City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership

Families First
Building Brighter Futures

Family Help Guide for Parents and Carers



Introduction

Our vision for children and young people in York is to:

Stay home: more children remaining at home or in their naturally connected network and community

Come home: more children returning to their family or network where it is safe to do so or at the very least returning to York when this is in line with their wishes

Safe and Connected: children are safe and connected to their network, community and supported to learn

The Children's Social Care National Framework says that we should be supporting families so that:

- Children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need
- Children and young people are safe inside and outside of their homes
- Children and young people are supported by their family and other important people in their lives
- Children in care, or who used to be in care, have somewhere safe and happy to live

You can find out more about the service you can expect: Children's Social Care National Framework

Family Group Decision Making

While we are supporting your family, you will be offered Friends and Family meetings to explore how they can support you. This will involve people who matter and people who are important to you.

> **"I felt listened to and we had a plan supported by our family and friends."**
>
> Parent

In York we use a 'Signs of Safety' approach to build relationships and make sure everyone understands what needs to happen to help improve things for your family. It's important that you include your friends and family as much as possible, as they will know you best.

What is Family Help?

Family Help is a Children and Families Service that provides support to families whose needs are best met by different professionals working together. This may be through targeted early help, child in need or child protection.

Key features:

- Multi-agency team around the family
- Coordinated support
- Clear plans and goals developed with the family
- Regular reviews
- Working together to improve outcomes and reducing risk

Please reach out to your Family Help Lead Practitioner if you have any questions or concerns.

What is a Family Help Lead Practitioner?

All families who are working with the Family Help Service will have a named Family Help Lead Practitioner- this may be a social worker. This person will be your dedicated worker and main point of contact- they will contact you and arrange a visit to see you and your family at home.

If child protection worries are identified by the Family Help Team, the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team will be informed. There is a Child Protection guide for parents and carers.

What is an Assessment?

Family Help receives information (referral) from people who know the family when they believe children and young people need support and help to be safe and healthy. Family Help Lead Practitioners have a responsibility to speak to you and your family to explore how best to help. They will contact you and arrange to see you within five days of the information being shared. The assessment is both a process and a written document.

What to expect?

Family Help Lead Practitioners will want to speak with you and your family about the things that people have been worried about or said you might need support with. Family Help Lead Practitioners know that this can be a stressful and worrying time – please ask as many questions as you want.

Family Help Lead Practitioners will:

- Work with you, your child(ren) and other people you know to understand your family's life.
- Speak to your child(ren) on their own to understand what has happened and more about their life.
- Speak to you to understand what has happened, better understand you and talk through your ideas for making the situation better.
- Speak to members of your family or friends who you identify as support, to see what they can do to help.
- Share ideas to make the situation safer.
- Ask for information about your family from other agencies.
- Arrange a family and friends meeting to look at how you can make changes together, and how the people who already know and care about you can help.

Who will visit me?

A Family Help Lead Practitioner will meet with you to talk about the assessment. Their manager will ensure the worker has the skills and knowledge to best support your family. Family Help Lead Practitioners will talk to you about three important things:

1. What is everyone worried about?
2. What are the things that are working well?
3. What needs to happen next?

During visits, the Family Help Lead Practitioner will want to speak to children and young people alone and will talk to you about the best ways to do this. They can have conversations with you in different places, such as your home, a school or office.

How long will it take?

How long the assessment takes will be determined by the needs of the child and your family and level of worry, however, they must be completed within 45 working days. The Family Help Lead Practitioner will work with you to arrange a family and friends meeting while the assessment is happening. This is to bring together the people who know and care about you to talk about what's going on and what they can do to help. There will also be regular reviews by the manager, and you will be told when the assessment is due to end.

What happens at the end of an assessment?

Once the assessment is written up you will receive a copy and the Family Help Lead Practitioner will talk to you about what kind of support they have recommended for your family.

- A family and friends meeting to look at how things are going and how the people who already know and care about you can continue to help.
- Targeted Early Help – You might agree that some things are best supported with professional help, which involves a Family Help Lead Practitioner working together with teachers, health visitors, your GP and any other professionals who know your family, as well as your friends and wider family. The Family Help Practitioner will arrange 'team around the family' meetings.
- A Child in Need Plan – This involves the same people as Targeted Early Help, but the plan is written differently and there are regular 'child in need meetings' to make sure support stays on track to help things improve for your family. Children with a disability are entitled to support under a Child in Need plan.
- You or the Family Help Lead Practitioner may feel that a Child Protection Plan is required. This would be recommended if the Family Help Lead Practitioner is worried that a child has experienced or may be at risk of significant harm, such as neglect, abuse (physical, sexual or emotional), or unsafe living conditions. If this happens, Your Family Help Lead Practitioner will talk to you about this process and provide more information on the next steps. If a Child Protection Plan is needed, your family would be supported by a Social Worker.
- It may be that you don't need help from a Family Help Lead Practitioner. If helpful, we will share information about other services and support you could access as a family. We know many people find this really helpful (there are some useful links at the end of this guide).

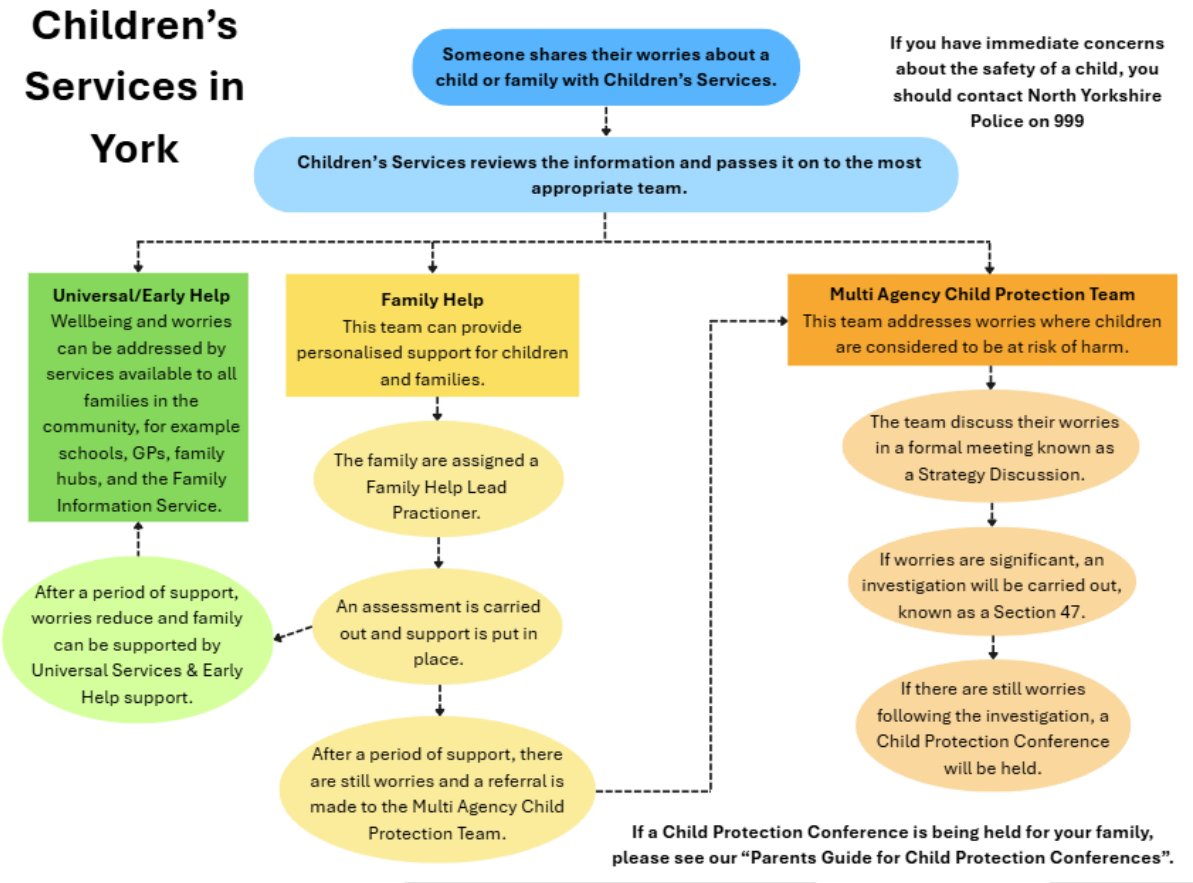
Providing feedback

We want to hear what you and your children have to say about your experience of the assessment, and any support provided by the Family Help Lead Practitioner.

If you want to talk to us about the support your family has received, or provide feedback, or if you are not happy with the service provided to your family, you can talk to your Family Help Lead Practitioner, their Service Manager, or make a complaint to haveyoursay@york.gov.uk

All have access to the City of York Council Corporate Complaints Service, Customer & Business Support Services, West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA or 01904 554145

Appendix 1 – Flow Chart



To see the flow chart of Children's Services in York please go to https://postimg.cc/N2mppBhb

WHERE TO GO FOR SUPPORT

You can also find out about other support and help at City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership Parents and Carers page accessed below and at www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/advice-parents-carers-1/parents-carers

Family Information Service

A free and impartial information service for all York families, from pregnancy to 19 years (up to 25 years for families who have children with additional needs and disabilities).

They can help with anything and everything around family life and being a young person.

If you're a parent or carer and have a question but don't know where to go, then please get in touch. Information includes:

- Ofsted registered childcare including a brokerage service for families struggling to find childcare to meet their needs.
- Clubs, groups, activities, and things to do for children, young people, and families
- Support services including parenting, emotional help and wellbeing, finance support services and more…

The service operates on an ask anything basis, so no matter what the question, feel free to get in touch and the team will try and help you.

Get in touch by:

Telephone: 01904 554444, Monday to Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm

Text telephone: 07786202241

Email: fis@york.gov.uk

Contact Us Form https://www.raiseyork.co.uk/raise-york/get-touch

Scan the QR code to find information about our Parent Panel.

Our Agreement

- ❑ I confirm that I have received the "Guide to Family Help" leaflet and that the information has been explained to me in a way that I understand.
- ❑ I agree (consent) to work with Family Help to receive support for me and my child(ren).
- ❑ I understand that information about me and my child(ren) may be collected, used and shared, where appropriate, to help Family Help and other relevant services provide the right support, coordinate services, review progress, and help keep children safe and well.
- ❑ I understand that this information will be managed in line with the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership's privacy notice which explains how our information is used, stored and protected and that I can find out more at https://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/terms-conditions/privacy-policy

Child/ren's name/s:

Signed……

Name of Parent……..

Date……

Signed……

Name of Parent……..

Date……

Family Help Lead Practitioner.....