



Early Help Steering Group Terms of Reference September 2014

1) Purpose and Aims

The steering group will bring together key partners to co-ordinate and deliver Early Help services for the children, young people and families of Wirral. Early Help is defined as, “intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and families, or with a population most at risk of developing problems. Early intervention may occur at any point in a child or young person’s life.” (C4EO definition of Early Help)

Early Help maximises life chances for children, improves outcomes for families and prevents more complex problems emerging. Both universal and targeted services play an important role in the Early Help Offer. Universal preventative approaches prevent problems from developing and targeted interventions support those with existing risk factors and vulnerabilities in order to reduce the severity of problems and prevent the escalation on need.

Thus the delivery of an effective Early Help Offer is not the responsibility of a single agency. Early Help requires a partnership approach owned by all stakeholders working with children, young people, parents and families. The Early Help Steering Group aims to achieve the following:

- To devise, implement and monitor the impact of an Early Help Strategy for Wirral;
- To ensure that Wirral’s Early Help Offer is wide-ranging and accessible both at universal and targeted levels of need;
- To ensure that all partners have a shared vision, common language and skills which puts the child and family at the centre of all interventions;
- To build and strengthen the capacity of universal preventative services;
- To monitor the performance of Locality Teams and the Gateway, holding the responsible senior managers to account;
- Devise and implement a communication strategy for Early Help;
- To examine the impact and cost-effectiveness of early intervention at a local level.

2) Governance and accountability

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013) requires local agencies to have in place effective ways of identifying emerging problems and potential unmet needs for children and their families. It also requires local agencies to work together to put processes in place for the effective assessment of needs of individual children who may benefit from Early Help services.

Governance of the Early Help Steering Group will be provided by Wirral’s Children’s Trust Board. The Children’s Trust Board will monitor progress of the Steering Group through quarterly performance reporting and group updates. Challenge and scrutiny will be provided by Wirral’s Safeguarding Children Board. The Head of Targeted Services will be the Lead Officer for Early Help on behalf of Wirral Local Authority.

3) Membership

Deborah Gornik	(Head of Targeted Services) (Link Forum) (Primary Education) (Secondary Education) (Post-16 Education) (Midwifery) (Health Visiting) (School Nursing Service) (Family Nurse Partnership) (Public Health) (CWP) (Commissioning) (GMCP-Connexions) (Housing)
Kath Lloyd	(Early Years/Children's Centres) (Merseyside Police)
David Robbins	(LSCB Manager)
Elizabeth Hartley	(Family Intervention Services)

4) Role of the Steering Group Member

Each member of the steering group is expected to be a Champion for Early Help and has an important role to play in embedding a robust partnership approach. Early Help Steering Group Members should:

- Be able to speak for their organisation with authority;
- Disseminate information throughout their 'home' organisation;
- Hold their agency to account in relation to the delivery of Early Help.

5) Functioning of the Early Help Steering Group

The Early Help Steering Group will meet on a 6-weekly basis. Agendas, minutes and meeting papers will be co-ordinated by the Head of Targeted Services.