



ISLINGTON

Early Help
Reviewing permanent
and fixed period
exclusion from school



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Early Help Service - Education



ISLINGTON

Early Help staff work collaboratively with schools, council services and partner agencies to support the early identification of children and families requiring additional support.

Practitioners work with families to ensure that children and young people are supported to access appropriate education that meets individual child and family needs – including supporting children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability, and children placed in our local Pupil Referral Unit and Alternative Provision.

Early Help works with schools to support families to positively engage with services to overcome:

- Persistent absence and barriers to school attendance
- Challenging behaviours
- Risk of exclusion and youth offending

SPARK – Exploring parent views on Early Help and education ISLINGTON

An Early Help service **available** everywhere and linked with universal services: schools; GP; stay and play; parents' groups.

Education is a huge focus and concern for parents, particularly regarding child behaviour and/or Special Educational Needs and Disability support in schools.

Facilitate meetings for families in schools, parents and education professionals from LA or other services.

Accessible for all families.

Parents sometimes felt schools treated issues in an isolated way and Early help staff help school to understand wider family context.

Mediate/advocate for parents in schools.

Positive promotion of Early Help services amongst schools – having a visual presence to share information and avoid lack of knowledge of services being a barrier to accessing help.

How do Early Help services engage with education? ISLINGTON

- **Team Around Family process** – engagement with schools as part of whole family assessment and intervention. Collaboration with education professionals throughout case work, including regular progress reviews with the family.
- **Education Information Requests** – specific information gathered from schools at beginning of intervention to inform planning (attendance; attainment; support in services/place).
- **School Link role** – All practitioners allocated to schools in borough to engage and promote the Early Help offer via Team Around School process. Youth Violence Survey (2018) – 92% Designated Safeguarding Leads in Islington schools stated they were aware of Early Help services.
- **Parenting Programmes and Support** – to support positive implementation of routines, boundaries and appropriate responses to child behaviour – this has a positive impact on school engagement and attendance.
- **Advocacy** – on behalf of family to wider professional network to ensure family and child's views are shared.



How do Early Help services engage with education?

- **Relationship established between Early Help and NRC PRU** - facilitates appropriate information sharing when children transition between non-mainstream schools to mainstream and vice versa to.
- **Trauma-informed** Early Help staff
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability training** - All staff in Early Help have attended training to enable staff to support families with children with SEND.

Whole School Approach to Providing Early Help to Pupils

All Staff awareness

All staff, including non-teaching, are aware of how to identify vulnerable pupils and follow the systems in place to provide early help and support.

Information about risk and protective factors

All staff are aware of the **protective factors** and how schools and school staff can contribute to these.

All staff are aware of risk factors, what to look out for and follow the systems in place to flag concerns

Consider...

- The importance of **mental health** and its relationship to the risk factors
- Housing issues
- Both pupils' **behaviours** and their **circumstances**
- How **traumatic experiences** can affect pupils
- **Family members with mental health difficulties**
- Impact of **parental conflict**

Information on trauma informed approaches

Team of key staff who support the DSL in implementing DSL responsibilities

Pupils

Parents

Information from parents or pupils may trigger concerns

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The **DSL** has the **knowledge, understanding, skills** and **time** to lead this work across the school. They are **responsible for**:

- **All staff awareness**
- Ensuring **whole school systems** are in place and **appropriate agencies** are involved.
- The **process to identify and report concerns** ensuring all staff **Identify the right support**
- **Receiving reported concerns** from staff / pupils / parents / external agencies
- Leading and **implementing the agreed approach**

Checking it's working

Taking advice when there are **incidents of concern** and **reporting** where appropriate

Appropriately **sharing information** about individual pupils or groups with **relevant members of staff**

Keeping up to date with most recent **guidance** and local **community** issues

Liaising with **external agencies**

- **Complete Early Help Assessment**
- **Share concerns about individuals or groups**
- **Current issues**

Families First and local **external agencies**

Team of key staff who support the DSL in implementing DSL responsibilities

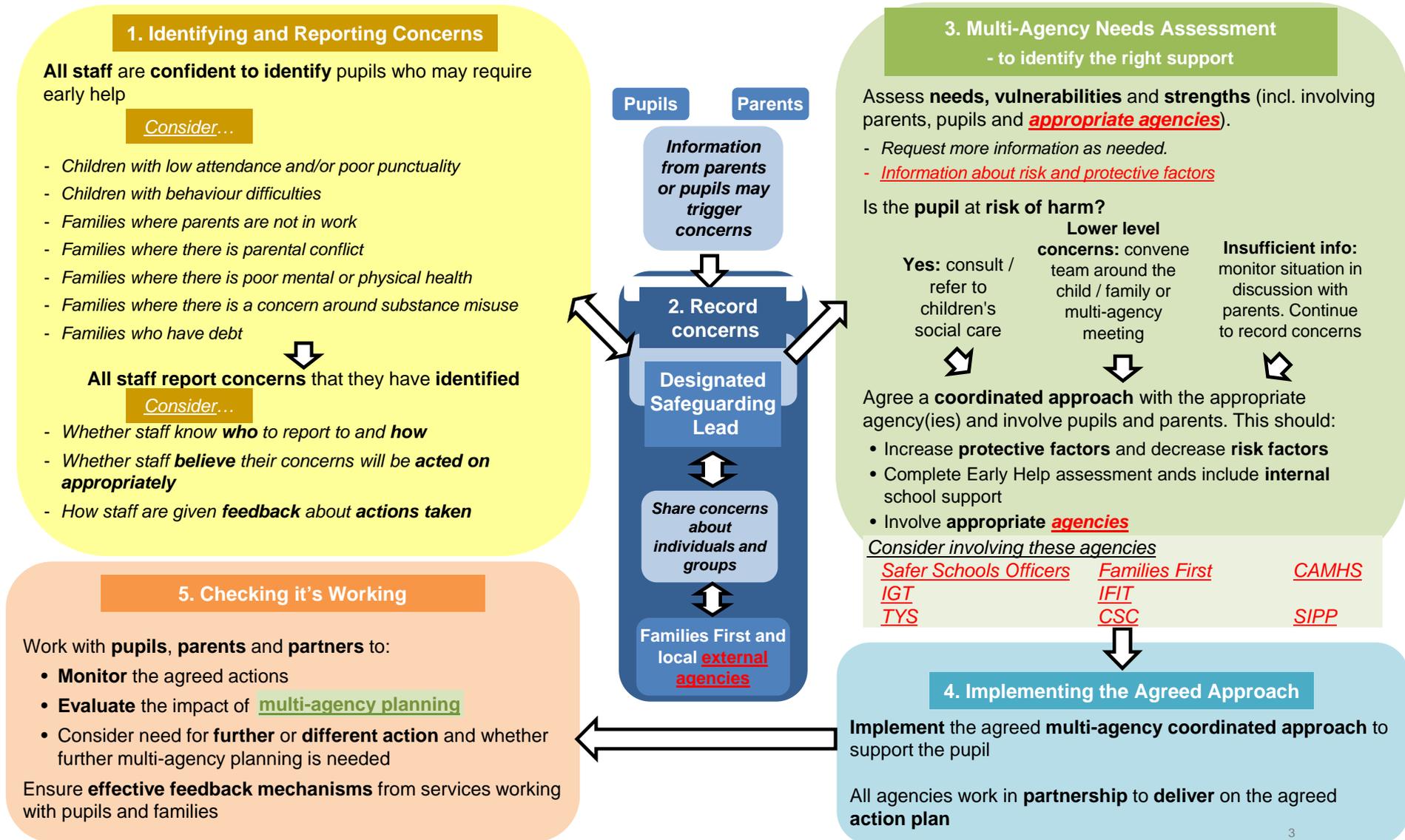
Whole School Systems

The school has rigorous systems for identifying vulnerable pupils and planning support.

There is a **safe** and **compassionate environment** and a focus on developing pupils' **life skills** through a **whole-school** approach. An essential part of supporting vulnerable pupils in school should include:

- **Established procedures** to:
 - **Improve attendance**
 - **Manage behaviour**
 - **Record and monitor low-level concerns**
- **High quality**, age appropriate, regular **PSHE** lessons for all pupils, including circle time, that reflect the needs of the class
- **Regular, close communication** between school and **agencies** for **advice, consultation and planning**
- Regular **multi-agency** pastoral meetings, with **key messages** consistently communicated to staff
- Developing effective **relationships** and **partnerships** with parents.
- Storing all information in one place, which can be accessed by the relevant, appropriate people.
- **Monitoring** and **reflecting** on the effectiveness of whole school systems

Process for Identifying and Responding to Needs





IMHARS – Islington Mental Health and Resilience in Schools

Continuing school outreach support at Pooles Park Primary School

‘FSW Larissa has worked as our Families First link worker for 3 years. In addition to her allocated hours, she has come into school before and after hours to meet the school community on the school gates and playgrounds in order to foster meaningful relationships with vulnerable families.

...she always responds to staff communications to meet to support families in school. She meets with families before they sign up to any services to ensure they understand what is on offer and available to them and to talk through any reservations/concerns. This means that families are in a better place to access the support and services, therefore take up is higher and leads to more positive outcomes for children.’

Pastoral Care Manager Maggie Ryan, Pooles Park Primary

‘whole school’
approach and
embedding Early
Help in schools.



Family:

Mum – VA
Child – AA (15)

**Themes: Poor attendance
and ASB**

Case was referred
from school.

**AA's presenting
behaviours:**

- truanting internally
- high number of exclusions.
- AA's involvement in , anti-social behaviour out of school.
- AA found gang culture fascinating and was at risk of gang involvement.
- AA CAMHS assessment identified: learning difficulties; easily distracted with a short attention span.

**AA at risk of permanent
exclusion if behaviours
continued.**

Referral to IFIT

**FIW assessment highlighted
contributing factors :**

- AA's learning needs not being met in education.
- Bereavement -loss of grandparent.
- VA's leniency regarding school attendance and lack of parental control.

Intervention:

- FIW completed parenting work, including exploring 'parenting messages' to understand VA's experience of education.
- FIW completed sessions with VA around boundaries, consequences, positive praise and incentives.
- VA was able to receive emotional and practical support.
- FIW met with AA at school to do direct work with him, covering topics such as: dreams; worries and good things; self-esteem; dealing with difficulties; coping tools.
- FIW collaborated with professionals (school/SEN) to support family through EHCP process.
- Support and advocacy on behalf of AA and VA to ensure that school were meeting AA's needs during EHC assessment and reduce further risk of exclusion.

Intervention

- AA has an EHCP plan which VA and AA contributed to and agreed with.

- VA stated she is 'happy that AA will be receiving the help he needs'. AA has also acknowledged that he feels supported by the school.

- AA had temporary reduced timetable implemented

- AA received extra support in school to meet his learning needs.

AA attended his local Youth Club which helped him increase in confidence and self-esteem.

- AA can reflect and be honest about how he is feeling.

- AA secured a place at college and is motivated to attend and expressed career aspirations.

- VA became more assertive and consistent with her parenting strategies

- Improved school attendance. resulted in improved school attendance

- Comfortable sleeping arrangement and routine for AA.

Outcomes

AA has an EHCP in place to support transition to college.

AA has been able to acknowledge his difficulties and is more confident asking for support if needed.

AA is more likely to attempt a piece of work that he finds difficult rather than shunning away from it.

VA now praises her children when they demonstrate wanted behaviours and gives incentives for them to work towards.

Futures



Family:

Mum – ZP

Child – MP aged 11

(Other children: aged:

1month; 7 years; 10 years)

Theme: school transition

and SEND

MP (aged 11) has a diagnosis of ASD and has an EHCP to support his needs. He recently transitioned to secondary school in borough and has had difficulties adapting to the new environment resulting in f/t exclusion.

Actions

- Concerns regarding MP's interaction with other pupils at school, so school SENCO provided whole class 'autism awareness' session to indirectly inform pupils to be sensitive to MP's needs to prevent further physical altercations
- FSW scheduled regular school Team Around Family meetings to discuss MP's Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) provision and school support to help MP's transition.
- FSW explored different schooling options for MP and suitability with school and parent.

Outcomes

- MP continues to attend mainstream provision with the support of his EHCP.
- Peers are more aware of MP's needs and understand that he does not mean to cause offence and/or initiate altercations.
- MP started playing chess and helping at a family member's café on a Saturday to increase social activities outside of the home.
- ZP provided contact details for SENDIASS colleagues and is able to now advocate on MP's behalf.
- ZP's relationship with school has developed and she has a good relationship with the new SENCO to monitor MP's progress. ZP feels more confident engaging with school and discussing MP's needs.
- All 4 children are engaged in extra-curricular activities, including MP.



Challenges

- **Schools using fixed-term exclusions to manage behaviour**
- **Failure to identify SEND and provide appropriate support** – e.g. starting of Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) process AFTER multiple fixed-term exclusions and/or permanent exclusion.
- **Transition from primary to secondary schools**
- **Implementing universal early help in mainstream provision**
- **Frequency and length of exclusions vary** from school to school
- **Use of alternative provision to avoid permanent exclusion**
- **Overcoming consent barrier to Early Help/other service involvement**
- **Early Help provision varies in each borough**

Early Help - Futures

New Outcomes Plan – measuring education outcomes including: attendance; exclusion; attendance to AP/PRU.

Flexibility – providing a flexible service offer to support families with children who are at risk of multiple fixed-term/permanent exclusion.

Whole school approach and TAS - Engagement from schools in TAS process –utilising the FSW link worker role consistently across ALL schools by schools organising a ‘multi-agency’ meeting to address the needs of children/families who could benefit from early intervention.

Awareness – engaging school Senior Leadership Teams in schools to promote early help as a whole school ethos e.g. **Heads Forum** .

Transition – a focus on identifying and improving outcomes for children who may find transition from primary to secondary school challenging.

Education Outreach Team – to support YP to positive reintegrate into mainstream school environment where appropriate.