

Salford Family Partnership

Early Help Strategy



Our early help approach and strategy to responding to the needs of children, young people and families 2023 to 2026

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Foreword

On behalf of the Salford Safeguarding Children’s Partnership, we are pleased to share Salford’s Early Help Strategy, which sets out our early help approach and plans for the way we work with children, young people and their families to enable them to thrive.

This strategy builds on our existing early help approach and reflects the work of our diverse and active partnership in the city. As we refresh the strategy, we celebrate the work that has already been done and look forward to the next stage of early help and how much we can achieve together to support children, young people and families in our city.

The approach and strategy supports our ambition to shift the balance of power towards families and communities, so that the work we do with children, young people and their families builds on their strengths and is led by their voice. This approach is crucial in improving outcomes for children, young people and their families as well as managing demand and cost pressures.

Our early help approach reflects our joint commitment as partners to work collaboratively to provide the earliest help and support for children and young people who need it, so that they and their families receive the help they need as soon as they need it from the people best placed to help them.

This strategy is vital in this context, bringing partners together to deliver our ambition to develop a strong culture of early help in Salford where families know where to go to seek advice and feel confident to ask for help. A city where families don’t have to ask twice – acting early to get families the advice and help they need is everybody’s responsibility.

This strategy and approach is an opportunity for us to shape new ways of working and develop the services, skills and tools that will help us achieve our ambitions. Its success is reliant on the effort and commitment of all partners in the city, including children, young people and their families.

We look forward to working with you to make sure that children, young people and their families in Salford get the help they need, when they need it to enable them to start well, live well and exceed expectations.



Melissa Caslake,
Executive Director,
Children’s Services



**Councillor Jim
Cammell,**
Lead Member for
Children and Young
People’s Services

What do we mean by early help?

Early help is the term we use in Salford to describe the way we work together with children, young people and their families to prevent problems occurring and provide support as soon as problems emerge or re-emerge.

Families may need early help at any time because, as children develop, challenges can emerge. Equally, family circumstances can change, and families can need more support.

Evidence tells us the sooner a family receives help, the sooner they are able to improve their situation and prevent the need for longer term support or statutory intervention, where appropriate.

Early help in Salford is not a service provision but a collaborative approach. Our belief is that children, young people and their families are best supported by people they know and trust. We know that most early help is provided by families, friends, neighbours and communities, and these are central to our strategy.

Where families need support, effective early help relies on local agencies working together in partnership with families to identify who in the family needs help and build on strengths and assets to empower families and enable them to thrive.



In Salford we use the 'Thrive' model to set out how the Partnership works together to ensure families get the right help at the right time.



Our vision

Our vision is for a Salford where strong families, strong networks and strong communities enable all children, young people and their families to start well, live well and be inspired to exceed expectations.

This document will set out the Salford partnership approach to early help and our joint strategic aims

To make our vision a reality, we will ensure that we will:

Young people told us that the two most important factors for stability and security are enjoyable work and good homes.

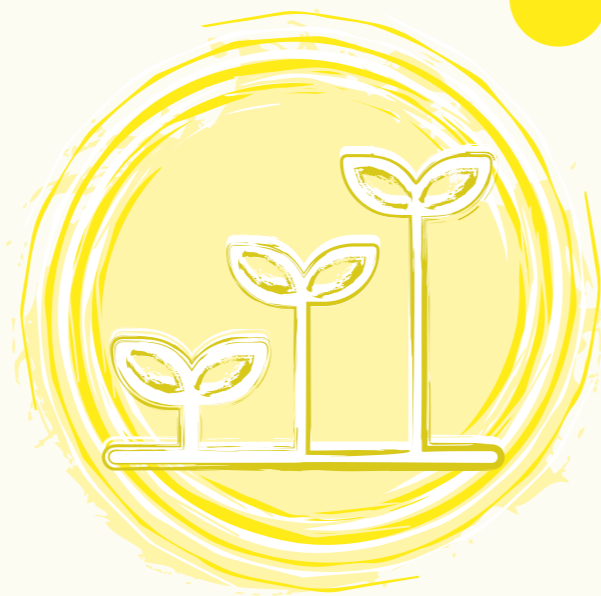
What we mean by this is, all children and young people are:

- Supported in their development and ready to start school
- Attending school and achieving
- Equipped for adult life and able to achieve their full potential
- Happy, healthy and emotionally resilient
- Connected to their community and have a sense of belonging and worth
- Enabled to make good choices in their lives
- In safe and stable homes with positive relationships

The voice and experience of children, young people and their families is at the heart of what we do. Our approach is informed by what families have told us works for them and key messages from them can be found throughout this document.



Put the child and their family at the centre of everything we do



Develop our culture and practice



Build our capacity in communities to help even earlier



Make better use of and access to information

The context

This approach and strategy links with our wider transformation work to build a better future for children, young people and their families in the city.

Local policy context. This strategy should be considered alongside:

The Great Eight

Salford has a vision to create 'A fairer, greener and healthier Salford'. To help achieve this vision a number of key priorities have been identified, The Great Eight: Tackling poverty and inequality; Creating vibrant places with spaces; Tackling the climate emergency; Skills and education (A learning City); Affordable housing and reducing homelessness; Promoting transport and digital connectivity; Creating an economy for all.

Support and Safeguarding in Salford: Helping Children to Thrive

The Support and Safeguarding in Salford: Helping Children to Thrive Guidance is for anyone who works with or cares for children including families, professionals, and members of the community. It has been produced to ensure the right support, from the right people is available at the right time for children and their families when needed and explains how to get the different types of support.

Locality Plan

The Locality Plan sets out a commitment to improve health and wellbeing and to reduce health inequalities. A plan to achieve a shared vision for Salford as a place where everyone can enjoy the best opportunities that Salford has to offer, where people in Salford will get the best start in life, and will go on to live well, and age well.

0-25 Transformation Strategy

Salford has a transformational approach to achieve a vision for all children and young people in Salford to achieve their potential. The 0-25 Transformation Strategy aims to build partnership service delivery and maximise the use of available resources to enable children and young people aged 0-25 to achieve positive outcomes.

Trauma Responsive City

Salford has an ambitious plan to become an ACE aware and Trauma Responsive City. Research into ACEs consistently tells us there are 10 adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) associated with an increased risk of poorer health and other problems in later life. Our approach understands potential paths for recovery; recognises the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices; and seeks to actively resist re-traumatisation.

Thriving Families and Neglect Strategy

Addressing child neglect is a huge priority for Salford. The Thriving Families and Neglect Strategy sets out a strengths-based, coordinated multi-agency response to addressing neglect and supporting families to thrive. The strategy is underpinned by the Thriving Families Assessment Tool.

Inclusion Strategy

The Inclusion Strategy establishes our vision and road map to ensure that our children and young people are in a school or educational setting which is right for them, where their emotional and learning needs are being met, and where they feel included, valued and invested in as an individual.

Salford Thrive Plan

The Salford Thrive Plan is our integrated local transformation plan for children's emotional health and wellbeing. The plan sets out the over-arching work programme and priorities for children and young people's emotional and mental health.

National policy context

The recognition that effective early help for children and families improves outcomes long-term can be seen in recent reviews and policy developments such as Working Together 2018 and the Munro Report. Statutory guidance focuses on the collective responsibility of all agencies to identify, assess and provide effective early help services.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. It means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. It 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.

Effective early help relies on local agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit
- Undertake an assessment of need
- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child

Start for Life

The Best Start for Life - The Early Years Healthy Development Review Report (2021): Explores the importance of support for children and their families in the first 1001 days (conception to the age of two), when the foundations of a child's health, development and wellbeing are set.

Supporting Families Programme

The national Supporting Families programme launched in April 2021 and builds on the previous Troubled Families programme. The focus of the programme is on building the resilience of vulnerable families, and on driving system change so that every area has joined up, efficient local services which are able to identify families in need and provide the right support at the right time.

Children's Social Care Reform 2023

In Feb 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) published Stable Homes, Built on Love: Implementation Strategy and Consultation. In the report, the government commits to resetting children's social care and sets out a vision for a non-stigmatising, welcoming family help service based in local communities that ensures that every child and family who needs it will have access to high-quality help no matter where they live. Consultation on the proposals and investment to deliver the proposals commenced in Spring 2023.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities recently published the Supporting Families 'Early Help System Guide'. This is a toolkit to assist local strategic partnerships responsible for their Early Help System, which should be used to assess the maturity of local working relationships and inform future partnership working.

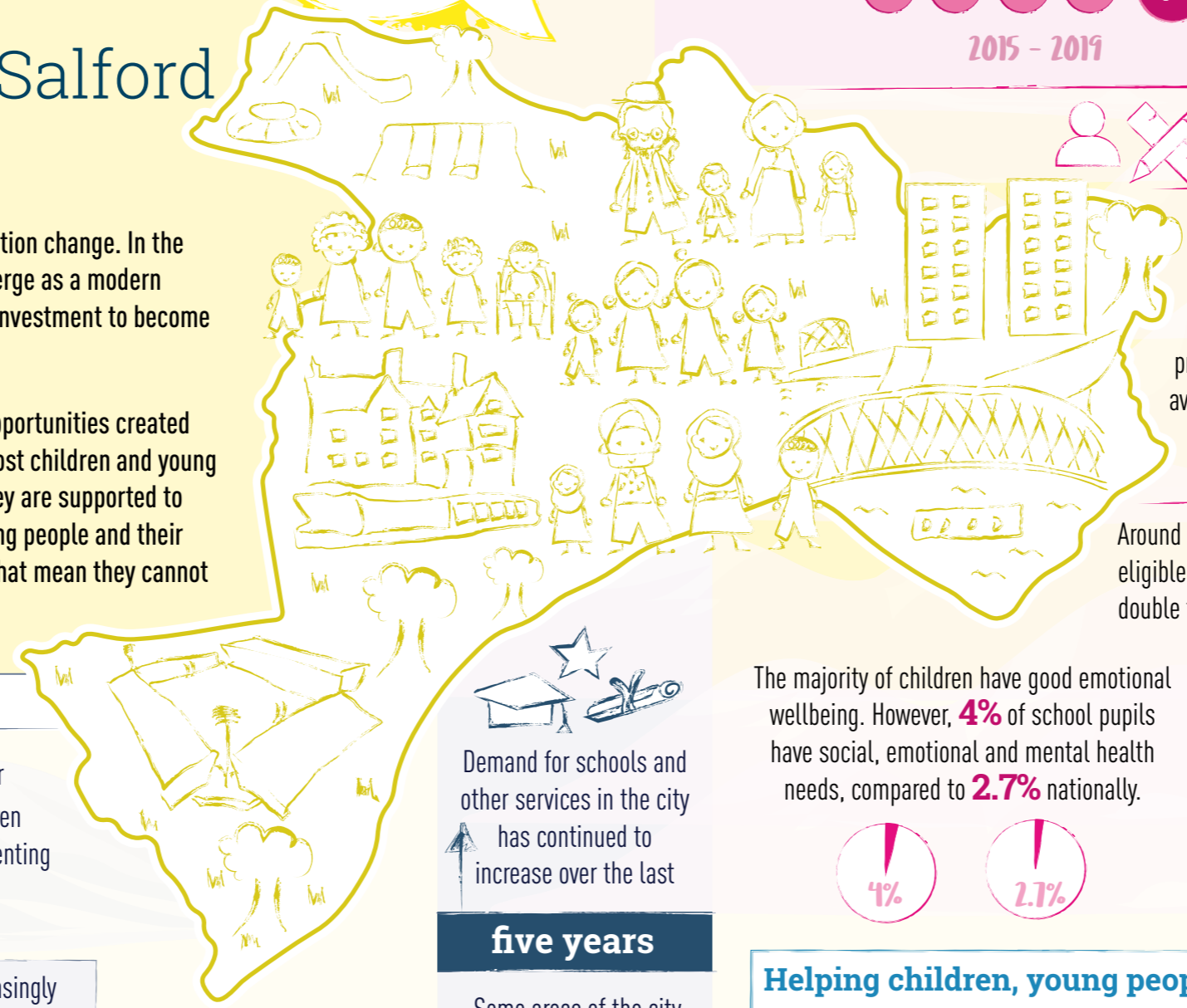
Why do we need early help services?

- the challenges in Salford and local context

Salford is a growing city with increasing diversity and population change. In the last decade Salford has been on a remarkable journey to emerge as a modern global city. It has attracted record public and private sector investment to become an engine of economic growth in Greater Manchester.

Over recent years, many families have benefitted from the opportunities created by Salford's phenomenal economic growth and expansion. Most children and young people in Salford are happy, safe and live in homes where they are supported to achieve their full potential. However, too many children, young people and their families still experience poverty, inequality and challenges that mean they cannot thrive in the way they want to.

“ I worry all the time about money and if I will have enough to get through the week. ”

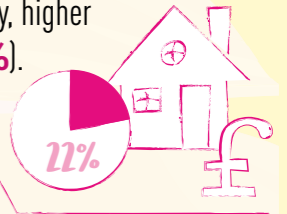


Tackling poverty and inequality:

Salford has become relatively more deprived, moving from **22nd** to **18th** most deprived local authority area in England between 2015 and 2019.



11,709 children aged 0 to 15 live in households that are income deprived. That is **22%** of all children aged under 16 living in relative poverty, higher than the national average (**19%**).



5% of young people aged 16 and 17 years old are not in education, employment or training. This is higher than the regional and national average.



Salford has a higher teenage pregnancy rate than the national average, with a conception rate of **17 per 1,000** women aged 15-17.

The number of first time entrants to the youth justice system has fallen but remains higher than the national average, at



Around **1 in 3** secondary pupils are eligible for free school meals, more than double the national average.



The majority of children have good emotional wellbeing. However, **4%** of school pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs, compared to **2.7%** nationally.



Levels of child obesity are higher than the national average, with **11.4%** of children in Reception and **25.2%** of children in Year Six classified as obese.



Changing population:

Our population is younger than the average for England. Salford is home to **58,442** children and young people under the age of 18, representing **22%** of the population.

There was a **17%** growth in child population since 2010 and it is predicted to grow by another **5%** by 2032.

Salford is becoming increasingly diverse. There are **89** languages spoken in Salford schools and **10%** of pupils were born outside of the UK.

By 2051, it is estimated that people from minority ethnic groups will account for around **1/3** of the total population.

Demand for schools and other services in the city has continued to increase over the last

five years

Some areas of the city, such as central Salford, have seen higher levels of population growth and diversity.

Helping children, young people and families:

Since 2019, more than **1,500** families have had an Early Help Assessment and Plan. = 100 families

95% of families closed to Salford's Early Help Service in the last 12 months did not need a referral to children's social care and, on average, **90%** of families remain at early help level or below 12 months after their intervention closes.

Our commitment

- Early help is everybody's business

Salford Early Help is 'everybody's business'.

Salford has robust, effective and successful multi-agency working arrangements across the diverse and active partnership in the city.

Partners in Salford are committed to a collaborative approach, which means children, young people and their families receive the help they need as soon as they need it from the people best placed to help them.



Local and sustained

In Salford, we value the contribution of all and recognise the importance of communities in enabling families to thrive.

We are building a culture and system where our communities understand that everyone has a role to play in Early Help.

Through our place based approach we are improving connectivity between voluntary and community sector activity, family networks and formal early help support. Family Hubs are an essential part of this.

By harnessing the creativity and talent of families and their communities we are able to design local solutions to meet local needs. This results in individuals, families and the wider community building a resilience that leads to a sense of well-being and greater quality of life.

Local and sustained

We will build on sustainable community support and relationships with peers. We will harness the talent of parents, carers and young people with lived experience to help one another.

Empowering and strengths-based

We recognise, value and reinforce the strengths of families and their communities, empowering them to create their own solutions and build resilience and independence.

Empowering and strengths-based

In Salford, we use a relational practice approach that prioritises trusted relationships in the way we work with children, young people and their families and with each other.

We build strong relationships with families and listen to what is important to them. Families feel heard and understood without judgement.

We work with and alongside families instead of doing to or for them. We work in a trauma informed and trauma responsive way. Families are empowered to draw upon their own resources and strengths to identify solutions that lead to long term sustainable change. Families build resilience that enables them to continue to thrive.

Whole family

In Salford, we recognise children, young people and their families need to be considered within the context of their relationships, the people around them and environment they live and grow up in.

We work with families in a way that considers their strengths and needs individually and as a whole, understanding that these are interconnected.

We listen to the voice of the child(ren) and family throughout, meaning the family only have to tell their story once.

Whole family

We will take a whole family approach that understands and supports wider family and community networks.

Right place, right time

Families will be enabled and supported to get the right support in the right place from the right person at the right time for them.

Right place, right time

In Salford, we have created a shared responsibility to act early to help children, young people and their families so things can get better before they get worse.

We recognise that the first conversation is really important and often happens in places where families go day to day. This might be in a school, GP practice or a Family Hub for example. Partners are responsible for identifying emerging need and willing to offer help where children, young people and their families feel comfortable. This is based on an understanding that Early Help is everyone's responsibility.

Building stronger communities

In Salford we believe all children, young people and their families should have the opportunity to reach their full potential and they are best supported to grow within their local communities.

We are developing a culture that builds on the power of community and family networks - where families feel confident to seek advice and ask for help and know where to go to get this.

Where families need advice and support this will be easily accessible and non-stigmatised.

We are shifting decision making about local services and facilities towards families and communities. If support is needed, it is co-produced with families and communities themselves. This will help develop better connectivity within communities and improve accessibility to services.

Early Help in Action – connecting to the community

A single parent with two children aged two and six, had recently moved to Salford. The family didn't know many people and were feeling isolated.

Mum saw a social media post about Family Hubs and came along to one of the 'Coffee and a Chit Chat' sessions. Through this she met other parents and started to feel more connected to the area, improving her well being.

“ stay and play was good for me and my daughter, it takes me ages to get out the house and take her places, I have really bad anxiety so it's done us good to both get out and I'm now feeling more confident.”

Early Help in Action – connecting to services

A 12 year old, assigned female at birth, was spoken to by a teacher following an incident at school, the teacher identified they were unhappy and needed support with their gender. The teacher made a referral to the Youth service LGBTQ+ group. A youth worker met the young person and asked what name and pronouns they wanted to be known as and introduced the young person to the group. They made some friends and met some other transgender young people and grew in confidence with their identity. The youth worker with agreement from the young person spoke to school who in turn spoke to mum and the name and pronoun information was changed at school. Mum and Dad were invited to T and Toast, a support group for parents and carers of transgender and non-binary young people and were able to gain support from other parents and increase their knowledge. The young person feels happier now he is known by his preferred name and pronouns and has ongoing peer support from the group, his parents and school.

Vibrant community assets:

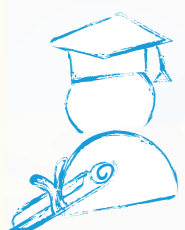
Salford has a vibrant and sizeable voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, with more than **1,660** organisations, employing an estimated **6,830** people and an army of **61,828** volunteers giving **210,299** hours per week.



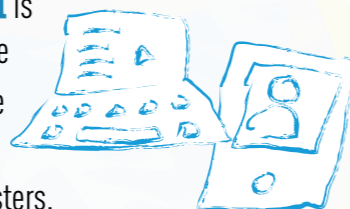
Empowering parents, empowering communities:

In Salford we have a programme of peer-to-peer parenting support that is co-designed with parents for parents.

There are currently **1,612** two year olds and around **4,500** three and four year olds who are entitled to early years' provision and **96.6%** of early years settings are rated good or better.



The University of Salford is one of the fastest growing universities in the country and **MediaCityUK** and the **Quays** has grown into one of Europe's leading digital, creative and technology clusters.



Salford Schools Partnership

brings together a team of professionals as part of a 'team around the school' approach to help children and young people to access support when they are showing early signs that they need additional help.

We have **99** maintained schools and academies in Salford, **83%** are rated good or outstanding.

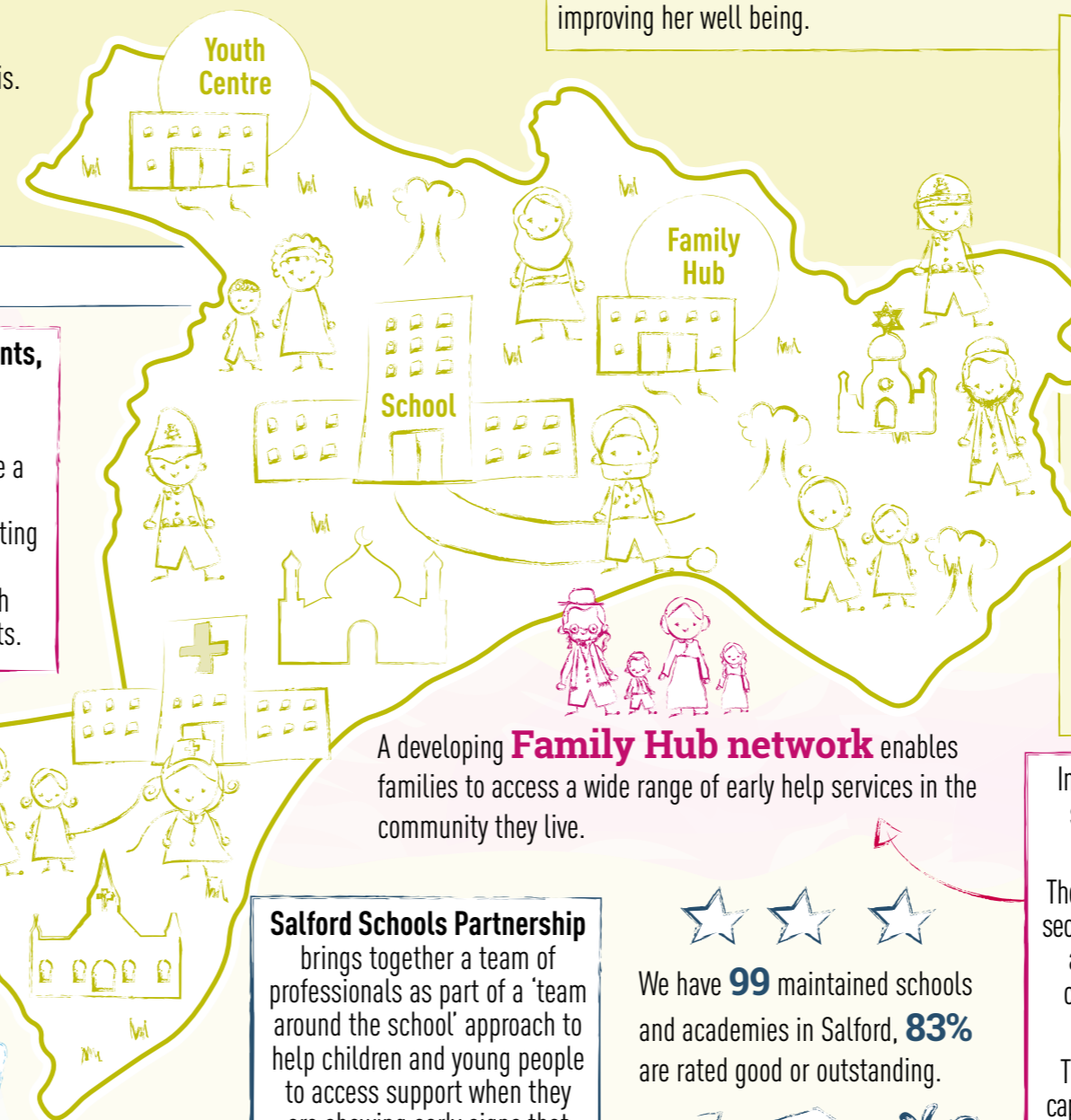


A developing **Family Hub network** enables families to access a wide range of early help services in the community they live.

In Salford, we have network of 4 Family Hubs and additional satellite sites which offer community-based support for children, young people and their families.

They bring together our well-established partnership of public sector, community, faith and voluntary groups, offering a broad and integrated range of help. This may include antenatal, child's health, play sessions, groups for young people, and relationships and parenting support.

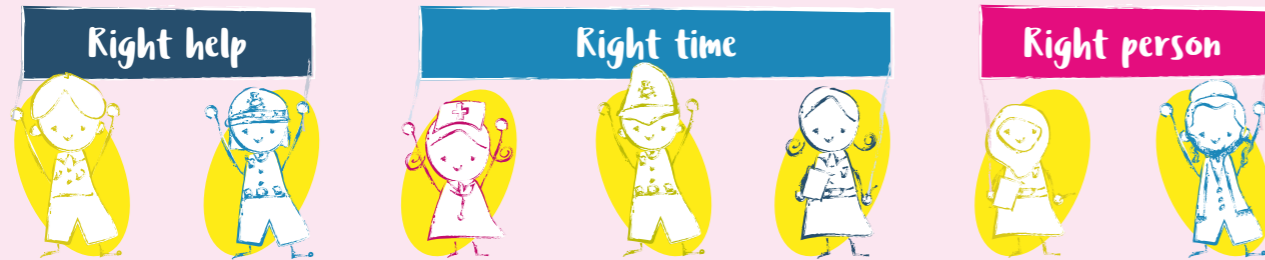
Through Family Hubs we are continuing to build community capacity to deliver a wider range of universal services that will include peer-to-peer parenting support, peer infant feeding champions, and parent and carer panels.



Early Help in practice

It is everybody's responsibility to identify where children, young people and their families require help from services to enable them to thrive. The help families receive may be through a single agency or a multi-agency response as is appropriate to their needs.

The voice of the baby, child and young person is at the heart of everything we do.



Where families need help from services, we will work with the whole family using a relational approach that is:

- **Strengths-based** – builds on knowledge and resources of families
- **Empowering** – enables families to build resilience and independence
- **Collaborative** – we will work 'WITH' families not 'DO TO' them, and be non-judgmental
- **Responsive** – reflects the changing needs of families
- **Proportionate** – we will work with families for the right amount of time
- **Transparent** – we will share information with children, young people and their families, keeping them as informed as possible
- **High support and high challenge** – we will show professional curiosity in our work

Many early help services in Salford use the Family Partnership Model.



Notice where a child, young person or family needs help. A conversation with the child, young person and their family takes place to understand the issue. Additional support is provided from within the agency's own organisation.



Identify that a child, young person and their family needs more help which cannot be met by a single agency alone. Help is provided through a multi-agency response, underpinned by an Early Help Assessment and managed through Team Around the Family arrangements.



Identify that a child, young person and their family has more complex needs which require an integrated and coordinated multi-agency approach, with longer and more intensive intervention. A referral to The Bridge Partnership may be made.

Develop a single agency plan. Review progress with the family.



In more complex situations, where children, young people and families need help to reduce risk of harm, it is important this level of support is provided as quickly as possible. In these circumstances, a referral should be made to The Bridge.

Lead worker:

Families will have a 'lead worker' who is the named practitioner who will be their main point of contact. The lead worker will lead on the completion of an assessment, coordinate the help families need and regularly review progress. The 'lead worker' will often be someone a family already knows, trust and have a good relationship with. Any practitioner working with a family can be the 'lead worker'.

Single assessment and family plan:

Conversations take place with children, young people and their family to understand their strengths and needs supported through completion of an Early Help Assessment and other appropriate tools e.g. Thriving Families tool. This will inform a single plan for the whole family. The plan will be shared with the family and others involved. Regular reviews, Team Around the Family meetings, will be held to effectively manage progress.



The Local Authority Early Help Service has a dedicated resource to support partners to undertake the role of the lead worker, complete an Early Help Assessment and lead the Team Around the Family.

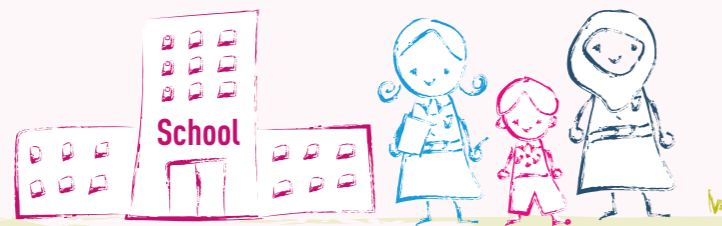
Early Help in action

“ I didn't know what help I needed but after the Early Help Assessment, they helped me understand what I needed and focused on all my children not just the one I was struggling with.”

“ whatever we needed she was there to support me and my children together.”

“ Very helpful and supportive, positive experience.”

'A teenage boy attending high school was presenting with some distressed behaviours and his attendance was deteriorating. His mother was struggling with her mental health and to manage her son's behaviour. School noticed they may need more help and used an Early Help Assessment to explore the strengths and needs of the family, and a multi-agency meeting was pulled together. Through the multi-agency team school provided increased support and a referral for a parenting course was made. The relationship between the teenage boy and his mother is now stronger, and things are calmer at home. His attendance has improved, and he is happier in school. His mother is feeling more confident in herself and is now looking to return to work.'



Early Help in Action - The Family Experience

“ A worker got in touch with us over the phone. They were really polite and checked whether it was a good time to speak. They told us a little bit about how they work and what they could help with then arranged to visit us at home at a time that suited us.”

At the visit, the worker told us that they wouldn't tell us what to do, instead they would help us to think through and celebrate what was strong about our family and then help us to set out which things we wanted to improve on. Also, they were really straight with us, and said they wouldn't be involved forever and would only stay involved until we felt ready to go it alone again.

There was a lot of pressure on our family with money issues, problems with our son in school, and feeling a bit out of our depth as parents, particularly with caring for our baby daughter. This was all impacting on our relationship, and we were both worried about rowing in front of the kids. So that's where we started the work.”



'A GP made a referral to the Early Help Service to request support for a mother, father and their three children, specifically with needs relating to neurodevelopment. A referral to Salford's Neurodevelopment Pathway was made and support coordinated through a Team Around the Family led by an Early Help Practitioner. The Early Help Practitioner worked with health services, school, and nursery to start an Education Health and Care Plan, provide positive parenting strategies, help to improve finances, and provide antenatal and postnatal support. The family are now feeling better able to manage the additional needs of their eldest child, with ongoing support from school and nursery and are linked in with community services for ongoing advice when needed.'



'Two young parents with a new baby. This is their first baby, and the mother has a number of mental health challenges. Their Health Visitor worked with the family to develop a support plan. Both parents were helped to access online parenting support and were given advice and guidance to enable them to support their child's development. They are attending groups at their local Family Hub, meeting other parents and continuing to build their parenting skills through peer support. Mother is now feeling much better able to manage her mental well-being alongside being a new parent. Both parents are working together to meet the needs of their baby, who is developing well.'

Our Early Help Strategy

Our aim is to provide effective and high-quality early help to children, young people and their families in Salford – at the right time and place for them and from people who are confident and skilled.

Towards achieving our aim and ambition and in addressing our areas for development, our Early Help Strategy has the following four key objectives:

Put the child and their family at the heart of everything we do:

Listen to the voice of children, young people and families so they only tell their story once and they are helped to access all the advice and support they need at the earliest opportunity. We will ensure that families feel that they are helped to recognise and build on their strengths and they are given opportunities to influence and shape services in their community. To support this, we will:

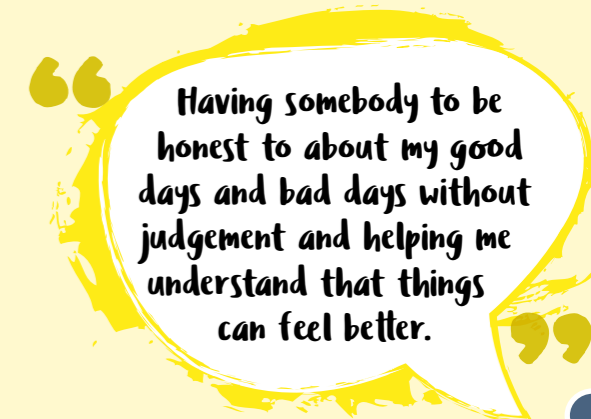
- Establish parent carer panels for each Family Hub in the city, to enable people with lived experience to help shape local services
- Develop a network of 'voice of the child' champions across the early help workforce to offer peer support and share best practice
- Embed and develop practice informed by learning from the GM Community of Practice priority around Voice of the Family
- Embed the principles of co-production so that children, young people and their families feel more independent and in control of the services they use

Develop our culture and practice:

Ensure that the workforce considers the strengths and needs of the family as a whole and understands that they are interconnected. Early Help is everyone's business and it is expected that any worker or volunteer from any agency or service will respond to meet those needs, by working with others to do so. To support this, we will:

- Continue to embed the Salford Family Partnership practice model across the early help workforce
- Review early help assessment, team around the family tools and practice guidance
- Embed Salford Schools Partnership across all schools in the city

Our ambition is to develop a culture of early help in Salford where families know where to go to seek advice and feel confident to ask for help. A city where families don't have to ask twice - the first person they ask will connect them to the advice and help they need. Where families need help from services, the practice, performance management and quality assurance is of consistently high quality, referrals routes are clear, timely and effective.



Build our capacity in communities to help even earlier:

Recognise and value the contribution of all and build capacity in communities to empower parents, carers and young people with lived experience to use their talents to help one another. To support this, we will:

- Continue to develop Salford's Family Hubs model to deliver an enhanced family offer in communities
- Develop a Salford Relationship offer including work with the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector to build on peer-led support
- Develop a digital offer to improve family experience of accessing services and enable them to self-serve where appropriate

Make better use of information

Use intelligence and insight to help agencies and services to effectively target and co-ordinate early intervention, inform service delivery, support demand management and monitor performance. To support this, we will

- Agree a set of standard reports for key early help partners to measure progress and impact of the strategy
- Build on performance management arrangements for Early Help to embed a culture of high support, high challenge and continuous improvement
- Build on Supporting Families framework to test a single-view of partnership intelligence that will support effective planning and service improvement

Governance:

This strategy is owned and overseen by the Early Help Steering Group (EHS) which reports to the 0 to 25 Advisory Board (025AB) and provides an annual assurance update to the Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP). Actions to deliver this strategy will be developed through the Early Help Steering Group (EHS).

Key indicators for measurement of the effectiveness of the strategy

- Increase the number of families supported through an early help plan
- Increase the number of families helped to achieve improved outcomes through an early help plan
- Reduction of contacts and re-referral to the Bridge – meaning that families are already supported in their community
- Number of parents who feel the early help they have received made a difference to theirs, and their children's lives
- Increase the number of children attending school
- Number of practitioners trained in Salford Family Partnership
- Number of parents trained in Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities peer-led parenting programme

