



Prevention and Early Help Strategy

2024–2028

**Sunderland
City Council**

NHS

 **SSCP**
SUNDERLAND
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
PARTNERSHIP

 **NORTHUMBRIA
POLICE**
Proud to Protect

together for
children
SUNDERLAND



Introduction



Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 Chapter 3: Providing help, support and protection states:

'All families can face challenges that make parenting difficult. Often families are able to overcome challenges themselves or with the help of relatives, friends and services, such as schools, youth services, health visiting and mental health services. However, sometimes families will have more significant needs that require more intensive help and support.'

Section 1: Early Help goes on to say:

'Early Help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. It is not an individual service, but a system of support delivered by local authorities and their partners working together and taking collective responsibility to provide the right provision in their area. Some early help is provided through 'universal services', such as education and health services. They are universal because they are available to all families, regardless of their needs. Other early help services are coordinated by a local authority and/or their partners to address specific concerns within a family and can be described as targeted early help. Examples of these include parenting support, mental

health support, youth services, youth offending teams and housing and employment services. Early help may be appropriate for children and families who have several needs, or whose circumstances might make them more vulnerable. It is a voluntary approach, requiring the family's consent to receive support and services offered. These may be provided before and/or after statutory intervention.'

In Sunderland we embrace these statements wholeheartedly but would go further than this and say that we believe that Prevention is every bit as important as intervention. As partners we are committed to ensuring that Prevention (support even before very early help) is at the forefront of every practitioner's thinking and actions.



Patrick Melia
Chief Executive, Sunderland City Council



Jeanette Scott
Director of Nursing, NHS North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

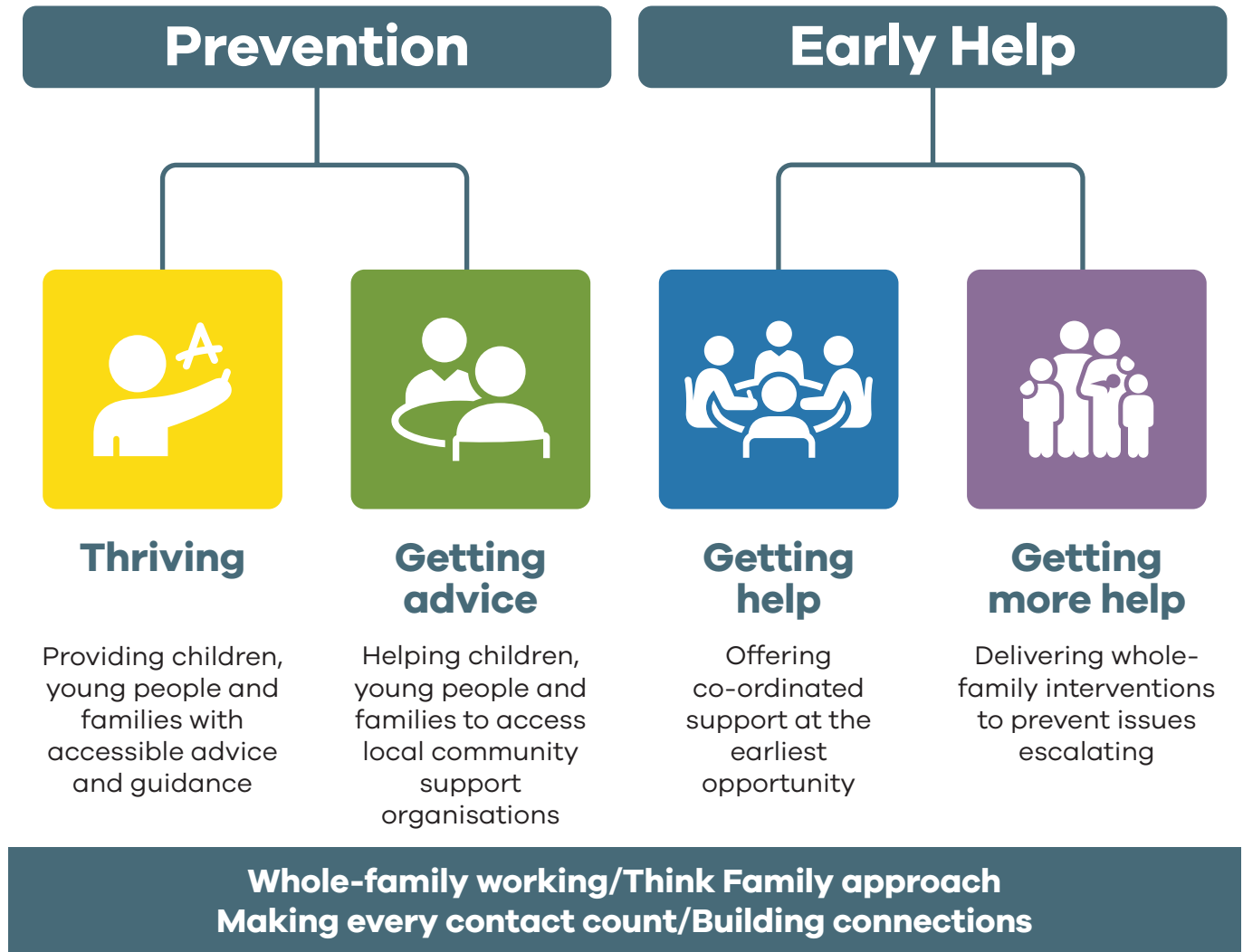


Mark Hall
Chief Superintendent, Northumbria Police



Themes

Our Prevention and Early Help Strategy for Sunderland is based on four themes. These are mapped here against the iThrive model of support.



Our Vision

“Everyone in Sunderland will have healthy, happy lives, with no one left behind.”

As part of this, all children, young people and families will know how to access and will receive the right support at the right level at the right time. We are committed to supporting families to support themselves.

We will know we are getting this right because families will tell us so. They will tell us that they know how and where to find the support they need, and that it makes a positive difference to their family.



Principles of the Prevention and Early Help Strategy



The principles of our Prevention and Early Help Strategy are:

Child and family-centred

This means that:

- We will listen to children and take into account their wishes and feelings;
- We will put the child at the centre of any action we take or decision we make;
- We will consider the needs of the child in the context of their family and support the family and the network to put the child at the centre of their own decision-making;
- We will recognise that it is our role to engage with families in the best interests of the child, and not their responsibility to engage with us.

Needs led and strengths-based

This means that:

- We will offer support at the earliest opportunity and at the lowest appropriate level; we will also step away as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so;
- We will use our model of practice to recognise the strengths in families and empower them to find their own solutions;
- We will use family networks of support to increase the number of people able to support children;
- We will 'make every conversation count' and use questions to explore the needs of all family members.

Trauma-informed

This means that:

- We will build relationships with our children, young people and families that help us to understand their lived experience;
- We will seek to understand the underlying causes of a child or family's circumstances or behaviours and respond kindly and with compassion;
- We will use language that does not criticise or blame;
- We will be respectful, honest and transparent in our conversations and communication with families.



Key Achievements 2017–2023

(inc 2020–2021 Covid pandemic)

Our targeted Early Help Service now supports over 2,700 families (over 5,000 children) per annum

‘Most children benefit from exceptional early help services, which are carefully targeted, innovative and continually evolving’ – JTAI 2023

We have reduced the number of children supported by statutory services by 18 %

We have reduced the number of young people Not in Employment, Education or Training or Unknown from 15 % to 5 %

75 % of children supported by a Family Group Conference need no further support after two years

We have reduced the number of First Time Entrants into the Youth Offending Team by 60 %

We now have an extensive Prevention and Early Help offer available to families

We have a community based approach and have established five local Family Hubs

We have a strong partnership with a shared vision and commitment. We are One Team

We have three established Mental Health in Schools Teams

We have an agreed threshold document which is understood by all partners

30 schools are now supported directly by an Early Help Worker (up from four in 2018)

Ambitions for the Prevention and Early Help Strategy 2024–2028

We will have a real 'No Wrong Door' approach to family access to services; children and families will receive the right support no matter where their starting point

Children and families will have a positive view of Early Help; we will receive more self-referrals than practitioner referrals

Our workforce will respond better to the cultural, ethnic and diverse profile of our families; we will see this reflected in recording and in family feedback

We will increase the number of families being supported by prevention and early help activity; our partners in the 'universal services' will feel equipped to co-ordinate plans

Our prevention and early help support will have a positive impact on educational outcomes: attendance, attainment and aspiration outcomes will all improve

Our Family Hubs will be a natural first point of contact for families; asking for help and support will become the norm

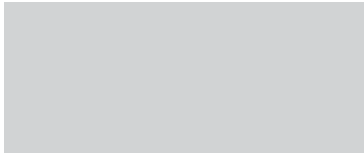
We will develop and roll out a multi-agency workforce development plan

We will develop a set of 'meaningful measures' of progress and a multi-agency audit tool to support quality assurance; we will support each other to improve

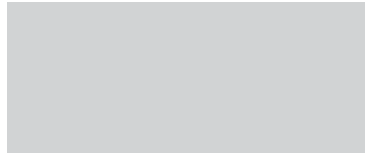
We will develop a multi-agency data and information sharing agreement that supports families rather than systems

The Sunderland Prevention and Early Help Pledge

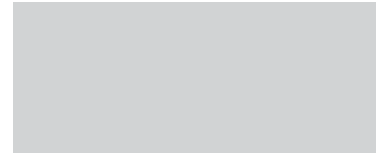
We the undersigned pledge our support for the Prevention and Early Help Strategy and commit to the support, funding, delivery of services and training required to meet its aims.



Leader of Sunderland City Council



Director of Children's Services



Chair of VCSE Alliance



Lead Member for Children's Services, Child Poverty and Skills



Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities



Lead Officer for the DWP



Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board



Independent Scrutineer, Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership



Chair of Secondary Heads' Group



Group Chair of Primary Heads' Group

For support and advice with prevention and early help, practitioners can contact or search for:

The Early Help Advice and Allocations Team (EHAAT)
Email: ehaat@togetherforchildren.org.uk
Phone: 0191 561 4084

My Best Life (directory of activities and services for families)
Web: www.mybestlife.org.uk – Sunderland

Rainbow Family Hub
Washington
NE37 3AE
0191 561 3995

Thorney Close Family Hub
Sunderland
SR3 4JQ
0191 561 4127

Bunny Hill Family Hub
Sunderland
SR5 4BW
0191 561 8126

Coalfield Family Hub
Hetton
DH5 9NE
0191 561 6625

Winnibell Family Hub
1-4 Lombard Street, Sunderland
SR1 2HS
0191 561 2850

Schools' directory
Web: www.mybestlife.org.uk – Sunderland

Sunderland health contacts
Web: www.mybestlife.org.uk – Sunderland

Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance (VCSE)
Web: sunderlandvsa.co.uk



