



**BMHP5021 Protecting and Supporting Families in Health  
and Care**

**Assignment Title;**  
**Component -2 Written Report**

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## Introduction

The concept of Early Help involves offering timely support to children, young people, and families as soon as concerns arise, preventing issues from escalating. It is a preventative approach used by local authorities and partner agencies to identify needs early and provide practical, emotional, or social support. Early Help plays a vital role in preventing small issues from becoming complex situations that are harder to manage. It supports better results for children across health, learning, and emotional development, and helps prevent the need for more serious interventions in the future. By focusing on the whole family rather than just the child, Early Help recognises that family circumstances play a significant role in a child's development. It also promotes multi-agency working, ensuring that professionals collaborate effectively to provide coordinated and consistent support. This report examines how Tower Hamlet council, Norfolk County Council, and Staffordshire County Council communicate information about these services on their websites, provides an explanation of the early help system, multi-agency working, evaluations of each council's information, a comparative analysis of strengths and weaknesses, and a conclusion on which authority's website provides the most effective and accessible information for families.

## Explanation of the Early Help System

According to the Early Help System Guide (Department for Education, 2022), Early Help does not operate as a single programme but as an integrated framework of services, procedures, and multi-agency collaboration. It aims to ensure that support is provided quickly and appropriately at the first indication of need, helping to avoid more complex situations later. The guide explains that Early Help involves assessing a child or family's needs through an Early Help Assessment, identifying strengths and areas of concern, and developing a clear action plan with agreed outcomes. The purpose of Early Help is to identify and address emerging concerns at an early stage, providing timely support to children, young people, and families to prevent problems from escalating and requiring statutory intervention. Statutory intervention takes place when children's social care services become involved due to legal responsibilities, including child protection investigations or court-related care proceedings. Early Help aims to reduce the need for these interventions by identifying concerns early and providing appropriate support before situations reach a crisis point. Early Help involves providing practical, emotional, and social support to families experiencing emerging difficulties such as parenting challenges, financial pressures, poor educational attendance, behavioural concerns, or mental health issues. Through the Early Help assessment process, professionals collaborate with families to identify needs, recognise strengths and create a coordinated support plan aimed at improving family outcomes. Another important purpose of Early Help is to promote multi-agency working. Different

professionals, such as teachers, health visitors, social workers, and community organisations, work together to provide coordinated support for the family. This ensures that families receive the right help at the right time and that problems are addressed before they escalate.

Early Help aligns closely with broader safeguarding frameworks as it focuses on identifying and addressing concerns at an early stage to protect children and promote their wellbeing. UK safeguarding frameworks emphasise the responsibility of organisations and professionals to protect children from harm while ensuring that they develop within safe and supportive family and community environments (HM Government, 2023; NSPCC, 2023). Early Help contributes to this by providing timely support to families before problems escalate into serious safeguarding concerns that may require statutory intervention. National safeguarding guidance, including Working Together to Safeguard Children, highlights the importance of early intervention in preventing problems from escalating into more serious safeguarding concerns. Early Help services support families experiencing challenges such as parenting difficulties, financial stress, poor school attendance, or mental health concerns. Early Help also reflects the safeguarding principle of multi-agency working (Firmin et al., 2019). Furthermore, Early Help promotes a preventative and family-centred approach, which is central to safeguarding practice. Safeguarding guidance emphasises the importance of working in partnership with families, recognising their strengths, and providing support that enables them to address difficulties before problems escalate.

### **Explanation of multi-agency working**

Multi-agency working involves professionals from various organisations collaborating to support children, young people, and families. These professionals may include teachers, social workers, health practitioners, youth workers, and staff from the voluntary sector. By sharing information, skills, and resources, agencies can coordinate their actions and respond more effectively to the complex needs of families (HM Government, 2023). In the Early Help system, multi-agency collaboration is essential for early identification of issues such as parenting difficulties, poor school attendance, mental health concerns, or financial stress. Coordinated support allows families to receive holistic assistance and prevents problems from escalating to the point where statutory intervention is required. Different professionals collaborate to support families by working together to share information, assess needs, and coordinate services so that families receive the most appropriate support. Each professional may observe different aspects of a child's life, such as their education, health, or home environment, and by sharing this information, they can build a more complete picture of the family's needs. Effective collaboration ensures that services are well coordinated, avoid overlapping of work, and help families access the right support at the right time.

## Evaluation of Three Local Authority Websites

### Tower Hamlets Council

Tower Hamlets Council provides information about Early Help on its website through well-organised pages that explain the service and how families can access support. Early Help aims to support children, young people, and families when difficulties first begin, helping to prevent problems from becoming more serious. The website explains that the service is available from pregnancy until a child is 19 years old, or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs or disabilities. This helps families understand whether they may be able to access the support (Tower Hamlets Council, no.date.).

The website is divided into different sections, including *About Early Help*, *Family Hubs*, and *Concerned about a Child*, which makes it easier for users to find relevant information. The *About Early Help* section explains the support that is available, while the *Family Hubs* section describes locations where families can access services such as parenting advice, health support, and guidance (Thfamilyhubs.co.uk, 2026). The council also highlights multi-agency working through the Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST), where professionals from different organisations work together to ensure families receive the right support at the right time ([www.towerhamlets.gov.uk](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk), no.date)

Overall, the website uses clear language and headings that improve readability. However, some information is spread across several pages, which may require users to navigate multiple links. Despite this, the site provides detailed information about services, referral pathways, and family hubs.

The borough also shows strengths in service delivery and education, with high resident satisfaction and many schools rated “Good” or “Outstanding” by Ofsted (Tower Hamlets Council, 2025). However, the council faces challenges, including governance concerns, financial issues, and increasing demand for housing and social care.

### Norfolk County Council

The Norfolk County Council website provides information about Early Help in its “Help for Families” section. This section explains that Early Help aims to offer advice, guidance, and practical support to families when challenges first arise. It also directs users to a range of services associated with family hubs and community organisations. Additionally, an online request form is available for families or professionals to seek support. The website outlines various types of assistance, including help with parenting, finances, mental health, and

children's well-being. Many of these services are delivered through Family Hubs, which gather support from different agencies both in the community and online. Families can request assistance through an online form, and professionals can refer families with their consent (Norfolk County Council, 2025). Overall, the Norfolk website is user-friendly and written in clear, accessible language. The layout is well-organised, making it easy for users to find information about support services. Contact details and online request forms are prominently displayed. However, while the website provides a useful overview of Early Help services, it sometimes lacks detailed information about the Early Help process in comparison to some other local authority websites. Norfolk County Council exhibits several strengths but also faces challenges. The council has been recognised for its environmental leadership, including projects like LED streetlights and tree planting (Norfolk County Council, 2025). Nonetheless, financial pressures, staff turnover, and increasing demand for services such as adult social care and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) continue to strain the council's resources (Norfolk County Council, 2023; 2025).

### **Staffordshire County Council**

Staffordshire County Council provides Early Help information through its **Families First** and Family Hubs services. The website explains that Early Help services provide advice, support, and practical assistance to families experiencing challenges. It also describes the different levels of support available, depending on the needs of the family.

The website provides a wide range of information about family support services. However, details about Early Help are spread across several webpages, which may make it harder for some users to navigate. Although the language is clear, users may need to look through multiple pages to fully understand the services available.

The Staffordshire website presents a variety of information regarding family support programmes, parenting support, and community services. However, the relationship between these services and the Early Help framework is not always clearly explained.

Staffordshire County Council shows several strengths but also faces some ongoing challenges. Adult social care is a key strength, as it was rated “Good” by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in 2025, which highlighted effective leadership and safe services (CQC, 2022). The council has also supported economic development, helping to maintain a strong local economy and low unemployment rates. In education, the council performs well, with a high proportion of children being school-ready by the age of five and relatively low levels of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET). However, some challenges remain. Support for care leavers and children at risk of neglect still requires improvement. In addition, recruitment and retention difficulties in the care sector, along with rising demand for

services such as education and social care, continue to place pressure on the council's financial resources. (Auditor's Annual Report for Staffordshire County Council 2, 2026).

### **Comparative Analysis**

All three websites provide information about Early Help and family support services, but they differ in how clearly the information is presented and how easy the websites are to use. The Norfolk County Council website is one of the most effective. A key strength is its clear and organised layout, which helps users find information quickly. The website uses simple and accessible language, making it easier for families to understand the support available.

Information about Early Help can be found in the "Help for Families" section, where users can access guidance on parenting, mental health, finances, and children's wellbeing.

Another strength is the online request form that allows families or professionals to ask for support directly. However, some information is spread across different webpages, which may require users to search through several pages.

The Staffordshire County Council website also provides a wide range of information about family support programmes, parenting advice, and community services. This helps users learn about the different types of support available. However, the connection between these services and the Early Help framework is not always clearly explained. This may make it harder for some users to understand how the services link together or how to access the right help.

The Tower Hamlets Council website also offers information about family support and Early Help services in the local community. A strength of the website is that it highlights local programmes and support available to families. However, some sections provide limited detail about how the Early Help process works.

Overall, the Norfolk County Council website appears to be the most effective because it is easy to navigate, clearly organised, and provides direct ways to request support. All three websites could improve by providing clearer guidance, simpler navigation, and more accessible features such as translated information and improved search tools.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the review of the Norfolk County Council, Staffordshire County Council, and Tower Hamlets Council websites shows that all three provide useful information about Early Help and family support services. However, the way this information is presented varies. Norfolk's website appears to be the most effective because it is clearly organised, uses simple language, and provides an online request form that allows families and professionals to access support more easily. In comparison, the Staffordshire and Tower Hamlets websites provide helpful information but sometimes lack clear explanations of how Early Help services connect or how families can access them.

To improve online signposting of Early Help services, local authorities should organise information more clearly, provide step-by-step guidance on how to access support, and ensure that key services are easy to find. Websites should also include accessible features such as clear navigation, search tools, and translated information. Overall, clear and accessible online information is essential to help families quickly understand and access the support they need.

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