

City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership

Guidance on Continuum of Need

Partners working together to ensure children and their families receive the right help at the right time.

July 2024

City of York
Safeguarding Children Partnership



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Introduction

In the City of York our shared vision *'is for all children to get the best start in life, be happy and healthy, stay safe and develop the skills and relationships they need to thrive into adulthood.'* (Children and Young People's Plan).

We know that many children do well however, some children and their families have needs which will require additional support to enable them to reach their full potential.

These needs may change throughout a child's life, needs which might require limited support or intensive support depending on their circumstances.

This document has been developed by the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership to support professionals working with children when faced with a decision about their wellbeing or safety, to drive our ambition of ensuring children and families are given the right help at the right time.

This document sets out which levels of intervention may be needed to support children and their families, while ensuring children are protected from abuse or neglect.



Working together to safeguard children – ‘A shared responsibility’

It is important everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities, we know that successful outcomes for children and their families depend on strong partnership working with families and practitioners where we are taking a child centered approach to working with the whole family.

The [Children’s Social Care National Framework](#) should be read alongside [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#) by all partners given the first enabler is: ‘multi-agency working is prioritised and effective’ to drive the overarching four outcomes:

1 Outcome one:
Children, young people and their families stay together and get the help they need

2 Outcome two:
Children and young people are supported by their family network

3 Outcome three:
Children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes

4 Outcome four:
Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes

In the City of York this is supported through our own Practice Model which is outlined in our **Local Protocol for Assessment** and support by our key principles (see page 5).



Every conversation and decision in York

<p>Starts with The child</p>	<p>Considers What the long-term impact may be of every decision</p>	<p>Ensures We develop resilient lifelong foundations for children through secure local family networks</p>	<p>Asks Is it good enough for my child or family</p>
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Practice Framework

<p>Systemic Practice</p>	<p>We will build trusting relationships with children and their families, focusing on the whole family system rather than an individual. Everyone is unique in their experiences and an expert in their own situation. We will work to understand a person in their context, their relationships and how they navigate within their own community. We will challenge ourselves to understand what makes someone who they are and how we can best support them.</p>
<p>Signs of Safety</p>	<p>We will work to build relationships with children, their families and everyone naturally connected to them to understand well-being, risk and promote safety, by building on strengths and successes and give the family and their network every opportunity to come up with and use their ideas to create lasting safety and wellbeing before we offer or impose ours. We will keep children and young people at the centre of our work through understanding their views, wishes and feelings. We will use a common language which is understood by all focusing on <i>‘What are we worried about?’ ‘What’s working well?’ ‘What needs to happen?’</i> to create long-lasting change over a child’s lifetime.</p>
<p>Family Seeing</p>	<p>We believe that every child has a family and a community who they should be connected to. We will invest in them, knowing that families and communities often have the best solutions to their challenges. Relationships are the foundations of resilience. We will see the family in front of us, engage them and their networks at the earliest opportunity, identify those important adults in the child’s life and work to build lifelong family relationships.</p>
<p>Safe and Together</p>	<p>We will work to promote the well-being of children through understanding the impact of domestic abuse, partnering with survivors to support them alongside intervening and engaging with those who cause harm to reduce risk.</p>

Early conversations

We know the needs of children and young people are often varied, needs do not fit neatly into little boxes and practitioners will need to seek support and advice. While practitioners should refer to safeguarding procedures they should speak with their designation safeguarding lead/team.

These discussions help to pull out the factors, the extent of harm and understand the balance of risk and protective factors in a child's life and determine the next steps.

Continuum of need

City of York have developed a Continuum of Need with some features we might see in families across the continuum. It is important to recognise that this tool should be used as a guide and does not represent a fixed definition or checklist to be used to access designated support for children and families.

Professionals should use this guide alongside professional knowledge and understanding, taking a holistic view of the child or young person, their lived experience, and the safety and protective factors around them.



Continuum of Need

Level one – universal need

The majority of children will have their needs met by a single agency response including: GP's, pharmacies, schools, libraries, health visitors, sport clubs.

Level two – emerging need

Some children and families have emerging needs. Intervention is provided by a single agency or a co-ordinated response by multiple agencies. Consider Early Help Assessment delivered by lead practitioner.

Level three – family help

Children with increased vulnerability and additional needs which require an Early Help Assessment, a multi agency response. Intervention to be provided via Team around the Family or Targeted Intervention

Level four – specialist need

Children and young people whose needs are increasingly complex and require specialist support through Section 17 social work led, Section 47 child protection and children in our care interventions.

Level one: Universal needs

All children and young people will receive support through universal services which include GP's, libraries, education settings, pharmacies. The majority of these children and young people achieve their full potential through accessing universal provision without need for further support.

Children and young people in this level have no unmet needs or need is low level and can be met by the universal services or with some limited additional advice or guidance

Some examples may include supporting a child to have:

- Meet developmental milestones
- Good school attendance
- Good access to community resources
- Positive friendships and connections
- Parents who feel empowered and able to meet the needs of their children

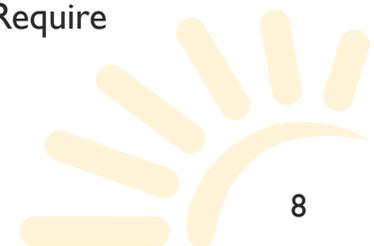
Level two: Emerging Need – Early Help

There are some families where emerging needs are identified and support above what can be offered by universal services is required. These children and young people are at risk of not reaching their full potential without the provision of additional interventions, and this intervention is provided from a single agency or via a coordinated response.

An Early Help Assessment may be appropriate for children at this level and should be considered. When emerging needs arise due to a child's having additional needs or being disabled, make use of York's Local Offer for SEND (yorksend.org).

Examples may include:

- Child not attending scheduled health appointments, or there are worries about child's hygiene. No evident adverse impact on the child. Parent would benefit from a conversation to ensure they are supported to attend the health appointment.
- Child could be experiencing bullying.
- Attendance is generally good however, there may be moments where the child is absent which requires conversations with parent/carer to understand barriers to make learning and attendance more accessible.
- Parent/Carer has limited access to community resources, which could include poverty and social isolation. Require support from an agency to link into community resources and build confidence in this area.



Level three: Family Help – Increased Vulnerabilities and Additional Need

Describes a service provided to children and families who are identified by practitioners as having increased vulnerabilities and additional needs.

The needs should be understood through identifying a lead practitioner who undertakes an Early Help Assessment and co-ordinates multi-agency partners to deliver Team around the Family.

The lead practitioner is the named practitioner who has been identified as the person who will be the family's main point of contact throughout the early help process.

A family support worker, school nurse, teacher, health visitor and/or special educational needs co-ordinator could undertake the lead practitioner role.

When complex needs arise due to a child having additional needs or being disabled make use of York's Local Offer for SEND (yorksend.org).

Examples could include:

- With support and adaptations, children continue not to attend health appointments, and requires multiple professionals to support to ensure their health needs are met.
- Concerns that attendance is declining e.g. child is disruptive or not engaged in lessons or is missing out on learning. There could be indications that home life is unsettled, further unpicking of what is happening around the child required through an early help assessment and professionals from more than one service required to support the child.
- Parent/Carer struggling with managing behaviour, asking for support and guidance.
- Child could be a young carer.
- Poor or overwhelming Care Co-ordination for a Child with Disabilities.
- Parental conflict occurring, where disagreements are not easily resolvable. Concerns that child could be replicating behaviours seen at home, and finds it difficult to cope with anger, frustration and upset.



Level four: Specialist need

Specialist need - Children and young people whose needs are increasingly complex and require specialist support through Section 17, Section 47 child protection and children in our care interventions.

These are children and young people whose needs are increasingly complex, based on a range of needs and depth or at risk or suffering from significant harm.

A child in need is defined under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled.

Where it is felt that it is in the best interests of the child and their family, the lead practitioner for Section 17 (Child in Need) does not need to be a qualified social worker however, they will need direct supervision from a qualified Social Work.

Acute need also describes children at risk of significant harm under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, which require further investigation. Harm can be determined 'significant'

by 'comparing a child's health and development with what might be reasonably expected of a similar child'.

Although there is no absolute criteria for determining whether or not harm is 'significant', local authorities such as social services, police, education and health agencies work with family members to assess the child, and a decision is made based on their professional judgement using the gathered evidence.

Children may become subject to child protection enquiries, taken into the care of the local authority or require specialist mental health intervention. Social Workers will take the lead in child protection safeguarding enquiries and co-ordinate services at this level.



Examples may include:

- Concerns family is at breaking point, asking child to leave or child has relocated to another network members home, therefore child has presented as homeless.
- Child is privately fostered.
- Children regularly going missing from home, with concerns the child is experiencing sexual or criminal exploitation or involved in county lines.
- Child has severe, complex or challenging mental health problems including significant, serious or numerous self-harm or suicide/attempts.
- Child has problematic, severe or chronic drug and alcohol misuse
- Parent or carer has moderate, severe or complex mental or physical health needs or learning disability, which places the child at risk of harm.
- Significant serious Domestic Abuse taking place within the home.
- Concerns in respect of medical neglect despite intervention and support from professionals, where the child is experiencing pain and harm through lack of medical care.

Significant harm examples could include:

- Children at immediate risk of significant harm including physical, sexual, emotional harm and neglect.
- Children disclosing incidents of abuse (sexual, physical, emotional).
- Non independently mobile babies and children with unexplained injuries, suspicious injuries or where there is inconsistent explanation of the injury.
- Children from families experiencing a crisis likely to result in an imminent break down of care arrangements
- Where there are serious concerns regarding the risk of significant harm to an unborn baby
- Children who are remanded to Custody.



Early Help

‘Early Help is a collaborative approach where we recognise families do best when they are supported by those who already know them and can assess and provide early intervention at the earliest stage’

Everyone in the City of York who works with children, young people and families, has a responsibility to support the delivery of Early Help and support them in accessing appropriate services’.

Early help is a collaboration not a service. In its simplest terms everyone is involved in the delivery of early help. This includes families, communities, voluntary groups, “universal” provision, schools, health etc.

Many universal agencies will use service specific tools to identify, assess and respond to need. However, in order to support our city wide approach to early help and joint working partner agencies have produced common guidance and tools.

Where a child’s needs are due to additional needs or being disabled make use of [York’s Local Offer for SEND](#).



Raise York – Your Family Hub Network

Families and communities help to provide a foundation for children and young people to grow, develop and feel safe. Raise York brings together children; young people; families; communities and professionals so everyone can get the connections, help and support they want and need.

Raise York is a network of people, places and online support. It supports children, young people and families from pregnancy to adulthood. You can expect a warm welcome in your local community and to be guided to the right support for you.

The Raise York network is a key component of how our city can come together to deliver the Early Help Strategy. The Raise York partnership have developed tools and information for families and partners:

- Information and support for families, including:
 - » Raise York website
 - » Family Hubs
 - » Developing Youth Strategy and Local Youth Partnership
 - » Information and advice for parents including parent champions
 - » Parenting support
 - » Supporting your parenting journey (Start for life)
- Tools, resources and support for professionals

Get in touch by:

For more information about Raise York and to find details of local help and support please visit: raiseyork.co.uk.



Raise York
Your Family Hub Network



Family Information Service

The York Family Information Service is a free and impartial information service for parents and carers of children and young people aged 0 to 19 (or up to 25 for disabled children).

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.

Get in touch by:

Contact Us Form:

raiseyork.co.uk/raise-york/get-touch

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

Text telephone: 07786202241

Email: fis@york.gov.uk

Follow us on Facebook or X

Supporting Families

Supporting Families Advisors have been developed to support partners as part of wider work to develop York's Family Hubs Network. Supporting Families Advisors do not directly work with families but provide a contact point for help and advice for partners in the city who are working with children, young people and families at an early help level.

If you're completing an early help assessment for a family, or think one might be helpful, you can contact the Supporting Families Team for advice and guidance. The Supporting Families Team can:

- Provide practical advice and guidance to partners about the early help assessment and **T**eam **A**round the **C**hild and **F**amily process.
- Provide case specific advice and guidance to help you better support or access services for the families you are working with. This includes providing advice in cases where progress has become 'stuck'.
- Let you know if an early help assessment and TACF process is already in place for family and link you in with the lead practitioner

Contact the Supporting Families Team at:

supportingfamilies@york.gov.uk and a member of the team will respond to you; please provide your phone number if you would prefer a call back.



MASH

If there are concerns a child is vulnerable or at risk of significant harm, contact should be made with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in York. The MASH is a multi-agency team made up of representatives from a range of services, including Social Care, Early Help Targeted Intervention, North Yorkshire Police and Health Professionals.

MASH is a single point of contact for concerns about children, reviewing referrals and making decisions on contacts made to Children's Social Care. This partnership approach will make it easier to get children, young people and families to get the right level of support as quickly as possible.

Following a referral, the MASH team come together to review and share information sent to them. They use their professional judgement and also the threshold document, to enable them to make right decision at the right time for a child.

In order for MASH to efficiently make decision, all relevant information, including parental consent or clear reasons why this has not been obtained, is provided to ensure that the referral can be progressed as effectively as possible.

Get in touch by:

Referrals on situations that are not immediately urgent should be made by completing the MASH referral form

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub contact information:

Phone: 01904 551900

Email: mash@york.gov.uk

Address: MASH, West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA

Outside office hours, at weekends and on public holidays contact the Emergency Duty Team on telephone: 0300 131 2131



Local Authority Designated Officer – allegations against professionals (including foster carers)

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) works within a local authority to:

- Provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations
- Liaise with the police and other agencies
- Monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process

The role of the LADO is to coordinate all allegations and concerns made against a person who works with children within the City of York.

As such, all allegations and concerns must be reported to the LADO. The LADO will maintain a database of all allegations and concerns received and will provide reports to the CYSCP at least annually or on request.

The LADO will advise, in discussion with the senior manager within the organisation, on what action should be taken by the employer and whether the matter should be referred to children's social care and the police for a decision on whether to convene a strategy meeting or an initial evaluation meeting.

The CYSCP have produced a Procedure for Allegations against Childcare Professionals and Volunteers. This guidance deals with allegations against staff, volunteers, foster carers and adopters, it is for employers and organisations responsible for providing services to children and young people.

If you do have concerns and wish to make a referral then please complete the LADO Referral Form.

Completed LADO referral forms must be sent by email to: lado@york.gov.uk



Information sharing and consent

Within the City of York we recognise it is important to work alongside families and all organisations adopt a 'working with' and not 'doing to' approach. The importance of engaging children, young people and families from the outset and of securing their consent to work with the child and family is crucial to ensure long term improved outcomes for children.

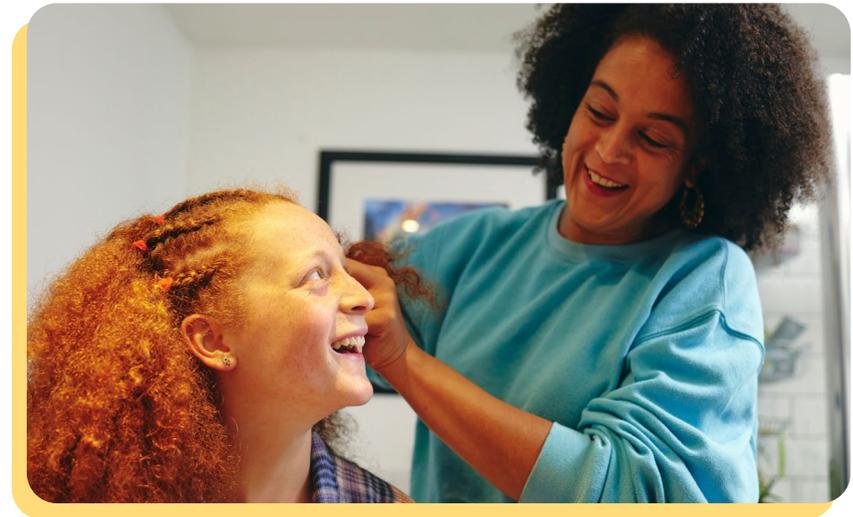
Consent means that the family is fully informed about the services they are being referred to, agree with the referral being made and understand what information professionals are passing on and why. Refusal to engage with services or refusal to give consent to share information are not in isolation reasons to escalate concerns.

There are some exceptions when there is a need to protect children and young people. For example, if having a conversation with the family would place the child, or another child, or someone else, or you the referrer, at increased risk of suffering harm you do not need consent.

You also don't need consent if it might undermine the investigation of a serious crime or where a delay in getting consent may mean the child or young person is put at further risk of harm.

In circumstances where information is being shared without consent the practitioner should respond in line with safeguarding guidance and or procedures, such as; Children who are at risk of exploitation, fabricated and induced illness (FII), unborn and non-mobile baby protocol.

Refer to [CYSCP City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) for further information.



Seven golden rules of information sharing:

1

Remember that the Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.

2

Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

3

Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.

4

Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is good reason to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be certain of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.

5

Consider safety and well-being: Make your information sharing decision after considering the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.

6

Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).

7

Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

In the City of York we aim to promote a culture of partnership working, whereby all agencies working with children, young people and their families feel confident, able and supported to address concerns in situations where there are differences in professional judgements around the response to the well-being and safety of children and young people.

As a partnership we are keen to foster a culture of conversation that aims to promote healthy, collaborative relationships between practitioners. We know that when we have strong partnerships between professionals and with families' outcomes for children are better.

These conversations should take place as soon as possible with the aim of achieving a shared understanding and resolving any differences at the earliest opportunity.

Successful outcomes for children depend on strong partnership working between parents/carers and the practitioners working with them (*Working Together 2023*).

Effective working together relies on good information sharing resolving disagreements to the satisfaction of workers and agencies, and a belief in a genuine partnership and joint working to safeguard children.

Decisions should be reached together through constructive conversation however, at times there may be disagreement. If this is the case:

Stage 1: Direct Professional to Professional Conversation:

conversations should take place as soon as possible between practitioners to resolve any differences at the earliest opportunities. This fosters a culture of conversation that aims to promote healthy, collaborative relationships between practitioners. We know that when we have strong partnerships between professionals and with families', outcomes for children are better.

Stage 2: Direct Line Manager to Line Manager Conversation:

where resolution is not reached between practitioners, their respected line managers should have a conversation with the aim to reach a resolution.

Stage 3: Senior Manager to Senior Manager Conversation:

Escalation should take place to senior management if resolution is not reached through conversation with practitioners and their respective line managers in the previous stages. The aim of Senior Management involvement is to create a space where practitioners and their respective line managers work through differences with the aim of achieving a shared understanding and resolving any differences at the earliest opportunity.

Stage 4: Support from the CYSCP to resolve the matter:

In the unlikely event that resolution has not been achieved through the previous actions, the CYSCP has a role to support and assist agencies in achieving a resolution.

For further information regarding the [CYSCP Professionals Resolutions Practice Guidance](#) please visit the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

If you would like this document in an alternative format, please contact:

 (01904) 551550

 ycc@york.gov.uk

 @CityofYork

 @cityofyork

It is available in the following languages:

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

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For further information: West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA

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