**13. Family Help**

**Early Help - Social Care**

**13.1. Family Help – Our Approach**Our core aim is to work better together with our multi-agency early help partners across all areas in Lancashire, to ensure that Children, young people and their families are safe, healthy and achieve their full potential. Early Help is fundamental to achieving this vision.

This is a guide for schools and setting who works with children and young people with SEND. Within Lancashire we take a holistic approach to identifying support for children, young people and their families. The aim is to assist schools and setting in identifying a child or young person’s needs, what type of approach may meet those needs, and the process to follow in moving from an identification there are issues to getting the right support, in the right place, at the right time. It introduces a continuum of need and support, or Graduated Approach and gives examples of the factors that may indicate a child, young person and their family need additional support.

It is important that all agencies understand the needs of each individual child or young person within their own context and realise that each situation is unique and specific to that child. This document should assist people in determining the next actions in meeting those needs and to help everyone to:   
• Think clearly to achieve a holistic approach.

• Understand the child in the context of their family and wider community to daw on their strengths and promote their resilience

• Develop ideas and solutions with children, young people and their families, to offer proportionate support in a timely manner by the right person/service and to prevent inappropriate escalation in order to access services.

• Empower families to make decisions and changes to their own lives. It is important that the appropriate services are accessed to meet needs in a collaborative way, and that families understand that a change takes place.

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Please see Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire for further guidance on thresholds [WWWCF\_1\_2.pdf (proceduresonline.com)](https://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/WWWCF_1_2.pdf)

**Introduction -How we practice in Children's Services.**

Read our [strengths-based-framework-booklet.pdf](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/929519/strengths-based-framework-booklet.pdf) for Lancashire County Council's practice approach in Children's Services, June 2021. *Lancashire’s Model of Practice: Strength Based Approach to working alongside Children, Young People and Families*

In Lancashire, from our children and families service and front-door to our leaving care services, we are determined to deliver excellent outcomes for the children, young people, and the families we work alongside. We believe that kindness matters, and we treat people with fairness, dignity, and respect.

Lancashire is committed to ensuring that children and families receive a seamless service through shared professional values, behaviours and approaches across all services. The best interest of the child is central at all times.

**Lancashire children, young people and families' partnership vision  
Five outcomes**

* Vulnerable children and young people are safe from harm and build resilience.
* Children and young people achieve their full potential in education, learning and future employment.
* Children and young people enjoy heathy lifestyles and know how to help others.
* Children, young people and families have a voice in shaping the support they receive.
* Children and young people live in Lancashire where they can enjoy a good quality of life, be happy and want to stay.

**13.2 Lancashire Break Time**

[Lancashire Short Break Services Statement - Lancashire County Council](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/things-to-do/lancashire-short-break-services-statement/)

Lancashire Break Time provides short breaks to give the primary carer of a child a break from their caring role whilst the child or young person attends a fun group activity. The break is for a period of at least two hours. People wishing to use the scheme need to register at the start of each year.

The criteria to qualify for Lancashire Break Time short breaks is to be the unpaid primary carer of a child or young person with special educational needs and/or disabilities, aged 4 to 18 years and living in Lancashire (excluding Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool). The child or young person will find it difficult to access universal services due to sensory issues, learning difficulties, physical mobility problems, etc. They will **not** be in receipt of an assessed social care outreach package; those with a higher level of need will receive services through their package of care.

Lancashire Break Time activities take place across Lancashire during term time and school holidays and will continue in their current form until the review of how short breaks are to be delivered is completed. There is a contribution of £2 per hour towards the additional costs for the activities.

If you think a child or young person meets the criteria and would benefit from a short break, please see further information at:

[www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/things-to-do/lancashire-break-time](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/things-to-do/lancashire-break-time)

**13.3 SEND newsletter**

Alternatively, you could also encourage parents to sign up to the Lancashire FIND Newsletter, which will be rebadged to become the SEND newsletter this year. [Family Information Network Directory (FIND) newsletter - Lancashire County Council](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/getting-help/family-information-network-directory/) is a free and useful resource for professionals and parent/carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The newsletter is published every 3 months providing information and advice, signposting, services and support; local and national regarding a range of SEND needs and issues. Parent/carers can register to receive this newsletter by registering on the FIND database on the above page.

For professionals supporting families with children and young people who have SEND, this newsletter can be a useful reference for them and to share with parent/carers.

**13.4 SEND Local Offer**

You can also advise them to access information about the Lancashire County Council`s Local Offer. This includes information on activities for children and information on local support groups.  
  
<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/>

**13.6**

**13.5 Local Offer – Things to Do**The Local Offer has a specific page which provides the links to a range of free activities. [Things to do - Lancashire County Council](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/things-to-do/)  
   
**13.6 Local Offer – POWAR / Youth Zone**It also provides links to the POWAR Young people`s participation network**.** POWAR is a participation group for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

It is run by Lancashire County Council's Targeted Youth Support and Participation service. POWAR influences decision making and helps to make a difference to young people’s lives. They hold regular meetings which are informal and fun. These meetings are open to young people from secondary school age up to 25. For more information, visit the [POWAR webpage](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/youthzone/need-to-know/powar-participation-group/).

These pages also provide information on the Youth Zones and the SEND Local Offer

[Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) - local offer - Lancashire County Council](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/youthzone/need-to-know/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send-local-offer/)

**13.7 Local Offer – Lancashire Parent Carer Forum**

The Lancashire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) is a parent led, voluntary group of parent's carers and grandparents, all with children or young people (CYP) aged 0-25 with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) our children and young people have wide variety of SEND.

As a parent led organisation, they promote the parent voice through participation and co-production to hold services to account and act as the cement in the SEND Partnership Board.

They look to recruit parent representatives who will join key working groups within the SEND Partnership Board and provide training to them to fulfil this pivotal role as parent representatives. So, if you have parents with skills sets and ambitions to support other parents and to shape services encourage them to join the Forum. If parents wish to join, they can follow this link. **admin@lancashireparentcarerforum.org.uk**

Lancashire Parents Carer Forum has a website and is actively involved in distributing information to parents and in working with other professionals in organizing local parent workshops and coffee mornings. [Lancashire Parent Carer Forum - Lancashire County Council](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/getting-help/carer-support/lancashire-parent-carer-forum/)

Contact is the national organisation that oversees funding to Forums across the Country.

[Parent carer participation | Contact](https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/parent-carer-participation/) **13.8 Holiday and Activity Food Programme**Funding for the programme has been provided from the Department for Education (DfE) to Lancashire County Council. [Holiday activities and food programme (HAF) - Lancashire County Council](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/school-holiday-activities/)

To get a free place on the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) your family needs to be [eligible for free school meals](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/free-school-meals/?page=2).

**13.9 Equipment and Adaptations to the Family Home**

Where a child has a significant physical disability and may require adaptations to the family home, contact**Lancashire County Council Social Services** 0300 123 6720 and tell them the child or young person need adaptations in your home. An initial assessment of the child`s needs will be carried by an Occupational Therapist, who will confirm the needs. The local District Councils who undertake the adaptations will then appoint a surveyor to recommend how the work will be done. Spend above £30k is subject to a means test. ( You do not need a social care assessment to apply for an adaptation)

The Government guidance issued below outlines the process for a Disabled Facilities Grant, Child Care, Motability applications; whilst the Contact site offers further advice on equipment.

[Help if you have a disabled child: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/help-for-disabled-child)

[Aids, equipment and adaptations | Contact](https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/social-care/aids-equipment-and-adaptations/)

Details of the main NHS services are available within the SEND Directory – click on Health – enter equipment in search.

**13.10 Team around the Family**  
  
In the first instance you should prompt the parent to request a TAF to consider their social care needs with yourself as the education provider and Lead Professional, and with key professionals involved with the child. The TAF should help signpost parents to local activities, explore other parenting advice required – and will then provide evidence for future onward referral. Depending upon the circumstances you may wish to consult the Community Support Worker attached from CFW to your school or provision.  
  
**13.11 Making a referral for Early Help or Social Care**

This page outlines the processes involved in requesting support from Children`s services.

[Requesting support from Children's Services - Lancashire County Council](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and-families/safeguarding-children/requesting-support-from-childrens-services/)

The following top tips are provided to you to facilitate the process.

****You can also direct parents to the following information available on the web- site should they choose to refer themselves in directly or where the situation is more urgent. In relation to requesting a Social Care Assessment the following link outlines the process and key telephone number. Call **0300 123 6720**[Social care support for children and families - Lancashire County Council](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/keeping-children-safe/social-care-support-for-children-and-families/)

In cases, where you do undertake to facilitate the referral for the parent, then as an Internal professional here is the link to our Request for Support E-Form – <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and-families/safeguarding-children/requesting-support-from-childrens-services/>

It is always useful to prompt parents to consider what is working well – what assessments have been previously undertaken – what are they and you are worried about – what is the outcome of their request for support. These are questions they will need to complete within their request.

In some cases, you may find that parents may have had an assessment completed in the last year and the case has been closed. In such cases, you will need to prompt them to refer in again. You will need them to be clear on how their circumstances have changed, or if the referral is for another child.

You should advise the parent that whilst they may request a Social Care Assessment the MASH team will determine whether there are unmet social care needs or not. If an assessment is offered, this could be completed at an Early Help level by a Child & Family Worker or a Child & Family Assessment by a Social Worker. The outcome might be that there are no unmet needs, and they may be signposted to other services.

**13.12 Child & Family Wellbeing Service**The Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFW) offers early help and support to children, young people age 0-19+yrs (0 -25yrs for SEND) and their families across Lancashire. The service responds as early as possible when a child, young person or family needs support, helping them to access services to meet their needs and working with them to ensure the support offered is right for them, is offered in the right place, and at the right time.

The main focus of the service is to provide an enhanced level of support which is prioritised towards those groups or individuals who have more complex or intensive needs or who are at risk and particularly where we think that providing early help will make a positive difference. Children and Family Wellbeing staff are skilled, committed and recognise that every family has different needs. The service approach is to listen, understand and work alongside individuals and families to make the changes that will help them get to where they need to be.

If you think a child or young person and their family would benefit from the involvement of the Child and Family Wellbeing Service then please see referral information for professionals at the following link: <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and-families/children-and-family-wellbeing-service/>

The following link provides information on what the Child & Family Wellbeing Service Offer is: [children-and-family-wellbeing-service-offer-february-2022.pdf](file:///R:\IDSS\DSCO\GUIDANCE\ordinary%20available%20toolkit%20revision\children-and-family-wellbeing-service-offer-february-2022.pdf)  
The following link provides guidance on how to request support from the Child and Family Wellbeing Service. [lcc-childrens-services-request-for-support-guidance-for-professionals.pdf](file:///R:\IDSS\DSCO\GUIDANCE\ordinary%20available%20toolkit%20revision\lcc-childrens-services-request-for-support-guidance-for-professionals.pdf)

**13.13 Children in Need**  
Children and young people with a disability, are considered 'children in need' under section 17(10) c. of the Children Act 1989. Parent carers of disabled children and young people can request an assessment of need by children's services. This social work assessment will identify a child or young person's needs, alongside the needs of the whole family. The assessment will identify any unmet social care needs and consider how these needs can best be met.

* Children and young people with severe and profound disabilities will be assessed by the Children with Disabilities Service.
* Children and young people with SEN, mild and moderate disabilities will be assessed and supported by workers within other Children's Social Care Services.

Where social workers within other teams require advice and support this is readily made available via consultations to ensure the needs analysis is detailed and that thresholds for support are consistent with regards to short breaks and other provision.

The Service threshold criteria are included here:



**3.14 Assessment process**

When completing an assessment, the social worker will look at several issues that may be affecting the child (or children) and family. The assessment will look at each of the three domains of The Framework for Assessment including the Child`s Development Needs, Parenting Capacity and Family and Environmental Factors.

Prior to the assessment being started workers will provide parents with an explanation of the assessment processes and confirm consent to talk to other professionals and access assessments and reports already completed for the child. Parents are advised at the offset of the Complaints Procedure and that their views are valued and will be included within the assessment, and that where professional judgement`s differ the Social Worker will be clear why.

The worker will find out about the strengths and difficulties in the family by asking questions about:

* The nature of the child’s disability and how it impacts on both their life and that of their family and parent carer.
* How the child is doing in terms of education, health and learning about how they are getting on with other people.
* The care of the child - including how well parent(s) or carer(s) are offering basic care, keeping the child safe, helping them learn, offering guidance and a stable home.
* The family circumstances, wider family and community networks
* The child’s wishes and feelings, goals, aspirations, dreams and what is important to them and any worries or concerns they may have
* Depending on the age of the child, any needs to prepare for adulthood
* The parent`s emotional resources and resilience – for the most part we seek to integrate consideration of parent`s needs within the assessment and will consider the employment, training, leisure and recreational needs of the parent carer.
* Parent carers can also request a stand-alone Parent carer needs assessments under Section 97 of the Children & Families Act 2014

The social worker will:

* Meet with the child at home and school – to explore their views by using child friendly tools together with them  
  This will be discussed with the parent to ensure the child feels comfortable and understands what is being asked of them.
* Meet or talk to both parents and with siblings and other members of their family, who are active within the child`s life.
* Talk to other professionals who work with the family, such as the child’s teacher or family doctor. We will confirm this within a consent agreement, or be clear where safeguarding concerns take precedence

Completion of the assessment does require parents to make themselves reasonably available, and Social Workers will seek to agree a number of dates at the offset so this can be done well within the outside target 45 working days.

**3.15 After the assessment**

Prior to the assessment being completed the Social Worker will provide the parent with a copy to ensure their views are captured. The Social Worker will then confirm outcome of the assessment:

* Where a child has needs which require continued social work support, then a plan called a **Child in Need (CIN) Plan** will be offered. The plan will be drawn up with parents, young people and key agencies to confirm the needs of the child and agreed outcomes and who need to achieve them. Where a child needs support to meet care needs, we will discuss a support package too
* Where we feel that child and family's needs could be met by the support of school or health professionals involved, then we would step down responsibility for supporting child to a TAF process as outlined in Level 2 of the Continuum of Need.
* For some children we may with their agreement signpost to other services, this may include Breaks Time.

Where a child has a Child in Need Plan is in place, a Child in Need (CIN) Review Meeting with the child, parent or carer will be held on an agreed basis. Where the child has an EHCP the Social Worker will seek to synchronise the two reviews to minimise duplication.

**Support packages**

Where the Social Worker assesses that the child or family need a support package, they will need to seek the necessary authorisations.

The Social Worker will in such situations talk to the family to consider if they would want a Direct Payment to enable them to buy in the required support themselves. This option allows people to recruit their own staff and can offer greater flexibility around when the support is provided. These payments do not affect benefits and are paid onto a pre-payment card.

[Direct payments - Lancashire County Council](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-social-care/getting-our-support/direct-payments/)

Where parents want more information or advice they can contact Lancashire Independent Living Services (LILS) on 01772 558863, who oversee the Direct Payment Scheme

Parents are also given the option of using Break Time Plus, which enables them to arrange care directly with providers. [Break Time Plus - Lancashire County Council](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/things-to-do/break-time-plus/)

For other parents a care agency or specific provider may be their preferred option.

**13.16. Preparing for Adulthood (Transitions from Children's to Adults' Services)**

Preparing for Adulthood should be a regular feature of a young person`s reviews from age 14 onwards, and so that the services and support they need can be put in place to start at 18. There should be a Transition Plan, which considers education, training and employment, health and social care needs, and housing if required.

Where young people aged 18 or over continue to have EHC plans under the Children and Families Act 2014, and they make the move to adult care and support, the care and support aspects of the EHC plan will be provided under the Care Act. The statutory care and support plan must form the basis of the 'care' element of the EHC plan.

Under the Care Act 2014 all young people going through the transition process are entitled to independent advocacy.

* Where a young person is open to Children`s Social Care services they will arrange the necessary introductions to the Transitions Service.
* However, some young people are not open to Children`s Social Care services and may require care provision after 18, especially where it is identified within the EHCP review that continued education provision would not be beneficial, or additional support is required to provide for their independence.

If a young person with SEND is presenting with needs for care and support as they approach adulthood, then they can request an Adult Needs Assessment. Care and support means the help some adults need to live as well as possible with any illness or disability they may have.

The young person has to consent to an assessment and where there are doubts about their capacity to do so The Mental Capacity Act 2005 applies. The young person can choose to have someone present with them such as a relative, friend or carer. If there is no appropriate support and the young person has substantial difficulty in being involved in the process, then the local authority will organise an advocate for them.

If you are of the view that a young person would benefit from an Adult Social Care Assessment then the young person or family can self-refer, or ask someone, such as, school or even family member, to get in touch on their behalf.

To make a referral or contact us for a discussion and information on 0300 123 6720 or out of hours 0300 123 6722.

The assessment will determine if the young person is eligible for support under the Care Act 2014 which, like the Children and Families Act 2014, focuses on promoting an individual’s well-being. The local authority applies rules set by the Government (for more information see: Care and Support (Eligibility Criteria) Regulations which are issued under the Care Act 2014).

You can also access information on the eligibility criteria for adult care and support by following the link here : [Assessing your needs - Lancashire County Council](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-social-care/getting-our-support/assessing-your-needs/)

The assessment is a two-way conversation to allow the young person to express their needs, wishes, feelings and for the assessor to understand and work with them to identify what is going well and what would help to improve their situation. The assessor will build on any previous assessments or plans in place for the young person so that they do not have to repeat their story. The assessment will include how the young person looks after themselves, it can include help with things like washing; dressing; eating; getting out and about and keeping in touch with friends or family.

Transition Assessments for adult care or support will determine if the young person is likely to have needs for care and support after they turn 18; and which are likely to be eligible needs.

Where a young person's needs are not eligible for adult services, local authorities must provide information and advice about how those needs may be met and the provision and support that young people can access in their local area.

Where a transition assessment identifies needs that are likely to be eligible, Adult Services will look to provide an Indicative Personal Budget so that young people have an idea of how much their care and support will cost when they enter the adult system. The young person may have to pay a contribution towards their care and support which is based on a financial assessment that looks at their income and any savings they may have.