too many risks to their wellbeing to keep them safe. These children need immediate safeguarding and are deemed to be **children at risk of significant harm**. For some the impact is so great that they need to become looked after. In Bury our looked after children have asked that we refer to them as Children in Care - **level 5**





Early Help is about ‘working with’ families and not ‘doing to’ them. The start of any Early Help is through discussion with parents and/or children, if they are old enough to fully understand and make informed decisions, to agree the support that will be put in place. This is called consent.

As a partnership we have all committed to recognising needs and to offering help earlier. We are committed to asking other family members, community members and professionals to work together to wrap around a family to stop things getting worse. At the start of this process seeking consent to work with the family is extremely important. Having the family feel involved and in control will build the trust we need to work together. If this is agreed an assessment is completed with the family. The family remains at the heart and directs this work. In Bury we call our **Early Help Assessment - The Story So Far**.

This new early help assessment has been developed through multi-agency consultation. The Story So Far has been developed with the intention for it to be a live document where a family’s story can be captured and added to as their circumstances change, stopping them from having to re-tell it to different agencies. The Story So Far is a strength-based assessment that can be used to build on the family’s assets to achieve positive outcomes.

When we have completed the assessment, if it seems that the family would benefit from some coordinated support, then the person completing assessment, who we call the **lead professional**, will agree with the family which services should be involved in a meeting to work out how best to offer support. This is called the **Team Around the Family**.

Any person working with the family can complete the Story So Far and take on the role of Lead Professional. Being the Lead Professional does not mean doing all the work but the Lead Professional makes sure the meeting happens. They will often chair the meeting and make sure reviews happen so that everyone, and especially the family, can see whether things are getting better. The Team Around Meeting can nominate a different lead professional at any time. It’s better when families are able to identify the Lead Professional themselves.

In Bury we also have something called the **Team Around The School**.



Early Help is through discussion



The family remains at the heart and directs this work



This new early help assessment has been developed through multi-agency consultation



Team Around the Family



We have developed locality Early Help Teams which cover our five neighbourhoods. The teams are enablers and are supporting professionals across the system to grow in confidence and expertise in leading on Early Help.

As lots of referrals into social care were from schools, our Early Help Locality Teams have adopted a Team Around the School approach. This aims to co-ordinate health and social care services, working together with schools, to offer support to children and their families, providing earlier intervention and targeted short-term pieces of work. This approach will support effective early intervention to prevent needs and challenging situations from escalating to levels that compromise outcomes not for only these children but which disrupt the learning

pathway for many other children within the educational setting.

Currently all schools in Bury have an identified Early Help Social Worker. By permission of families they can meet with their social worker to talk through how to support a family where there are emerging needs/concerns. The Team Around the School meeting includes the Early Help Social Worker from the locality team, the school and in some instances the school nurse.

With the permission of families other professionals can be invited. The professionals consult and agree who will, take support forward with the family either through a single agency approach or a team around approach.

ASSESS

We will ask parents and children to tell their story once. By listening to families and talking to those who know them best we will be able to better understand each family's needs and how we can best help. We will recognise the strengths and the challenges facing families as we start to agree together on what might need to change or improve. The experience and voice of children will be central to our conversations and assessment.

PLAN

Through our team around the family we will create a plan that recognises strengths as well as what needs to change and we will together identify which service or which person is best to support. We will be clear about who is doing what and we will make sure we are not overwhelming families but working with them to prioritise actions and to set realistic timescales.

Working together to help families and improve children's lives
Four steps to support

REVIEW

We will regularly come together in our team around the family to reflect on what is working well, celebrate successes but also to be honest with each other about where we are not making progress and consider what else we can all do to help. Children's voices and their experience will always drive our work and the impact on them will be the measure of our success.

DO

We will all take responsibility to make sure we do what we say we will. We will work together with families to problem solve in a way that increases parents' confidence and enables them to take control of difficult situations. We will support parents and children to access the services and programmes they have identified in their plan.



7 Strategic Priorities

Our Children and Young People's Plan sets our shared approach to meet the needs of families at the earliest opportunity. It sets out five high level outcomes and priorities for children and young people in the borough and aligns to the 'Let's Do It Strategy' for the whole population of Bury. Our Early Help priorities support the Children and Young People's Plan and are driven by listening to children, young people and families, learning from our data, our quality assurance mechanisms, our learning from rapid reviews and child safeguarding reviews as well as key national drivers.

Our priorities for 2021- 2024 are:

PRIORITY 1 – We are committed to extending our locality teams offer to develop family hubs in each of our neighbourhoods so that children and young people and their families get the support they need locally to where they live.

We will work together as a partnership to better align our services around neighbourhoods. This will help us to work together more effectively and to better facilitate families and communities to have greater involvement and influence in service design. As professionals we will know our local networks and it will help us to respond more quickly to family needs. Our nurseries, schools and clinics will be at the heart of our neighbourhood arrangements. As part of our **Strengthening Families** agenda and new **Family Hub** approach we will develop an integrated offer which reflects the needs of our neighbourhoods as well as responding to national drivers. In every neighbourhood we will have a family hub offer by April 2024.

To ensure that children have the best start in life with the right foundation for good future progress through school and life, we will start to build a model of pre-school support that reflects the **Team Around the School**, ensuring pathways are clear and accessible for children pre-school and adopting the same multi-agency principles as seen in the Team Around the School approach. We will call this Team Around Pre-School. This will link strongly with our early years offer and our school readiness agenda. To make pathways clear and accessible for children at pre-school age we will adopt the same multi-agency principles as seen in the Team around the School approach.



**Let's Do It
Strategy**



**We will work
together as a
partnership**



**Ensure that
children have the
best start in life**



We will also develop our **Team Around School Plus** approach for young people post school age who are in either college, education or training, following the same principles as the Team Around the School. We need to build on initial work to design our Team Around School Plus model, providing wrap around support for young people in post 16 education, employment and training.

PRIORITY 2 – Children and families understand our offer and how to get the support they need

We recognise that families are often telling their story to too many professionals. We will work together to embed our Story So Far approach, helping families to tell their story once and building on that story as we get to know families better. We will also improve how we work together as professionals to ensure that we develop services together and with families and reduce the number of pathways to support so that families can navigate our systems better. We will call this our Family Offer. We will develop our parenting strategy and we will also develop our relationship support as part of our family offer. We will have an agreed family offer by April 2023 which both professionals and families understand and can easily access.

Priority 3 - We will have a think family approach

We recognise the importance of a whole family approach. Families are diverse and complex but most children identify with those essential care givers with whom they live, as their family. Children thrive when their family context is loving, supportive, and enables them to achieve their best. Whatever the

presenting need of an individual child, parent or carer, we will look at how we support them in the context of family life. As a partnership we are learning from some of our more serious case reviews and we know we need to get better at seeing children both as individuals with individual needs as well as within the context of their family structures. We know this is a difficult balance and we need to keep children at the heart of all we do, their lived experience and the impact on them of any difficulties in their family.

Priority 4 – We will know ourselves well and the impact we are having

We will share data and information in our neighbourhoods so that we can support the development of services that best meet a family's needs at a local level. Our local offer will be bespoke to areas in which we work and will represent what our families and communities tell us that they need, as well as our local intelligence. We will develop a neighbourhood profile to help us shape our services and use our resources most effectively to achieve the best outcomes for children.

Priority 5 – We listen to children and young people. We will develop and shape our services together

We will start to develop clear systems and cultures that allows conversations, ideas and co-production to flourish. Children, young people and families will have the opportunities to be fully engaged and will be valued as equal partners in the design development and review of the services they use. We will have co-production strategy which has our children and families at the heart by 2023.



8 Indicators Of Success

Outcome	Indicators
 Children and families are supported at the earliest opportunity to improve their outcomes	Increase in numbers of children supported through early help
	Reduction of contacts into the MASH
	Reduction in referrals to Social Care
	Increase in contacts and referrals which evidence coordinated Early Help
	Reduction in re-referrals into social care
	Increase in Early Help prior to request for an Education, Health and Care Plan
	Reduction in avoidable appointments to hospital
	Compliance with long term conditions such as asthma
	Improved self management of long term conditions
	Reduction in referrals for specialist health services
	Evidence increase in use of Graded Care Profile at early help stage
	Reduction in children entering care
	Sustained good level of development for school readiness
	Improvement across all key stages
	Reduction in overall Not in Education, Employment or Training
	Improvement in school attendance
	Reduction in school exclusions
	Fewer hospital admissions caused by injuries in young people aged 15-24
	More children are taking up free nursery education entitlement at age 2, including % with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
	Fewer children are permanently excluded from school or have less than 3 fixed term exclusions over 3 consecutive terms, including % with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
	More children are achieving their expected progress levels at primary and secondary levels, including % with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Outcome	Indicators
 All families requiring early help are supported by the most appropriate lead professional.	Increase in assessments completed by all agencies
	Increase in lead professionals across all agencies
	Increase in Story So Far and Team Around the Family
	Increase in Story So Far completed by pre-schools
	Increase in Story So Far completed by Post 16 provision
	Increase in numbers of Team Around the School meetings
	Reduction in re-referrals into Early Help
 We will have a family hub operating in Bury East by 2023 We will roll out our family hub offer across Bury by 2030	Feedback loops evidence high levels of satisfaction following Early Help support



The Bury Children's Strategic Partnership Board has the overall responsibility for the development and delivery of the Early Help Strategy and priorities. Early Help is one of the Greater Manchester Transformation Programmes and is also overseen by the Greater Manchester Transformation Board. In addition, Early Help is a key element of Bury's 2030 Strategy and Public Service Reform and as such there is also oversight by Bury Public Service Reform Board.

The commitment of the Children's Strategic Partnership Board to developing a culture of

co-production is set out in the Engagement, Participation and Co-Production Strategy. This will underpin our Early Help Strategy and ways of working, and we will be held accountable to this by the Children's Strategic Partnership Board, supported by the Co-Production sub group.

The delivery of the priorities will sit with the Starting Well and Early Help Group – a sub group of the Children's Strategic Partnership Board.

