

Redcar & Cleveland



Children & Young People's Partnership Early Help Strategy

2021 – 2025

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1 - Introduction



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.

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later and if delivered in the right way can also prevent further problems arising.

Local authorities, under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, have a responsibility to promote inter-agency cooperation to improve the welfare of children.

Effective early help relies upon local agencies working together to identify children and families who would benefit from early help and then to provide targeted Early Help Services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family.

The focus should be on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.

This strategy articulates the principles and ambitious priorities that underpin the future development and delivery of our multi-agency approach to early help in Redcar and Cleveland.

2 - Our Vision and Principles

Our vision:

“In Redcar and Cleveland we will work together to ensure that children, young people and their families receive the right help as early as possible; to support them to thrive and fulfil their dreams.”

Our vision is underpinned by the following principles:

1. Early help is everyone's responsibility, and we will work as a team to support children, young people and their families.
2. The child is at the centre of everything we do; we will listen to their views and work with them to develop their plans.
3. Families will be empowered to build the resilience and support networks they need, to ensure their children are always safe and cared for.
4. Understanding the needs of the whole family and working with them all, is critical to help the children's circumstances improve.
5. The community and partner agencies will understand where to go for support and advice to help a child or family.
6. Our multi-agency workforce has confidence and competence in their work so that our children and families can access high quality, excellent support.

3 - Why we need to focus on Early Help

In Redcar and Cleveland, the gap between affluent and deprived wards is widening and we know that health and educational outcomes are worse in the most deprived wards. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an adverse effect on our children, young people and their families; the full extent of which remains to be seen. We know that children and young people have lost a large part of their education and opportunities to socially interact with their peers which has affected their mental health and wellbeing. Leigh Middleton, Chief Executive of the National Youth Agency stated in his report, 'Inside Out Young Peoples' Health and Wellbeing: Response to Covid 19 August 2020': "The pandemic has expanded inequalities that already existed.....There is clear evidence of a rise in mental health issues among young people exacerbated by COVID-19. This report highlights concerns also about the lack of access to health services and wrap around support for young people's physical fitness, nutrition and personal relationships, and the impact from poverty and discrimination as we head into a global recession."

Inequalities for many children and young people can commence prior to conception or at any point during their childhood and can follow them throughout their life course.

Despite efforts to reduce risks for children, young people and their families, factors remain which impact a child or young person's risk of poor life chances and our local data demonstrates that we have significant challenges to face in giving all of our children the best start in life.

Redcar and Cleveland as a Local Authority has performed well in respect of the number of families receiving support to achieve significant progress under the Troubled Families Programme (now known as the *Supporting Families* programme). However, to make the necessary step change improvements within our early help model, it is important that partner agencies are more closely involved in the delivery of the agenda.



4 – Redcar & Cleveland Key Statistics

(compared to the national picture)

In excess of 27,000 children & young people reside in Redcar and Cleveland out of a total population of 137,000, with approximately 1,700 births every year.



Health & Wellbeing



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England

	16.5%	Smoking at time of Delivery	10.4%	
	34.6	Under 18 conceptions per 1,000	16.7	
	27.6%	Women continuing to breast feed at 6—8 weeks	48%	
	24.5%	Children living in poverty (6925 children) Children in low income families (all dependent children under 20)	17%	
	13.1%	Reception age children who are obese	9.9%	
	24%	Children aged 10 to 11 who are obese	21%	
	118.1	Emergency Admissions among 0 to 4 year olds per 1,000	91.2	
	529.1	Hospitalisation due to self-harm among under 18s per 100,000	439.2	

**The above figures are from the most recent statutory data set as at March 2021*

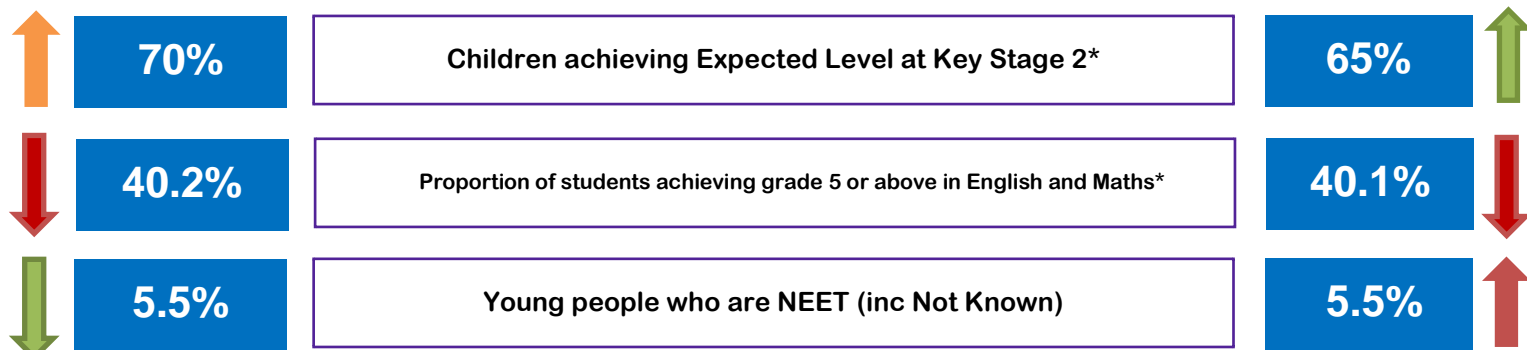


Education



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England

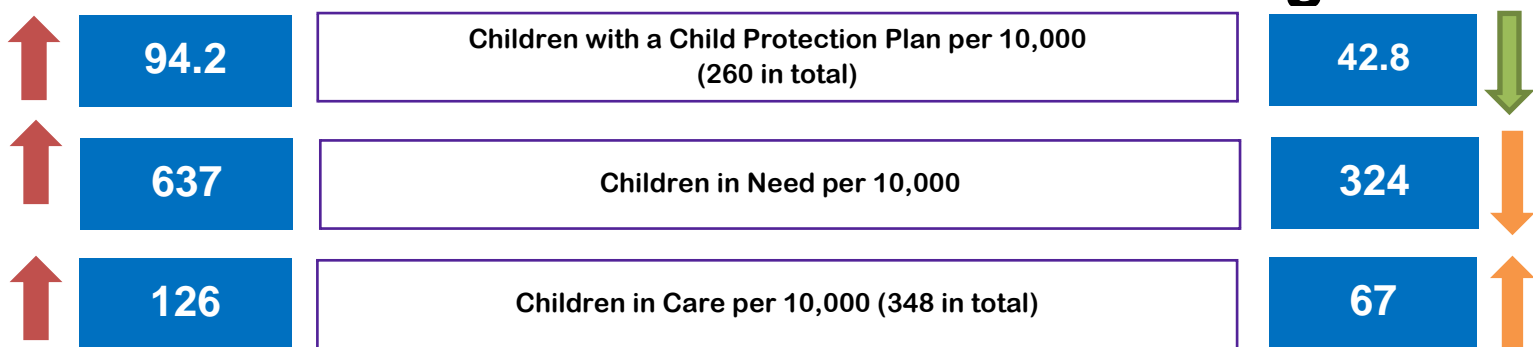


Social Care



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England

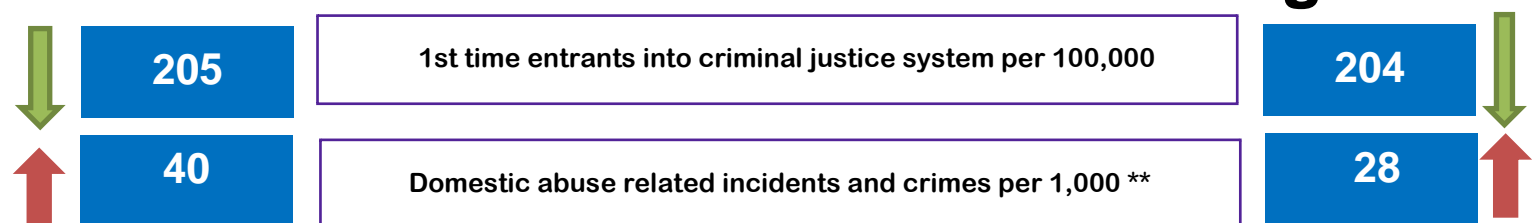


Crime



R&C

England



*Grade 5 is equivalent to a grade C+ under the new GCSE assessment methodology, this measure was introduced in 2017. Latest educational attainment data is 2019 due to no examinations taking place in 2020 because of the pandemic.

** New measure as previous measure of people aged 16-19 experiencing domestic abuse unavailable. However, arrows reflecting trend for new measure since 2017 have been added.

Arrows depict where rate has increased or decreased in comparison to data available in 2018 when the Early Help Strategy was last published. Green depicts significant improvement; Red is significantly worse and Amber means only marginal changes to rate.

5 - Transforming Early Help Services

Early Help Services within the Borough are delivered by a broad range of agencies. In formulating this strategy and its priorities, we have worked in partnership to identify the priorities for the borough. A list of partner agencies involved in the development of this document and the agreed outcomes following consultation and workshops is included at Appendix 1. Collectively we recognise that transforming Early Help Services, in a way that is sustainable, requires a focus on driving prevention, early intervention and the independence and resilience of our families.

Earlier, impactful intervention which builds sustainable resilience in families must be delivered, so that problems are tackled before needs escalate and crises occur, which may lead to costly specialist interventions. Our Signs of Safety practice model uses this strength-based approach in our work with children, young people and their families, creating safety networks to give families sustainable support. We will work to further embed this approach across our children's services teams and with our partners.

We have adopted a model in which there are four levels of need and this strategy outlines the services that are available in Redcar and Cleveland at each level. The model has been designed to support professionals and services to identify where an individual child's needs lie and the level of response that should be provided. The four levels of need are further described at Appendix 2, along with a table to guide practitioners.

Together we need to build the commitment to create the balance of ensuring that problems are adequately addressed; taking a whole family approach to assessing needs which always focusses on the voice of the child and their wishes and feelings.

Over the last few years, there has been an increased focus on the contextual safeguarding agenda. Redcar and Cleveland Children's Services have reported increasing cases of children vulnerable to Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) being discussed at the multi-agency VEMT Practitioner Group (VPG). In June 2020, CCE cases accounted for 57% of all VEMT cases discussed compared to 22% in June 2019. Analysis of a range of data sets suggests that children resident within the Cleveland Police area may be more at risk of exploitation than those resident in other areas of England. Cleveland Police published their Police Problem Profile '*The Exploitation of Children in Cleveland*' (Nov 2020), informed by partners and their data. This report aims to develop a common understanding of the current and future picture of exploitation including threats, vulnerabilities and risks. It states, "There are clear benefits to combining data sets (police and partnership) to ensure all children who may be at risk are identified." (P6)

We recognise that in order to transform our multi-agency prevention strategy, there needs to be improvements made to the ways we share information at a child level across our partnership; for instance, to work together to analyse risk factors so that through our data sharing, we can identify children at risk of CSE/CCE and serious youth violence at an earlier stage. There can then be a more informed and targeted intervention by our combined resources.

We will work together to plan for the future and use our intelligence sharply to ensure we are aware of local, regional and national changes which will impact on our families, for example, a rise in unemployment or the introduction of local regeneration programmes.

In March 2021, the Department of Health and Social Care published the findings from its Early Years Healthy Development review and the report, '*The Best Start for Life – A vision for the 1001 Critical days*' outlines an ambitious programme of work to transform how we support families. We will ensure that the on-going development of our integrated Family Hubs offer takes this framework into consideration, so we can provide universal, essential provision for every new family through our centres such as midwifery and health visiting, mental health support and infant feeding advice; alongside specialist family support services for all vulnerable families across our area, including those with children aged 0 to two years old.

We recognise that connecting with communities is vital for an early help offer to be created that both reacts to current need and seeks to prevent future need arising. Together with the South Tees Safeguarding Children's Partnership (STSCP), we will unpick the underlying causes and symptoms of neglect so that we can identify more clearly what leads parents to be unable to appropriately care for their children.

We intend to address any disconnects between service providers to create an early help model that tackles domestic abuse, substance misuse and parental emotional or mental health challenges.

Whilst the child remains central to everything we do, we will widen our net to have a whole partnership approach so that together we can actively intervene in the parental factors that disrupt or inhibit family relationships.

We aim to better understand the demand on services by using local intelligence, for example, callouts to the police, challenges at school, attendance at A&E, to involvement of Youth Offending Service; and we aim to use this learning to drive more integration and more targeted early intervention.

We will continue to strengthen our early help presence in the MACH. In addition to LA Early Help Coordinators who help screen safeguarding referrals and act as a single point of contact for referring agencies and families seeking support, we will form a huddle, as early help partners, to consider complex cases that do not meet the threshold for social care. Then we can collectively decide who is best placed to support the child and family.

The Redcar and Cleveland 'Peoples Information Network' (PIN) website has a key role to play and will enable people expressing low level needs and concerns to be sign-posted to access universal services or community resources to meet their needs.

We know that creating a system wide partnership is critical to the success of this early help model and the Children and Young People's Partnership Board will support this; along with a truly integrated response to families where developing family resilience becomes everybody's business.



6 – Our Priorities

Our multi-agency priorities are focussed on supporting children, young people and families to access help when needs and/or concerns are first identified in order that the early help provided improves the child's situation and supports sustainable progress.

In accordance with our principles and based on the learning from our multi-agency workshops, we have jointly developed the following priorities under the themes of: Whole Family Practice, Systems and Data Sharing, Workforce development, understanding communities and quality assurance. These themes were taken from the framework of the self-assessment we undertook as a partnership for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, in preparation for the next reiteration of the Troubled Families Programme (now known as the Supporting Families programme):

1

Whole family practice

Continue the improvement journey across health, education and VCS services, to strengthen the use of the Early Help Assessment (EHA) and model of whole family working.

2

Systems and data sharing

Strengthen information sharing processes across all agencies, especially at the front door; and work towards sharing datasets with key partners such as health, police and housing.

3

Workforce Development

Continue to encourage partnership working and awareness of the Signs of Wellbeing practice model, so we use the same language which children and families understand.

4

Understanding Communities

To empower communities to build sustainable support networks which help children and families thrive.

5

Quality Assurance

To work together to understand the quality of early help practice across agencies and how that impacts on children.

To support our work towards these priorities, a robust multi-agency Early Help implementation plan with clear actions will be developed.

7 - Ownership, Governance and Accountability

All partners involved in the development of this Early Help Strategy believe that it is a joint responsibility to work together and intervene early in order to help prevent children, young people and families experiencing unnecessary problems and reduced life chances. Our partnership includes the South Tees Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Health, Police, Youth Offending Service, Schools/Education, Children's Social Care, Housing, VCS organisations and the wider community.

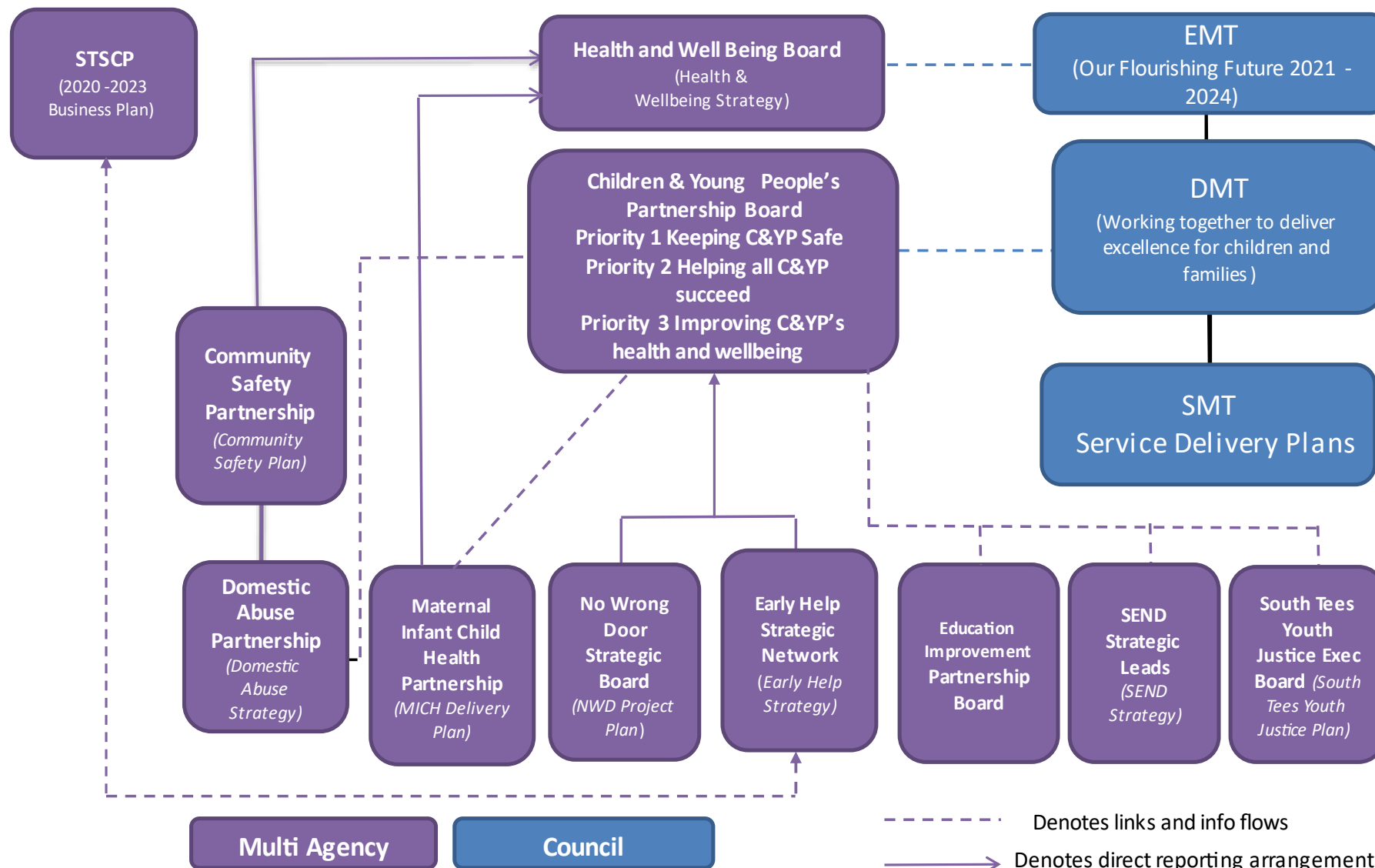
This Early Help Strategy and its implementation plan will be monitored by the Children and Young People's Partnership Board; the progress made against the agreed strategic priorities and objectives will be reported to them on a quarterly basis.

The relationship between this Early Help Strategy and other multi-agency strategic plans and partnerships is demonstrated in the diagram overleaf.





Children & Young People's Partnership Governance Framework



Appendix 1 – Co-production with Partners

Consultations around our local area Early Help self-assessment and on-line workshops took place between October and March 2020/21. The following agencies were involved in discussions to inform the development of this strategy:

- Beyond Housing
- Cleveland Police
- Community Safety Partnership
- Education Inclusion Service (RCBC)
- Family Hubs (RCBC)
- Health Visiting and School Nursing service (RCBC)
- MACH Manager (RCBC)
- Newcomen Primary School
- Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust
- Prevention Service (RCBC)
- South Tees Public Health
- Redcar and Cleveland Voluntary Development Agency
- Redcar Link Charitable Trust
- South Tees Youth Offending Service
- Tees Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust
- The Junction VCS organisation
- Youth and Community Service (RCBC)

Below are the key points that emerged from our area self-assessment and other consultation/workshops with partners:

Whole family practice - although there is a shared practice model and set of processes for professionals in partner agencies working across the wider early help system, respondents felt that wider Health partners, a lot of our schools and other partners do not yet practice whole family working.

Systems and data sharing - it was acknowledged there is a lack of a common case management system or interoperability between case management systems across the partnership. It was acknowledged that MHCLG would like us to invest in data transformation such as data warehousing with automatic feeds from across the partnership agencies to provide management information to inform our needs analysis and commissioning and we have not yet started this work.

Workforce development - staff need more encouragement to think more about partnership working, roles, functions, interactions and commonality of language. We need to continue to embed the signs of safety (wellbeing) practice model that focusses on building resilient family and wider support networks, to help families achieve their wellbeing goals.

Understanding communities - we need to work more on building capacity in communities e.g. through training or developing residents, and connecting voluntary and community organisations to the Early Help system.

Quality Assurance - we do not fully know the quality of early help practice (practice model, assessments and plans) across professional agencies, including health and education sectors. We are not good at measuring outcomes and impact of our services and we don't have shared outcomes across case management systems.

Appendix 2 – Our Early Help Model

A2.1 The Continuum of Need

Partners in Redcar & Cleveland have adopted a shared model for working with children and young people. It has been developed to provide clear thresholds that must be applied consistently to ensure the right help is given at the right time. We have adopted a model in which there are four levels of need and this strategy outlines the services that are available in Redcar and Cleveland at each level. (Table A2.2)



Level 1 – Children whose needs are met by universal services - Most children will have their needs met by their families, universal services and informal support networks. Children who fall within this level are making good overall progress in all areas of their development.

Level 2 – Children with additional needs that can be met from one other agency - Professionals working with some children or families may identify that they have some emerging or low level needs which if ignored, could develop and lead to adverse outcomes. Often, one service working with a family for a limited period at a particular point in time is all that is required to address needs at this level. It is useful to undertake an Early Help Assessment (EHA) to help identify and assess needs early. This tool looks at the family's strengths, needs and goals after considering all aspects of the child's life, family and environment.

Level 3 – Children with a range of additional needs that require a coordinated response from multiple agencies - There will be circumstances where an Early Help Assessment (EHA) identifies that a child has a range of additional needs where a co-ordinated multi-agency response, within or between agencies, will be needed. In these circumstances it is advisable for a lead professional to be identified to co-ordinate any interventions through a Team Around the Family (TAF) process.

Level 4 – Children with complex / significant needs that require specialist or statutory intervention - Specialist services are needed by a small number of children and young people where there are urgent and/or complex problems that are likely to have a significant impact on their health and development without the provision of services

The majority of children with needs at this level will require assessment under Section 17 (Child in Need) or Section 47 (Child in Need of Protection) of the Children Act 1989. These children may become subject to a child protection plan and/or need to become a looked after child either under Section 20 (voluntary accommodation) or Section 31 (Care Order) of the Children Act 1989.

A referral to children's social care should be made by a professional if they have the consent of a parent (or other person with parental responsibility) or, where appropriate, the child.

For further information you can view guidance on 'Providing the Right Support to Meet a Child's Needs' by clicking [here](#).



A2.2 Our Service Response to Levels of Need

Level of Need	Description	Service Response	Examples of Services Provided
Level 1 Children whose needs are met by universal services.	Most children will have their needs met by their families, universal services and informal support networks. Children who fall within this level are making good overall progress in all areas of their development.	Universal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Hub Services • Schools & Colleges • Day Nurseries and childminders • GP's, Health Visiting & School Nursing • Leisure Services • Housing Providers • Local Voluntary and Faith Groups • Youth and Community Services • Sports Clubs
Level 2 Children with additional needs that can be met from one other agency	Professionals working with some children or families may identify that they have some emerging or low level needs which if ignored, could develop and lead to adverse outcomes. Often, one service working with a family for a limited period at a particular point in time is all that is required to address needs at this level.	Universal services/Targeted intervention services	Universal Services as above and/or: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour and Therapeutic Support • Speech and Language Support • Early Years SEND Practitioners • Key Workers • Education Welfare Officers • Education Inclusion Officers • Targeted Intervention Officers
Level 3 Children with a range of additional needs that require a coordinated response from multiple agencies.	<p>In the majority of cases, effective early intervention at level 2 will prevent a child's needs escalating to the point where a more coordinated response from multiple agencies is required.</p> <p>However, there will be circumstances where a child has a range of additional needs where a coordinated multi-agency response, within or between agencies, will be needed.</p>	Identified Lead Practitioner or LA Key-worker to coordinate EHA and a Team Around the Family (TAF) process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEET Advisors • Short Breaks • Occupational Therapy and equipment • CAMHS Therapy Services • Parenting Programmes • Transformation Challenge Keyworkers • Youth Offending Service Prevention and Support Workers • Young Carer Support Services
Level 4 Children with complex / significant needs that require specialist or statutory intervention	Specialist services are needed by a small number of children where there are urgent and/or complex problems that are likely to have a significant impact on their health and development without the provision of services.	Intervention, Treatment & Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Offending Service Case Managers • Child Protection, Children in Need, Looked After Children and Leaving Care Social Work Services • CAMHS Treatment Services • Paediatric A & E • Specialist VCS Support Services

Glossary of Terms

CAMHS	Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Groups
CYPPB	Children and Young People's Partnership Board
DAP	Domestic Abuse Partnership
DMT	Departmental Management Team (Children's Services – Redcar and Cleveland Council)
EHA	Early Help Assessment
EIP	Early Intervention Programme
EMT	Executive Management Team (Redcar and Cleveland Council)
HWBB	Health and Wellbeing Board
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
PIN	Peoples Information Network (service directory website)
RCBC	Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SMT	Senior Management Team (Children's Services – Redcar and Cleveland Council)
STSCP	South Tees Safeguarding Children's Partnership
TAF	Team Around the Family
VCS	Voluntary & Community Sector
PIN	Peoples Information Network (service directory website)

