

EARLY HELP STRATEGY

2021/2023



Cllr Mrs Patricia Bradwell
Executive Councillor
Children's Services



Heather Sandy
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Detective
Superintendent



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INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, we are delighted to introduce our refreshed Early Help Strategy for Lincolnshire, which has been developed through collaboration, engagement and consultation with children and families. This represents our joint commitment as partners to work collaboratively to provide the earliest help and support for children and young people, so they and their families can receive the right support at the right time and from the right person.

In Lincolnshire we believe Early Help is a collaborative approach, not a provision, every professional working with or engaging with children and families, regardless of organisation, status or position has a responsibility to deliver Early Help and support the family to access appropriate services. By working together, sharing information and resources the best outcomes can be achieved for all children,

young people and families. In these unprecedented times, it is necessary to rethink how the whole system works to give children and families the most co-ordinated and effective services. Our commitment to building and supporting family networks, and community-based help has never been more crucial.

Our Early Help offer was critical during the challenge of the Covid19 pandemic and associated lockdown. The multi-agency support to respond effectively and creatively during times of crisis has enabled us to continue to maximise opportunities. We have much to be proud of in Lincolnshire, and the maturity of our Early Help system continues to drive and maintain excellent outcomes for children and families.

We want to thank our staff and our children, young people and families who have helped to shape this strategy and forward plan.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Lincolnshire is a large rural county with communities whose needs differ. We respond to this by ensuring everyone works collaboratively with children and families to meet their needs. The county comprises of one County Council, one City Council, five District Councils and one Borough Council. One of the greatest challenges for Lincolnshire is the size, scale and complexity of the environment in which all services operate. Lincolnshire is the fourth largest county, where 95% of the land area is designated rural and 48% of people live in rural areas compared to the national average of 18%.

We have a population of approximately 783,083, which is projected to grow by 94,000 by 2043 and the number of children aged 0 to 19 has grown by 3.9% in the last 10 years. There are just over 142,950 children and young people aged between 0 and 19 living in Lincolnshire, of which 22,730 (15.9%) live in poverty; of the total of those aged under 16 (121,636), 16.5% live in poverty. These figures are below the national

averages of 21.6% for under 16s and 20.9% for 0-19s. We provide for approximately 98,200 children aged between 4 and 16 years of age, with 56,200 educated within primary schools, 40,100 in secondary and approximately 1,900 in special/alternative provision.

The school provision within the county is:

- ✓ 5 nursery schools.
- ✓ 280 primary schools (including infant and junior).
- ✓ 1 all through school catering from the ages of 3 to 18*.
- ✓ 19 special schools.
- ✓ 52 secondary schools.
- ✓ A University Technical College (UTC) catering for years 10 to 13.

We celebrate a strong partnership ethos, demonstrated by our joint ownership of this Strategy; and its associated implementation plan.

- ✓ With an Outstanding Ofsted rated children's services.
- ✓ Clear vision for the work with children and families.
- ✓ Diverse good quality childcare sector.
- ✓ 48 children centres (7 maternity hubs).
- ✓ Integrated locality delivery across four areas.
- ✓ Strength in our strategic partnership with schools.
- ✓ Almost 930 providers registered to deliver childcare and funded early education places.



THE VISION FOR THE EARLY HELP SYSTEM IN LINCOLNSHIRE IS PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST

Working Together with Families to Enhance Children’s Present and Future Lives’.

Children, Young People and Families will be:

- ✓ Helped to make changes for themselves.
- ✓ Seen as a positive solution to the challenges they face.
- ✓ Able to get the right service at the right time.

Understood as a whole family.

Supported by Skilled professionals that:

- ✓ Understand and apply Relationship Based Practice.
- ✓ Is restorative in approach.
- ✓ Is well trained and supported.

Enabled and equipped by:

- ✓ Clear governance that puts children and families at the heart of how we plan and deliver support for them.
- ✓ Clear framework and set of tools which includes using Signs of Safety as a methodology which builds on families strengths.



WHAT IS EARLY HELP?

Statutory guidance re-emphasises the crucial role of effective Early Help and focusses on the collective responsibility of all agencies to identify, assess and provide effective Early Help services and states:

This Strategy also links with our wider transformation work; particularly our ambitions for SEND and High Needs Reform; transforming services for our Children in Care; and our new Early Childhood Strategy.

To find out more, please click on the following links:

- Early Childhood Strategy
- Special Educational Needs Disabilities (SEND) Local Offer
- Corporate plan – Lincolnshire County Council
- NHS Long Term Plan
- Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Trust (lpft.nhs.uk)
- Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership

“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 a point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early Help can also prevent further problems arising, for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care.”

WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN, HM GOVERNMENT, 2018

EARLY HELP PRINCIPLES & VALUES

In Lincolnshire Early Help is defined as anything that supports children, young people and their families to achieve their potential, by either preventing difficulties, or stopping those getting worse.

Early Help is the term used by all agencies to describe Lincolnshire’s approach to providing early support to families so that children, young people and their families are safe, happy and ready for school, work and life’s challenges. Early Help is the right help, at the right time, in the right place. Our belief is that children and young people are best supported by people they know and trust; and that loving human relationships are essential to health and wellbeing. We know most Early Help is provided by families, friends, neighbours and communities, and these are central to our strategy. We are committed to supporting families, extended families, networks of friends and neighbours, and local community-based professionals (both paid and volunteers).

Our Early Help System brings together local partners, including health services, police, voluntary sector, educational settings, housing, and Local Authority services

to provide early support to children and their families that build resilience, prevents difficulties from escalating and leads to better outcomes that are sustained.

All of us are committed to continuing to identify and provide support to children and young people who are at risk of poor health and wellbeing. Our goal is providing the right support, at the right time, through the right person. This can only be achieved if all partners work together with families and their networks towards goals that are owned by the children, young people and their families.

Our Principles and Values

- ✓ Child and Family at the centre of all we do and understood as a whole family.
- ✓ Listening to children and families and giving importance to what they say.
- ✓ Building on strengths as well as identifying the difficulties.
- ✓ Focusing on building family networks that families have in place, to support them to come to their own solutions.
- ✓ Identifying the right support at the right time and by the right person.
- ✓ Open and honest communication



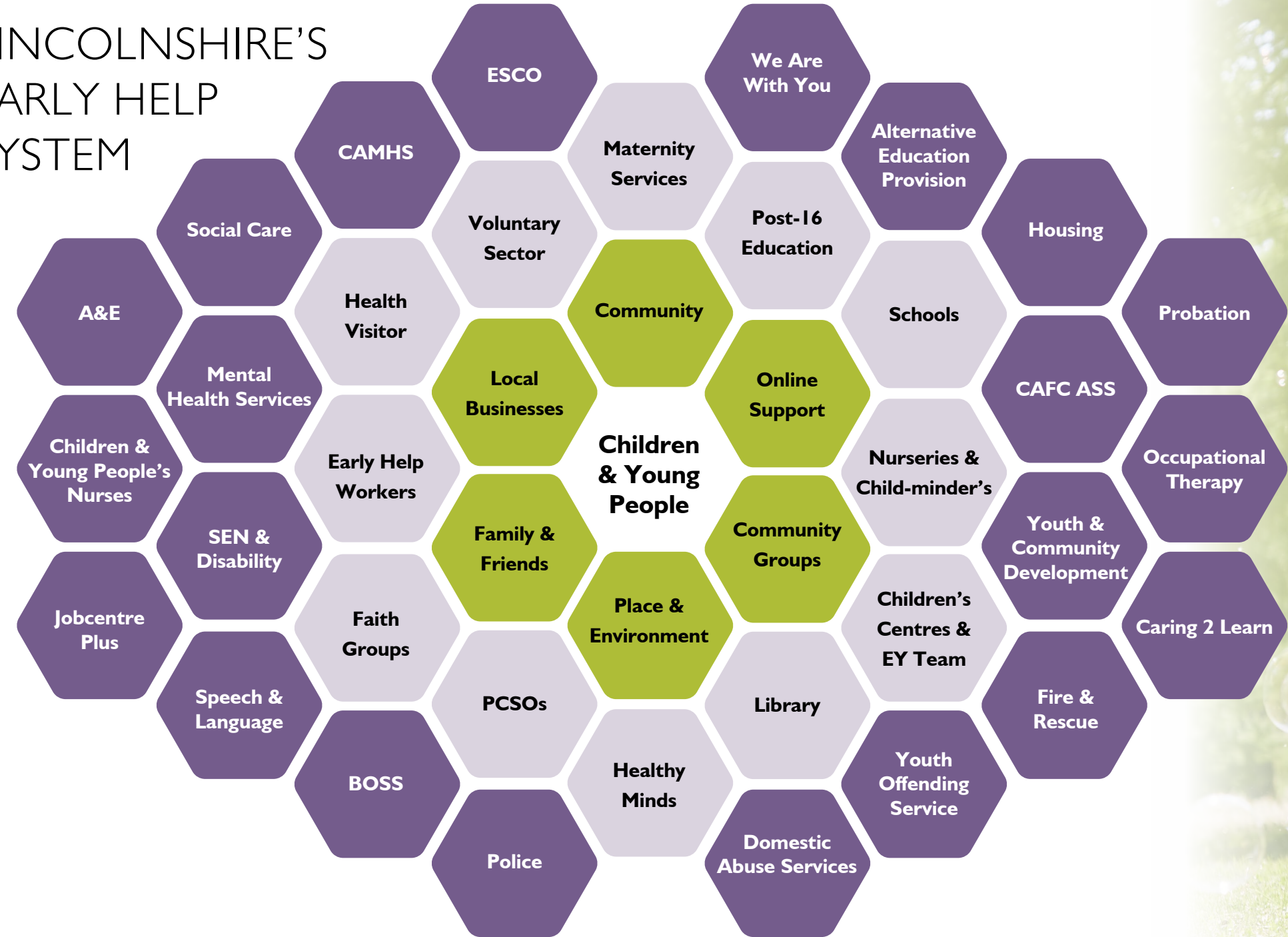
The approach of the Early Help system in Lincolnshire is to provide early support to families to prevent needs from escalating and we provide this by ensuring:

- ✓ Children will have the BEST START in life.
- ✓ Children will LEARN and ACHIEVE.
- ✓ Children, Young people and their families will be HEALTHY and RESILIENT.
- ✓ Children and young people will have safe and supportive families, RELATIONSHIPS and NETWORKS.
- ✓ Children, young people and their families will receive the RIGHT SUPPORT at the RIGHT TIME by the RIGHT PERSON and for the RIGHT DURATION.

This Early Help Strategy is informed by a commitment to these principles and values, and all partners are responsible and accountable for the delivery of its priorities through a partnership based governance arrangement.

This strategy should be read alongside ‘Putting Children First – Meeting the Needs of Children in Lincolnshire’. Putting Children First - Meeting the Needs of Children in Lincolnshire

LINCOLNSHIRE'S EARLY HELP SYSTEM



Lincolnshire has a wide range of services that work with, and for children, young people and families.

We also recognise the impact that the environment and communities, have on children.

Most of all, we acknowledge that the greatest, and most sustainable outcomes are provided by the children, young people, their families, and their friends.

HOW DO WE ENSURE THAT EARLY HELP IS THE RIGHT SUPPORT, PROVIDED BY THE RIGHT PERSON, AT THE RIGHT TIME?

In Early Help we use the Early Help Assessment to hold conversations with families and professionals. In Lincolnshire we value relationships and these conversations should be held with the person the family knows trusts or chooses. We use the Assessment to gather, share and analyse information with families so that we can make professional judgements together. We work in an open and honest way with each other and our families so that families feel informed, empowered and in control of their own lives. We have a clear practice framework to support our work with children and families and a set of tools, including restorative practice within our Assessments to help us to:

CHALLENGE

TO

WITH

NOT

FOR

SUPPORT

- ✓ Work at relationships with families.
- ✓ Be curious and prepared to admit when we are wrong.
- ✓ Listen to our families and use this to inform how we do things.
- ✓ Use the family’s language and say it in a way that children can understand.
- ✓ Be open and honest with our worries and work together to find solutions.
- ✓ Focus on behaviours not the person.
- ✓ Respect for family culture - ask questions that seek to understand and to empower families to find their own solutions.

We will work with families in a coaching way and ask questions within the assessment not just around the worries, but also on what is working well and what needs to happen next so that we are balanced and solution focussed. We speak to Children and Young People at every stage and ensure the plan is built around their wishes and feelings. We will all share our professional judgements with each other and the family.

For a copy of our **Assessment, Practice Guidance and information on Signs of Safety** please visit **Keeping Children Safe - Team Around Child.**

HOUSE OF WORRIES

HOUSE OF GOOD THINGS

HOUSE OF DREAMS



WHEN FAMILIES NEED EARLY HELP:

It is really important, that the moment an early help need is recognised, someone has a conversation with the child/family and their support network about that concern, what it looks like and how it affects the child's life, as well as what everyone is doing to keep them happy and safe. Once the need/s has been identified and the family agree, an Early Help Assessment will be completed. If any of the worries are safeguarding concerns, Partner Agencies will need to call the Customer Service Centre on 01522 782111.

If the Partner Agency can support the family on their own the Assessment and Plan can be used as tools for conversations and there are no further actions. We call this a Single Agency Response.

Complete Assessment
and Plan, continue to
support the family.



Any Safeguarding
Concerns call
01522 782111



WHEN WE NEED TO INVOLVE MORE THAN ONE AGENCY:

When we identify that the family need support from another Agency we will begin the Team Around the Child (TAC) process. This is where all the people who care about or are working with a child form a team that helps to support them. One professional takes the lead to ensure that services are co-ordinated, coherent and achieving intended outcomes and acts as a single point of contact for the child and their family.

A lead professional can be any professional who is a part of the team around the family. This professional can be from any service/agency. It is important that the family are involved in the discussion of who is best placed to coordinate the support and services being offered to the family. Please see Lincolnshire's TAC Handbook for further guidance.



Any Safeguarding
Concerns call
01522 782111

Complete Assessment and email to
tacadmin@lincolnshire.gov.uk
Set up a meeting with the Team/Family

Work with the Team/Family
to create a plan to email to
tacadmin@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Needs are met complete a
closure and send to
tacadmin@lincolnshire.gov.uk

WHEN THE NEEDS ARE AROUND A CHILD'S DISABILITY SOMETIMES THE TAC NEEDS SUPPORT FROM THE EARLY SUPPORT CARE COORDINATION SERVICE:

Early Support Care Coordination (ESCO) is a service which helps coordinate support for children who are disabled, or have significant and complex additional needs which mean they need additional support during much of their daily lives and it is probable that there will be a long term impact on their development and learning. An ESCO Keyworker will be allocated where there is evidence of unmet care coordination needs relating specifically to the child's disability/complex additional need. Partner agencies will complete an assessment or update a plan that identifies these unmet needs and includes details of agencies working with the family. The assessment or plan will be looked at by ESCO to determine if ESCO can support. If a partner agency identifies that a family would benefit from signposting to support available in their community, parents and carers can book an ESCO drop-in session by contacting **Customer Services** on **01522 782111**.

**More information
on ESCO and
support for
Children with
disabilities can
be found in
Lincolnshire's
Family Services
Directory Children
with Disabilities
Children with
Disabilities.**

Contact **01522 782111**
request a referral to **ESCO**

Complete Assessment
and email to
ESCO@lincolnshire.gov.uk

If allocated an ESCO worker creates
plan together with the Family and
multi agency team. This plan will be
reviewed 3 monthly until support is in
place to meet the child's needs.

WHEN FAMILIES NEED HELP FROM A CHILDREN'S SERVICES EARLY HELP PROFESSIONAL

Early Help Professionals will be allocated when a single agency or team of agencies have identified they are not able to meet the needs of the child. Partner Agencies will complete an Early Help Assessment or update a plan that states the family need the support of an Early Help Professional and what the support looks like. The Assessment or Plan will be evaluated and assessed at the Early Help Front Door and a decision made. The Early Help Front door works with Customer Service Centre and Social Care Screening team to understand whether families can be supported in Early Help and who is the most appropriate professional to support the child/family. They also support in identifying families who may need help from a Social Worker. The Early Help Front Door review Early Help Assessments to make decisions with professionals and the family on who are the right people at that time to support the family after an assessment has been shared.



Any Safeguarding Concerns call
01522 782111

Complete Assessment or update a plan and state the support the family need from an Early Help Professional and email to **tacadmin@lincolnshire.gov.uk**

If allocated an Early Help Professional create plans together with the Team/Family and send to **tacadmin@lincolnshire.gov.uk**

Needs are met complete a closure and send to **tacadmin@lincolnshire.gov.uk**



WHAT ARE OUR PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD?

In order to continue to do better for children, young people and families, research and practice tell us we need to concentrate on 5 main areas:



FAMILY EXPERIENCE

GOAL: We want Lincolnshire to be a place where families get the right help, at the right time, from the right person. We want families to feel respected and supported, even when services challenge them. We want them to be actively involved in a conversation to work out what help they need; and be proactive in coming up with a plan that ensures their children are happy, healthy and safe.



- PRIORITIES:**
- ✓ Improving families’ journey through services by embedding a strong practice framework that ‘works with rather than ‘does to’ children, young people and families.
 - ✓ Improving the way we support our most vulnerable adolescent young people within their schools and communities; and through our evolving Future for Me Service.
 - ✓ Implementing our Early Childhood Strategy to support families with very young children.
 - ✓ Collating more information on child and family experiences to use in further design and delivery of services.
 - ✓ Increased use of trauma-informed practice to improve experiences of children and their families.

LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

GOAL: We want to demonstrate passionate leadership across the whole system, consistent with our vision and principles. We want this creative and innovative leadership to come from all levels of services, to drive a culture of collaboration, belief in early help, and belief in our children and families.

PRIORITIES:

- ✓ Continuing to develop collaborative leadership across the whole early help system, to ensure that this strategy is owned by all of us.
- ✓ To demonstrate a learning culture that is creative and innovative.

NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIP

GOAL: We believe that strong networks and partnerships are the key to making sure children and families get the right support at the right time from the right people. Therefore we want every child who needs early help to have a network of people around them who are there for them now and in the future. We want this aim to be supported by strong, committed strategic partnerships between services and organisations.

PRIORITIES:

- ✓ Ensure that building networks on an individual child and family level is a priority throughout all early help.
- ✓ Continue to improve collaborative multi-agency support via TAC.
- ✓ Continue to develop strong strategic partnerships with common vision and goals.



SERVICE DELIVERY

GOAL: We want all services in Lincolnshire to deliver respectful, strength-based services in a creative and flexible way with confident staff who are true to our principles and values.

PRIORITIES:

- ✓ Working in partnership for the sustained implementation of Signs of Safety, Restorative Practice, Family Finding and Trauma-informed practice models .
- ✓ Continued development of a safe and effective ‘Front Door’ to services, with transparent decision-making and clear guidance to all lead professionals.
- ✓ Ensuring that systems, processes and paperwork support our professionals to deliver high quality services.



MEASURING SUCCESS

GOAL: We want Lincolnshire to be a place where we know what good early help looks like and feels like to children and families. We want to have a range of ways to demonstrate outcomes, and celebrate what our families and their networks have achieved.

PRIORITIES:

- ✓ Developing a comprehensive, consistent data set for Early Help.
- ✓ Developing our data analysis to better understand the needs of children and families in Lincolnshire; and our performance in meeting that need.
- ✓ More direct information from children and families about what works to be visible throughout the system



WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE



GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The underlying principle is that the delivery of the Early Help System requires multiple partners to work together, providing an integrated and joined up Early Help offer.

The Lincolnshire Early Help Steering Group is a county wide multi agency group which is accountable to the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Partnership via the Strategic Management Group.

In summary, the purpose of the Early Help Steering Group is to build on the strong partnerships to develop and deliver our Early Help Strategy and to understand the impact upon Children, Young People and Families.

- The responsibilities of the Early Help Steering Group include:**
- ✓ The oversight, production, publication, delivery and review of the Early Help Strategy.
 - ✓ Support the continuous improvement of multi-agency Early Help arrangements across Lincolnshire.
 - ✓ Having open and honest conversations about challenges and opportunities.
 - ✓ Reporting on the impact of the Early Help System to the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership.



LINKS TO OTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR EARLY HELP:

lincolnshire.gov.uk/tac

tacadmin@lincolnshire.gov.uk

earlyhelpconsultants@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Customer Service Centre (Children's) 01522 782111

