

SMARTER STRONGER SOONER SAFER



An integrated approach to supporting children, young people and their families through early help in Tameside.



2020 - 2022

www.tameside.gov.uk/earlyhelp/neighbourhoods

FOREWORD

Welcome to “Smarter, Stronger, Sooner, Safer”, the refresh of our Early Help Strategy for 2020-22, which builds on the work that has been undertaken since 2017 on our integrated approach to making sure that children and families get the best possible start in life.

The principle of “Starting Well” has been enshrined in the joint Corporate Plan of Tameside Council and the NHS Tameside and Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group as one of our most important duties. But Early Help is not just the responsibility of a single council service, or even a single organisation. By bringing together public, private, charity and community partners from across Tameside and Glossop we are ensuring that, no matter what their circumstances, every child is given the care and attention they need to thrive, develop and move with confidence into adulthood.

This refresh has been developed while we are all playing our role in the global fight against the coronavirus pandemic. The measures we have taken as a community to protect ourselves and others, most notably social distancing, has not diminished the need for Early Help. In fact, in many ways an Early Help approach is required now more than ever to help children and families adapt to difficult and unprecedented times. This has required us to work differently, and as this refresh is implemented we will be looking closely at examples of best practice, and how we can retain and develop these when the immediate danger from coronavirus has passed. Our shared priority is not going back to way things were before, it is to build back better.

With councils and other organisations facing the double blow of years of sustained budget cuts and the financial impact of the pandemic, ensuring that we support children and families at the earliest possible stage takes on even more importance. Identifying the need for intervention and tailoring our response to meet those needs will ensure that every penny of funding spent has the greatest possible impact in reducing the likelihood of problems escalating, improving the long term outcomes for children and families, and securing the financial sustainability of service providers.

Since 2017 we have been able to point to a number of successes in building an Early Help offer in Tameside, including training almost 200 practitioners in the new Early Help Assessment and creating a number of new approaches and frameworks which emphasise joined-up support and a focus on the voice of the child. Much has been done, but there is much more still to do.

I believe that this refresh provides a strong foundation from which to progress the Early Help approach in Tameside, and I look forward to working with all of you to take the next steps together.



Cllr Bill Fairfoull
Deputy Executive Leader
(Children and Families)

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INTRODUCTION

Definition of Early Help:

Whilst most children and their families in Tameside are able to have a good quality of life with minimal additional support from public services, there are some who find life more difficult for a variety of reasons. At different times in their lives, children, young people and their families in these circumstances may need additional support and help from universal, targeted and specialist services.

Early help is therefore an approach, not a provision and is everyone's responsibility. Early help means children, young people and their families are supported holistically at the right time, as soon as a problem is identified and is not left to escalate. Early help also means families are an equal partner in their support and are recognised for their strengths.

This strategy builds on from the Early Help Strategy, workforce consultation and the Early Help Needs Assessment completed in 2017. The strategy recognises the successes since implementation and emphasises the continued commitment to an Early Help approach in Tameside.

The strategy outlines Tameside's integrated approach to improving outcomes for children, young people and their families through early help approaches, and provides a guide to the workforce, on the vision, principles, offer, priorities and enablers of early help in Tameside.

The strategy has been pulled together by all partners who make up the early help approach and offer in Tameside, including but not exclusive to:



The strategy reflects the Tameside Children's Improvement Board's Improvement Plan, the Starting Well Partnership's work programme and aligns with the Tameside and Glossop Locality Plan, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Tameside and Glossop Corporate Plan.



The strategy is intended to support and complement (rather than duplicate) existing local strategies and programmes, including:

- Tameside’s Early Years ‘Grow’ Programme and the Greater Manchester Early Years Strategy
- Tameside’s Perinatal Infant Mental Health Programme
- Tameside’s Parenting ‘Grow with Me’ Strategy
- Tameside’s Poverty Action Plan
- The Troubled Families Programme
- Tameside and Glossop’s Children and Young People’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing Transformation Plan
- The Healthy Child Programme
- Tameside’s Children and Young People’s Health and Wellbeing Programme
- Tameside’s Domestic Abuse Strategy
- Tameside’s Young Parents Programme, including the Family Nurse Partnership
- Tameside’s Education, Employment and Skills Work Programme
- Tameside’s Youth Justice Programme
- Tameside’s Neglect Strategy
- Tameside’s Voice of the Child Strategy
- The Greater Manchester Population Health Plan
- The Greater Manchester Public Sector Reform Programme
- The Child Sexual Exploitation Programme
- The Greater Manchester Drugs and Alcohol Strategy

The Importance of Early Help

Early help is morally the right thing to do and can make the biggest difference when support for families is given before problems escalate. The concept of early help, or early intervention as it is sometimes known, reflects the widespread recognition that it is better to identify and resolve problems early, rather than to respond when difficulties have become acute, and demand action by more expensive and/or specialist services.

Working with a child and their family to address their needs early on can help reduce, prevent and remove risk factors (the worries for the family) and increase protective factors (what is working well for the family). Protective factors can reduce risk to a child’s wellbeing and may include:

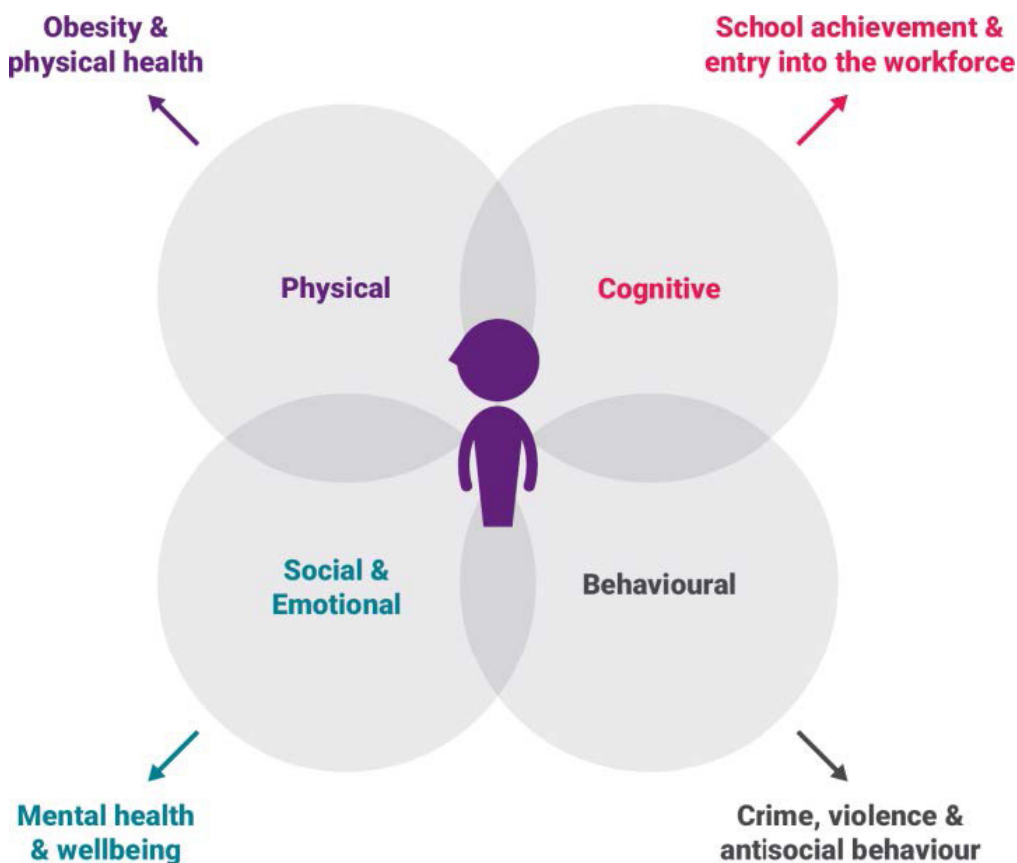
- developing strong social and emotional skills;
- having a strong social support network for the family;
- support for good parental mental health;
- having good income support, access to benefits and advice;
- having access to good community services and facilities¹



¹ Early Intervention Foundation. (2018). <https://www.eif.org.uk/why-it-matters/what-is-early-intervention>

Early help can take different forms, from home visiting programmes to support vulnerable parents and children, to school-based programmes to improve children’s social and emotional skills (or as we prefer to say, valuable), to mentoring schemes for young people who are vulnerable to involvement in crime.

Early help approaches also support the four key aspects of child development – the physical, cognitive, behavioural, and social and emotional development. Supporting child development at any stage has the potential to make a big difference. While some have argued that early intervention may have its strongest impact when offered during the first few years of life, the best evidence shows that effective interventions can improve children’s life chances at any point during childhood and adolescence.



On the other hand, not intervening early can bring high costs to public services and a recent widely recognised estimate, is that this could be as great as £17 billion per annual². Most of this cost falls to local authorities and their partners and previous reports and reviews such as those authored by: Munro³, Allen⁴, Marmot⁵, Tickell⁶, and Field⁷ conclude that it is essential to prevent problems arising to reduce pressures on public services.

Learning from COVID-19

The refresh of the Tameside Early Help Strategy has been developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time there has been a need for the local early help offer and local services to operate differently. As a result, there is a local recognition to learn from the different ways of working, by understanding what has useful and beneficial for families and professional alike, and build on the new assets developed. Therefore as the refresh of the Tameside Early Help Strategy is implemented, there will be an ongoing discussion and review of the implementation plan to ensure as a local system, we can build back better.

² Early Intervention Foundation. (2016). <https://www.eif.org.uk/report/the-cost-of-late-intervention-eif-analysis-2016>

³ Munro. (2011). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180919/DFE-00177-2011.pdf

⁴ Allen. (2011). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284086/early-intervention-next-steps2.pdf

⁵ Marmot. (2020). <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on>

⁶ Tickell. (2011). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180919/DFE-00177-2011.pdf

⁷ Field. (2010). <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110120090141/http://povertyreview.independent.gov.uk/media/20254/poverty-report.pdf>

SUCCESSSES SINCE THE EARLY HELP STRATEGY 2017

Since the launch of the 2017 Early Help Strategy, a significant amount of work has taken place to build a local early help offer in Tameside. Here are just some of the headline successes:

Learning Circles

The Learning Circles have enable partners to come together in a workshop style environment to discuss the needs of the families within a given neighbourhood. Through partnership discussions the Learning Circles have looked at what local resources are available and by working together, put projects in place to better the support for families and practitioners in each neighbourhood. To date there has been 16 Learning Circles and some of themes have included school readiness, anti-social behaviour and school exclusions.

Team Around Approach

The Team Around approach is a mechanism for schools and other settings to meet with family support services and other key partners in the locality, on a regular basis to have a shared conversation about children and young people they are worried about. Partner agencies will work together to pool resources to provide support to families that are outcome driven, focused on solutions and helps the family to become more resilient and self-reliant in order to prevent a child or young person requiring statutory services in the future. To date the Team Around meetings have been warmly received.

“

“I can say without hesitation that the model is flexible and will fit all settings, and I can also say how glad I am we were able to be involved, as it is a valuable contribution to the work we do in support of our children and their families.”

“The sharing of intelligence and having a Social Care and Health perspective means that communication is strong and help and advice easily accessed.”

”

Early Help Access Point

The Early Help Access Point provides advice and guidance to professionals in relation to assessments, services available and risk management. It brings together professionals from services that have contact with children, young people and families. The model creates a supportive environment where partners share information in a dynamic way in order to identify and assess need which in turn ensures the Early Help Access Point are able to make decisions based on the best possible information available at a given time. The Early Help Access Point's advice and guidance officers will take calls and liaise with partners. They will provide advice, signposting and triage for professionals and members of the public seeking support for a child or family below at Level 1 and 2 of the threshold. The team work closely with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

Early Help Assessment

In September 2019, Tameside began to roll out the new Early Help Assessment to partners; this replaced the Common Assessment Framework. The Early Help Advisers have offered training to support completion of the new document and to date has delivered training to more than 200 practitioners. As a result of our wider partners attending the training, we have seen an increase in the number of Early Help Assessments.

“

“The training helped break everything down, I now understand why the voice of the child is so important.”

“The training has helped me see why keeping things simple and keeping the family at the centre of the work is essential.”

”

Signs of Safety

Signs of Safety is a workforce development programme that has been embedded across the early help offer in Tameside. The programme has enabled a strengths-based, safety-organised and consistent approach when working with families – from initial screening and built into assessment plans and conversation. The Signs of Safety Framework can also be used at all levels of need, and has been a useful tool for listening to the voice of the children and/or young person.

“

“It’s good that all agencies are being trained in the same model which we didn’t have previously which focuses on positives and helps families be clear about what is expected.”

”



VISION AND PRINCIPLES

Vision

We know that Tameside is a great place to grow up. We have strong communities, excellent schools and early education, good opportunities for work and much more.

But we can do better.

Most of our children and families grow up in a supportive environment that enables them to have the best start in life without the input of specialist services. When this is not the case children and families may need some extra support at different times in their lives.

We want every child, young person and family to get the help and support they need to succeed as early as possible.

Our vision is that every child and young person in Tameside has the best start in life, to grow, thrive, and be prepared for a successful adult life; and when the need or emerging problems occurs, communities and organisations work together with children, young people and families to co-ordinate support thereby improving the overall wellbeing and quality of life of all Tameside's children and young people.

Principles

Key to the delivery of this strategy are the co-operative principles which underpin much of the work that we will carry out to support children, young people and families. These principles are:

1. Early help is everyone's responsibility – partnership approach not provision.

Lots of organisations across Tameside are made up of staff who practice early help, such as schools, health visitors, the Council, and 3rd sector organisations. By working in partnership between organisations, communities and families, and by providing personalised, integrated and caring support, means families receive quality services and can build a trusting relationships with professionals. Moreover, as early help is everyone's responsibility, it also means 'never do nothing' – if you think a family needs help – ask someone.

2. A commitment to prevention - wherever possible all children and families' needs will be met by universal services, families and communities.

A commitment to prevention underpins effective early help. Early help has the best chance of success where individuals and their families feel supported to find their own solutions to the issues facing them in the communities where they live.

3. We will ensure that children and families are safe.

We all share responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, whether as a teacher, nurse, police officer, firefighter or carer. When we are worried that a child is being harmed, by a parent or carer, we have a legal and professional duty to share our concerns with Children's Social Care. It is our responsibility to put the safety and health of the child before everything else including the needs and wishes of the parent. Where we have to do this, we will always treat the family with dignity and respect.

4. We will listen to children and families and treat them as partners – ‘Nothing about me, without me’.

As a local area we have signed up to the Tameside Voice of the Child Strategy and we will continue adopt a family and child friendly approach, which is strength based. The key role that parents/ carers play as educators is critical as they have the most significant influence on children. All services will keep the child at the centre of the solution, encouraging families to harness their own strengths, resourcefulness and build supportive community networks, thereby enabling families to develop the capacity to help themselves. Moreover, services will delivered be delivered in line with the ‘Statement of Expectations’ put forward by young people themselves, and commissioning of service will be based on the LISTENing Framework.

5. We will understand the needs of children and families in Tameside and Early Help resources will be commissioned based on this understanding.

Interventions will be informed by a sound evidence base. Interventions will also be tracked in order to measure the extent to which they are delivering their stated aims and making a significant impact on outcomes. Resources will be allocated where there can be confidence of achieving significant impact and good value from the investment. We will use intelligence and information better and ensure effective early help systems and processes are in place.

6. We will ensure staff are supported through workforce development.

To have an effective and consistent early help approach in Tameside, it is essential for our model of practice to be embedded across the children and families workforce in Tameside. This means supporting all partners through workforce development on evidence based models such as Signs of Safety and the Solihull approach.

7. We will continue to develop our early help offer across a place based approach.

We recognise Tameside is built into unique neighbourhoods and for families and children, it is important to access local support and services, near to them. We will therefore ensure as the early help approach in Tameside evolves, it will be aligned to the neighbourhood model. This includes our physical spaces, our processes, as well as the offer of support and staff.



THE PICTURE IN TAMESIDE

The need to have an Early Help approach in Tameside is supported through the understanding that outcomes for children, young people and families are in general, worse than the national average. The below infographic illustrates just some of the challenges in Tameside and emphasizes the importance and need for early intervention.



Child in Need

We are doing better on this indicator, and we are lower than our statistical neighbour



Looked after children

We are doing worse on this indicator, and higher than our statistical neighbour



Child Protection

We are doing better on this indicator, but we are higher than our statistical neighbour



82%

Accessing 2 Year Old provision

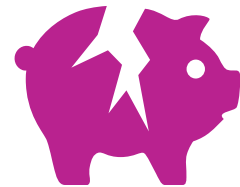
We are doing worse on this indicator, but still higher than the England average



569

Children living with parents in treatment for drug or alcohol addiction

Service data - but this is still too many



26%

Children living in low income families

We are doing worse on this indicator, and higher than the National average



13.6%

Pregnant Mothers who smoke

We are doing better on this indicator, but still higher than the England average



575 per 10,000

Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in children (aged 0-14)

We are doing better on this indicator, but still higher than the England average



1,850

Domestic Violence Incidents

Reporting data - but this is still too many



85%

Good or outstanding schools



1,167

VCE organisations focused on child and family support



OUR EARLY HELP APPROACH

Our Early Help approach in Tameside has been developed with four underpinning priorities: Smarter, Sooner, Safer, and Stronger.

The Early Help approach will grow its offer by continuing to align to these four priorities.

The early help approach will be **Smarter** in the way we do things, including:

- How we structure and build our services and partnerships, through integration and co-location.
- Continuing to have accountability for implementation of the early help offer and approach in Tameside.
- Continuing to grow the place-based/ neighbourhood delivery of the early help offer through co-ordinated and integrated services and commissioning intentions, as well as supporting the development of an effectively 'early help' marketplace
- Having a closer working relationship with our partners working in adult services.
- Support the workforce with training needs aligning to local priorities.

We will be **Stronger** because we know we are making the right impact and improving outcomes for children and young people:

- Co-design and co-produce support and services with children, young people and families in Tameside.
- Build resilience in our communities and strengthen the role of the voluntary sector.
- Agreeing with partners a set of indicators for measuring the difference the implementation plan makes.
- Agreeing indicators that will include system-wide and local measures including the satisfaction of children and families.
- Ensure we are measuring the things that really count and not just those that data is available for.

Children, young people and families will get what they need **Sooner**, making sure the right help is available to the right people in the right place at the right time:

- Ensuring early intervention and prevention is embedded across children's workforce.
- Ensuring strength based approaches when working with families is fully embedded across the children's workforce.

We will ensure children live in strong protective communities and families where they are **Safer**:

- Delivering the implementation plan of the recently launched Parenting 'Grow with Me' strategy and ensure we don't lose the focus on early attachment and relationship building.
- Uphold to our safeguarding responsibilities.

These priorities are fundamental to the Tameside Early Help approach. It reinforces that the child and family are at the centre of all we do.

Our approach and offer enhances the principle of 'early help is everyone's responsibility'. The below diagram (on the following page) illustrates the relationship between the early help offer and the Safeguarding Children's Partnership Thresholds Guidance which can be found in **Appendix A**.

The Early Help approach and offer in Tameside will continue to see families, communities, universal, targeted and specialist services working together effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of the child and the family at the earliest point to prevent problems escalating.

Reaching a decision about level of need in relation to the Tameside Safeguarding Threshold Guidance and the best package of support requires discussion, reflection and professional judgement. All professionals should work together to provide appropriate support to families according to their needs, using and completing the relevant tools, such as the Early Help Assessment and the Graded Care Profile, but also be ready to respond if there is a change in a family's circumstances.

Moreover, universal services are important even when more specialist services are working with the family. Where a child and family is being supported by Children's Social Care and ready to 'step down' into universal and early help services (Level 1 & 2 TSCP Safeguarding Threshold Guidance), it is vital we have appropriate community services that can meet the needs of the family, able to manage risk and support timely 'step down' services.

Crucially, the approach and offer requires clear links to be defined with wider universal services which may be the first to identify emerging issues for children and their families. Services for adults also play an essential role in our early help approach. Many adults have additional needs e.g. substance use, mental health needs, parental learning disabilities and domestic abuse which can impair their parenting capacity. Services which predominantly work with either children and young people or adults need to adopt a 'Think Family' approach to secure better outcomes for children, young people and families with additional needs, through effective teamwork and co-ordinating the support they provide.



EARLY HELP
NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFER

MULTI AGENCY REQUEST FOR SERVICE FORM

Intervention or Safeguarding

The Neighbourhood Learning Circles

THE EARLY HELP ACCESS POINT

Information/Support/Advice/Triage for Early Help Support

HARM

If you have safeguarding concerns identified or suspected, where significant risk of harm or neglect can be evidenced, complete a multi-agency request for service form and then send it to the multi-agency safeguarding hub.

WHEN ADVICE AND SUPPORT IS NEEDED

Family Information Service

Provides information and advice about accessing childcare and the Free Entitlement Funding.

Service Information Directory

Online directory showing activities and support for families.

Early Help Assessment Advisors

EHA advisors provide relevant advice and guidance on initiating and managing the EHA processes following TMBC procedures.

Parenting

Information and support to access parenting programmes.

Early Years GROW Offer /Children's Centres

Provides support and activities for families with children under 5 years old.

Voluntary Sector and Community Offer

Provides information on how to access voluntary and community support.

Early Years Provider Development Team

Support and guidance for private, voluntary, independent and Early Years settings.

TEAM AROUND APPROACH (TAS)

Children or young people causing concern at an early stage can be supported using a Team Around Approach. Providing multi-agency support, including Children's Social Care, Early Help and Health services.

These Team Around meetings are coordinated within schools, including private and independent establishments and colleges.

COMPLEX EARLY HELP NEEDS

Where complex needs are identified and cannot be managed with the Team Around Approach the referral will go to the Early Help Panel.

EARLY HELP PANEL

The referrals for children with complex needs will be discussed at multi-agency panel meetings. Children's needs will be reviewed to allow allocation to the most appropriate agencies within and working with our service.

CHILDREN'S MASH

Where there are safeguarding concerns that cannot be met through the Early Help offer, the multi-agency response will be to arrange a Child and Family Assessment. This will review concerns and identify needs. Where the case meets our threshold for service, it can be managed on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan.

Where appropriate a plan or step down procedure to another relevant agency will happen through the Early Help Panel.

TAMESIDE EARLY HELP MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS

We will assess the impact of the Tameside Early Help Strategy by improving on a range of outcomes and key performance indicators.

Aligning to the Tameside and Glossop Corporate Plan, the Early Help Strategy will support and improve outcomes for children, young people and families, based on the co-operative principles, reducing inequalities and by working towards a Tameside that has:



The very best start in life where children are ready to learn and encouraged to thrive and develop.



Opportunities for people to fulfil their potential through work, skills and enterprise.



Aspiration and hope through learning and moving with confidence from childhood to adulthood.



Nurturing our communities and having pride in our people, our place and our shared heritage.



Resilient families and supportive networks to protect and grow our young people.



Longer and healthier lives with good mental health through better choices and reducing inequalities.

In order to understand the impact of the early help approach and offer in Tameside, we have identified a number of key measurements that will enable us to demonstrate the effectiveness of our offer and service. These have been put together into a dashboard and will be reported to the Early Help Strategy Group. Below are examples of key measurements that will be monitored.

- Number of Early Help Assessments open
- Contacts to the Early Help Access Point (% of all contacts)
- Number of 'Team Around' cases
- Number of Early Help Panel Referrals in the last 12 months
- Cases open to Children's Social Care Receiving Family Intervention Work (%)
- Troubled Families - % of attachments resulting in successful outcomes

Moreover, wider outcomes will be measured and include:

- Improved school readiness and child development
- Improved access to good quality childcare provision
- Reduction in smoking in pregnancy and more smoke-free families
- Reduction of pregnancies and children exposed to alcohol
- Reduction in domestic abuse
- Improved emotional health and wellbeing
- Reduction in children living in poverty
- Improved education attainment
- Reduction in youth related crime
- Improved access to the community offer
- More families having accessing to good food and moving more



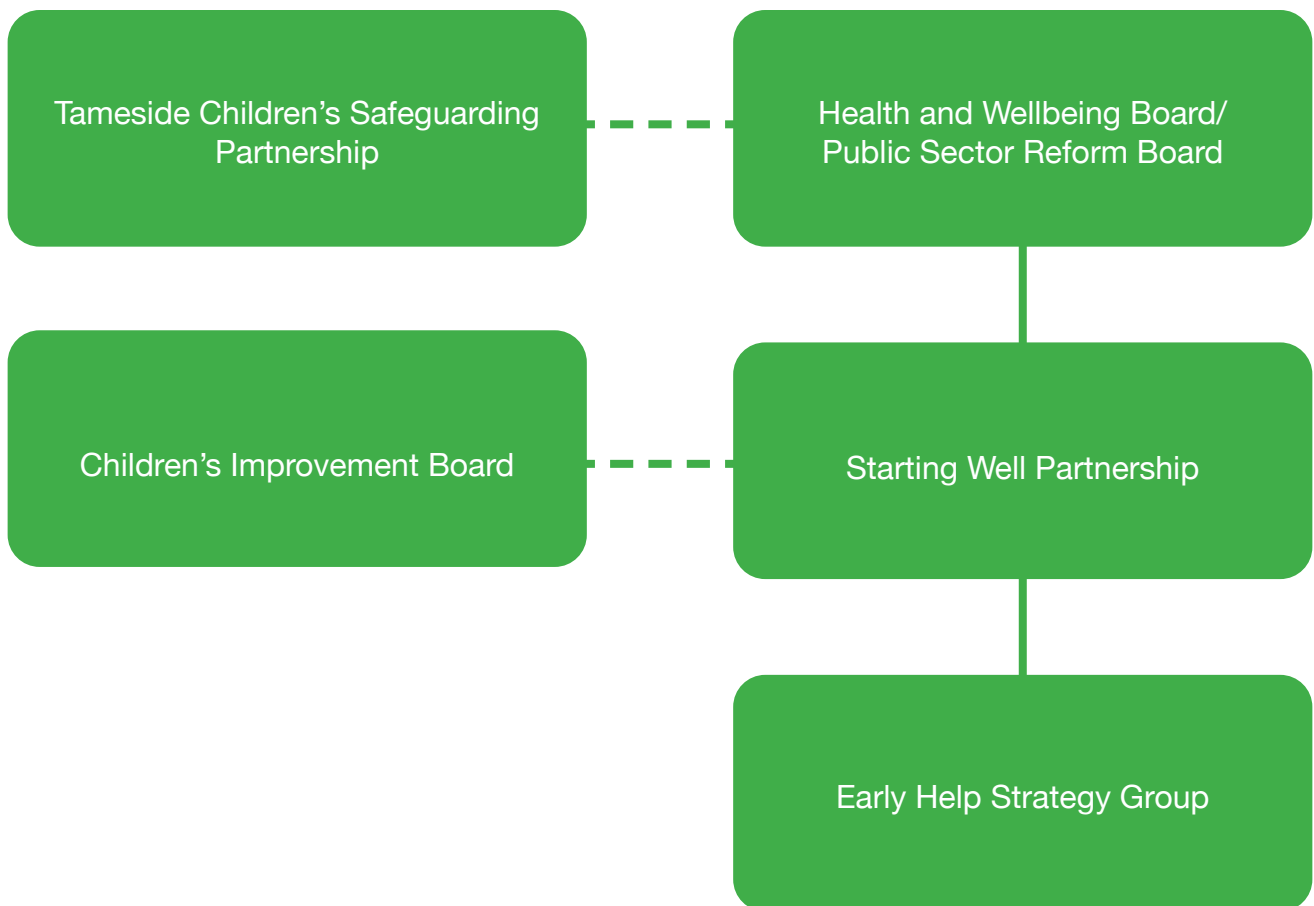
IMPLEMENTATION AND GOVERNANCE

To deliver on the vision and approach of early help in Tameside effectively and successfully, a multi-agency implementation plan has been produced and is regularly updated.

The implementation plan sets out an ambitious but much needed plan of work for transforming the early help approach and offer in Tameside.

With this in mind, we have developed themed actions that support the four key priorities: Smarter, Sooner, Safer and Stronger, as well as underpinned by our early help principles.

Each theme expands within the implementation plan with tangible and timely actions, however the implementation plan is not a static document and will be co-produced and regularly reviewed by the Early Help Strategy Group and agreed by the Starting Well Partnership and Tameside Children's Improvement Board.



Appendix A – Tameside Children’s Safeguarding Partnership Thresholds

HELP

Support at this level is provided universally for all children and young people. All those identified with low-level need which can be met by helping accessing mainstream services such as health centres, schools, children’s, community centres etc.

**Level
1**

Children and families with needs at this level cannot be met by one service alone. Assessment and support should be coordinated through a family Early Help Assessment. A Lead Professional should be appointed to coordinate support but all relevant universal services have equal responsibility for delivering the support needed.

**Level
2**

In some instances family problems are severe and don’t improve through enhanced or specialist support. Sometimes there is a need for statutory intervention, but this will only occur when children and young people are experiencing, or are likely to suffer significant harm.

**Level
4**

Children and families at this level have needs or requirements that are sufficiently complex to require a statutory social work assessment. Compromised parenting may also be identified as an issue. The intervention can be long term and specialised, for example assisting with a child that has disabilities.

**Level
3**

HARM