

Early Help in County Durham

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 January 2025



Introduction and content

- County Durham's Early Help Strategy (2024/26) and Early Help System
- National legislation which applies to Early Help and the current Inspection Framework
- Governance and funding arrangements
- The Family Hub and Start for Life Offer
- Intensive Family Support Services
- Early Help Partnership Working
- Supporting Families Programme
- Innovation and national good practice
- Next steps - Family Help and Social Care national reforms

What is Early Help?

Early Help in County Durham is not a single service but a way of ‘thinking’ and ‘working’ through a collaborative approach between communities, families and services.

Early Help is the term used by agencies in County Durham to describe our approach to **providing support to children, young people and families as soon as problems start to emerge or when there is a strong likelihood that problems will emerge in the future.**

There are 115,000 children and young people (aged 0 – 19) in County Durham with almost 4,800 live births annually.



48th most deprived LA

50% of children live in the top 30% most deprived areas

The information to the right makes plain the scale of the challenge for the county and why we need to provide high quality early help to those who need it.



- 1 - Durham Insights
- 2 - TEWV Research looking at the impact of COVID People Survey in England
- 3 - Durham County Council Case Management Data
- 4 - Mental Health of Children and Young People Survey in England

Early Help Strategy 2024-2026

The new County Durham Early Help Strategy has been co-produced with parents, children, young people, parents and carers.

[2 minute video provides an overview](#)



The Early Help System

Acute & Targeted

Universal

Community Support



Stronger Families

A new way of working with families in County Durham



Working Together

- Statutory guidance sets out key roles for individual organisations and agencies to deliver effective arrangements for help, support, safeguarding, and protection.
- **Child-centred** approach within a **whole family** focus.
- Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child, listen to what they say, observe their behaviour, take their views seriously, and work with them and their families and the people who know them well when deciding how to support their needs.
- Some early help is provided through universal services, such as education and health services. They are **universal services** because they are available to all families, regardless of their needs.
- Other early help services are coordinated by a local authority and/or their partners to address specific concerns within a family and can be described as **targeted early help**.



HM Government

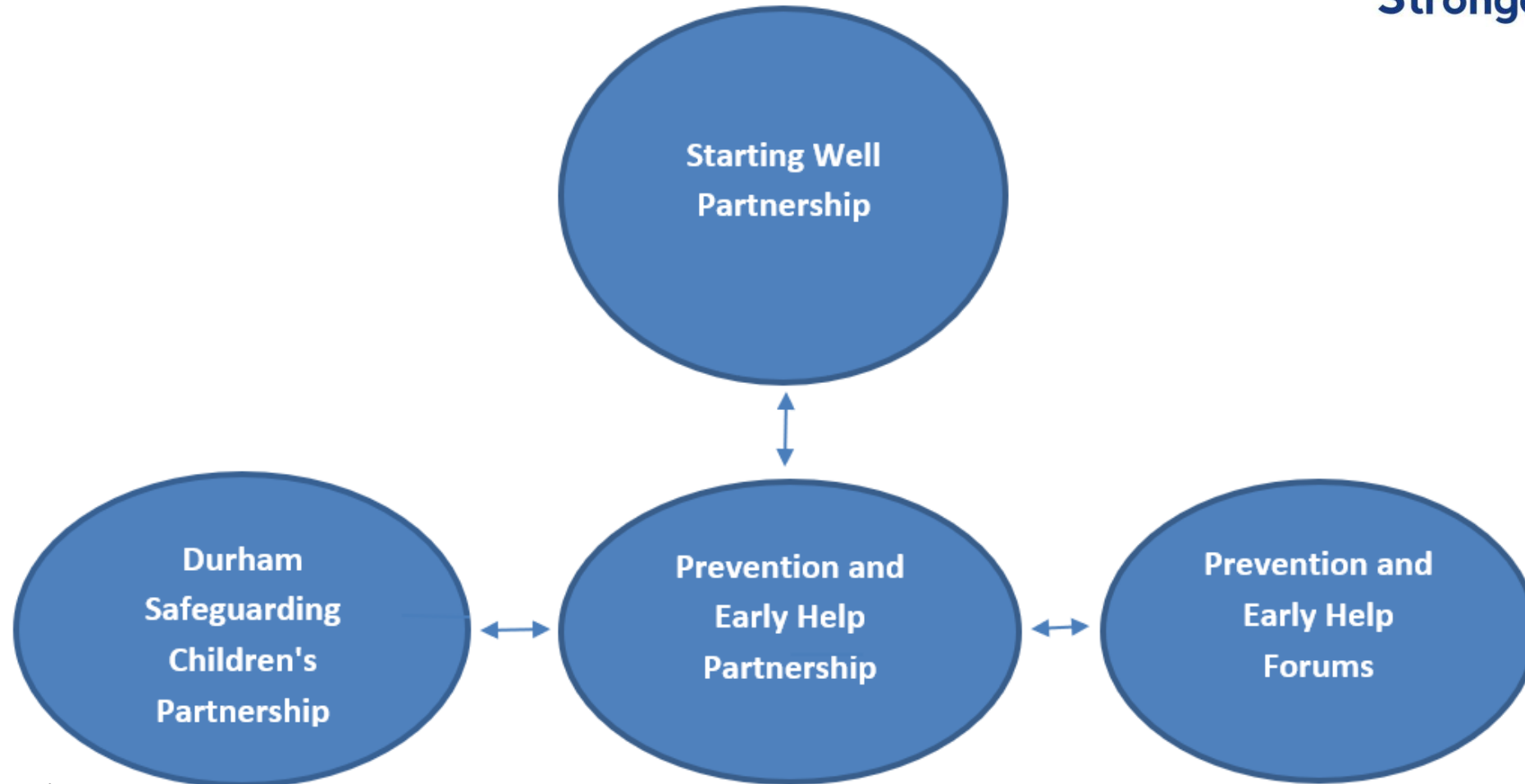
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children

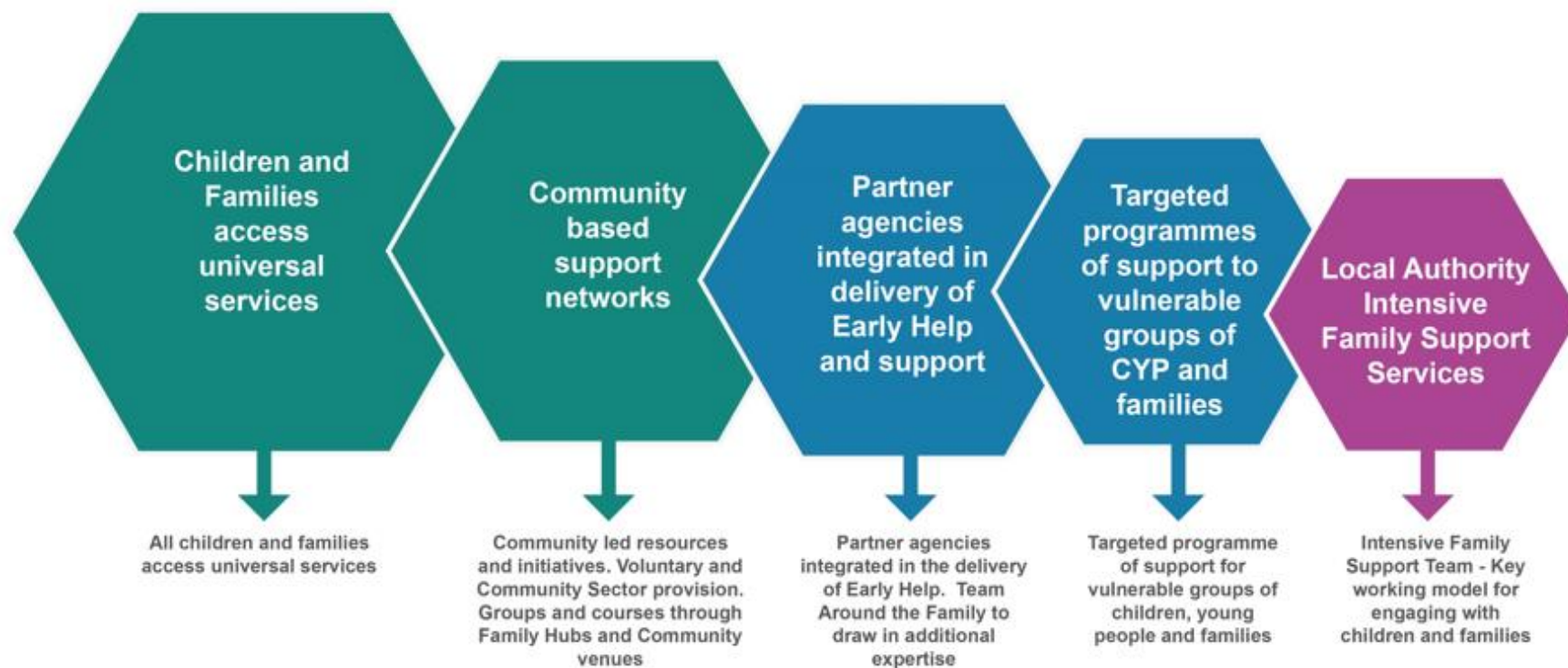
December 2023



Early Help governance and funding



Durham's Early Help Offer



Integrated Early Help Offer



**Locality Early
Help
Conversations**

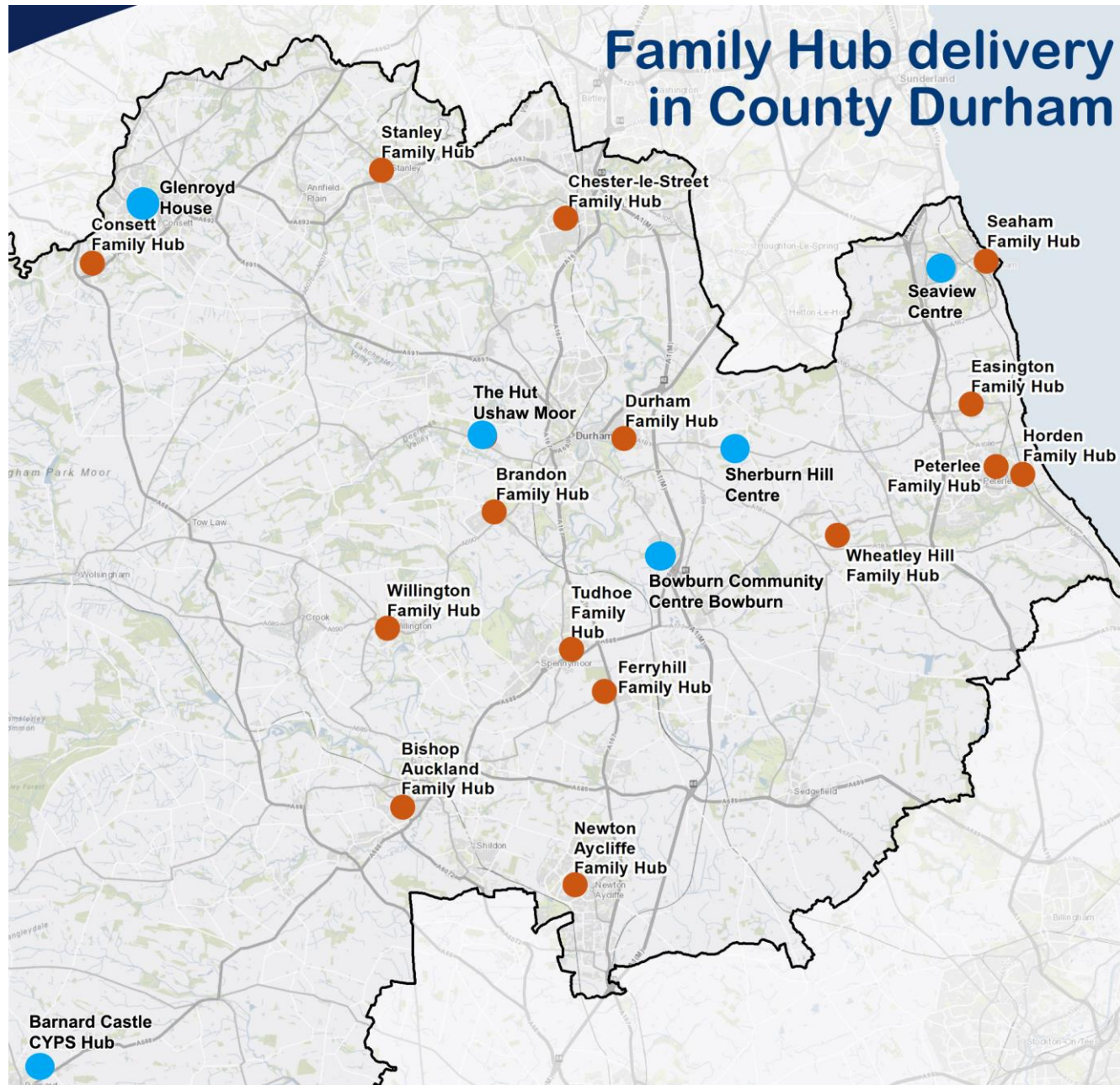
**Shared case
management
system with
Social Care**



What are the aims of Family Hubs?

- To provide support from pregnancy, through a child's early years until they reach the age of 19 (or 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities).
- To make a positive difference to all parents, carers, and their children, through providing a mix of physical and virtual spaces to easily access support.
- To provide a universal front door to families, offering a one-stop shop of family support services.
- To facilitate professionals across public sector, voluntary, community and faith sector to work together and a common approach to their work with children, young people, and families.
- [Family Hubs – For you and your family \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Family Hub delivery in County Durham



We have Family Hubs across the County and also deliver from outreach sites

Key:

Red dots: Family Hubs

Blue dots: Outreach sites

Groups and courses for parents and carers – areas of support

Pregnancy and preparing to be a parent

- Antenatal appointments in Family Hubs
- In person programmes delivered jointly by Health and local authority staff
- Online Antenatal Solihull, Me You and Baby too
- Aqua natal classes

Support you and your baby and toddler

- Baby & Me and Toddler & Me sessions. Play Together outreach. Neonatal baby and parent drop in
- Growing Healthy and Infant Feeding Drops in
- Structured programmes – Incredible Babies, Triple P for Baby, Baby and Us
- Perinatal Mental Health Team – One to One support and peer support groups

Groups and courses for parents and carers – areas of support

Supporting you with your child speech, language and getting ready for school

- WellComm Screening
- Let's Talk at Home
- Incredible Years Pre School

Supporting you with understanding your children or teenagers' behaviour

- Online and in person programmes
- Incredible Years and Triple P 0-12 and Triple P Teen
- Online Solihull

Groups and courses for parents and carers – areas of support

Support you with your child's wellbeing

- In person and online programmes
- Fear-less, Supporting the wellbeing of children and young people (Durham Learn)
- Understanding your child's feelings
- Pilot CAMHS drop in sessions

Supporting your child with their wellbeing

- Chill Kids [Family Hubs - Chill kids \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
- Teen Zone and Safer Choices
- Online understanding - Your Teenage Brain

Groups and courses for parents and carers – areas of support

Supporting your relationship

- Reducing Parental Conflict - Parenting Together and When Separated
- Domestic Abuse programmes - Harbour

Dads and male carers sessions

- Durham Dads Together
- Dads Stay and Play
- Knock out depression
- Men's Pie Club
- North East Young Dads and Lads

Groups and courses for parents and carers – areas of support

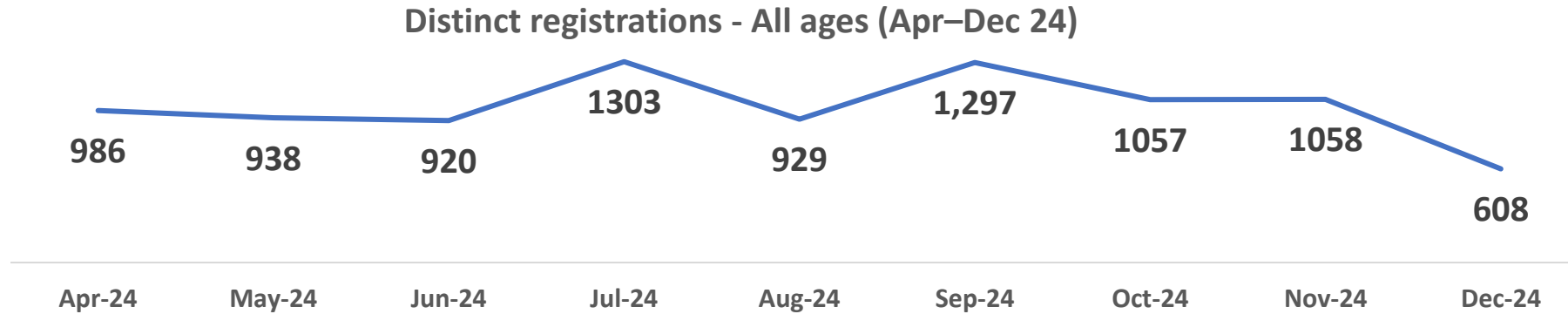
Support for parents of children with SEND

- In person and online programmes – Stepping Stones
- Drops in with SENDIASS and Educational Psychologist Team
- Peer Support sessions – Daisy Chain
- Workshops – Daisy Chain and North East Autism Society

Course for keeping your family healthy

- Workshop on toileting, and sleep
- HENRY programme covering Weaning, Fussy Eating, Toothbrushing

Family Hub registrations



9,051
 Total distinct registrations
 (all ages)
 (Apr-Dec 24)

3,409
 Families registered
 (distinct count)
 (Apr-Dec 24)

All ages at point of registration (distinct count) by deprivation level (Apr–Dec 2024)

IMD Decile	Top 10%:	Top 10 to 20%:	Top 20 to 30%:	Not Deprived:	Unable to determine:
	1,423 (16%)	2,474 (27%)	1,532 (17%)	3,379 (37%)	243 (3%)

How to find out more

www.durham.gov.uk/helpforfamilies

www.durham.gov.uk/FamilyHubsSENDGroups

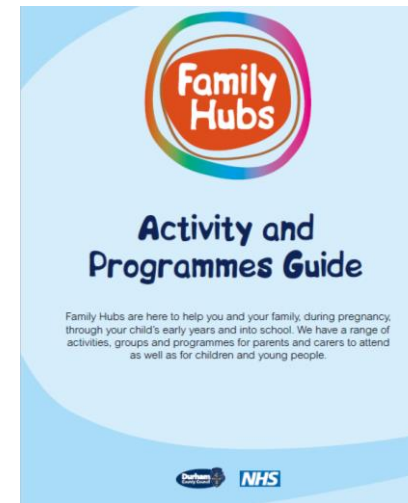
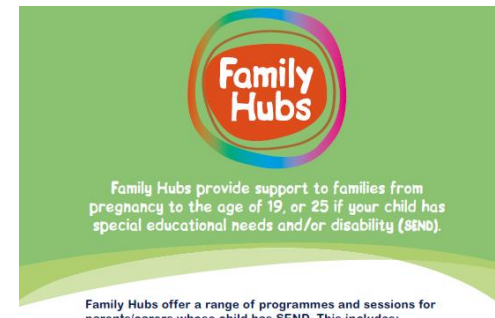
Facebook – County Durham Family Hubs

Start for Life Leaflet

Activities and Programmes Guide

General Family Hubs Flyer

SEND Flyer

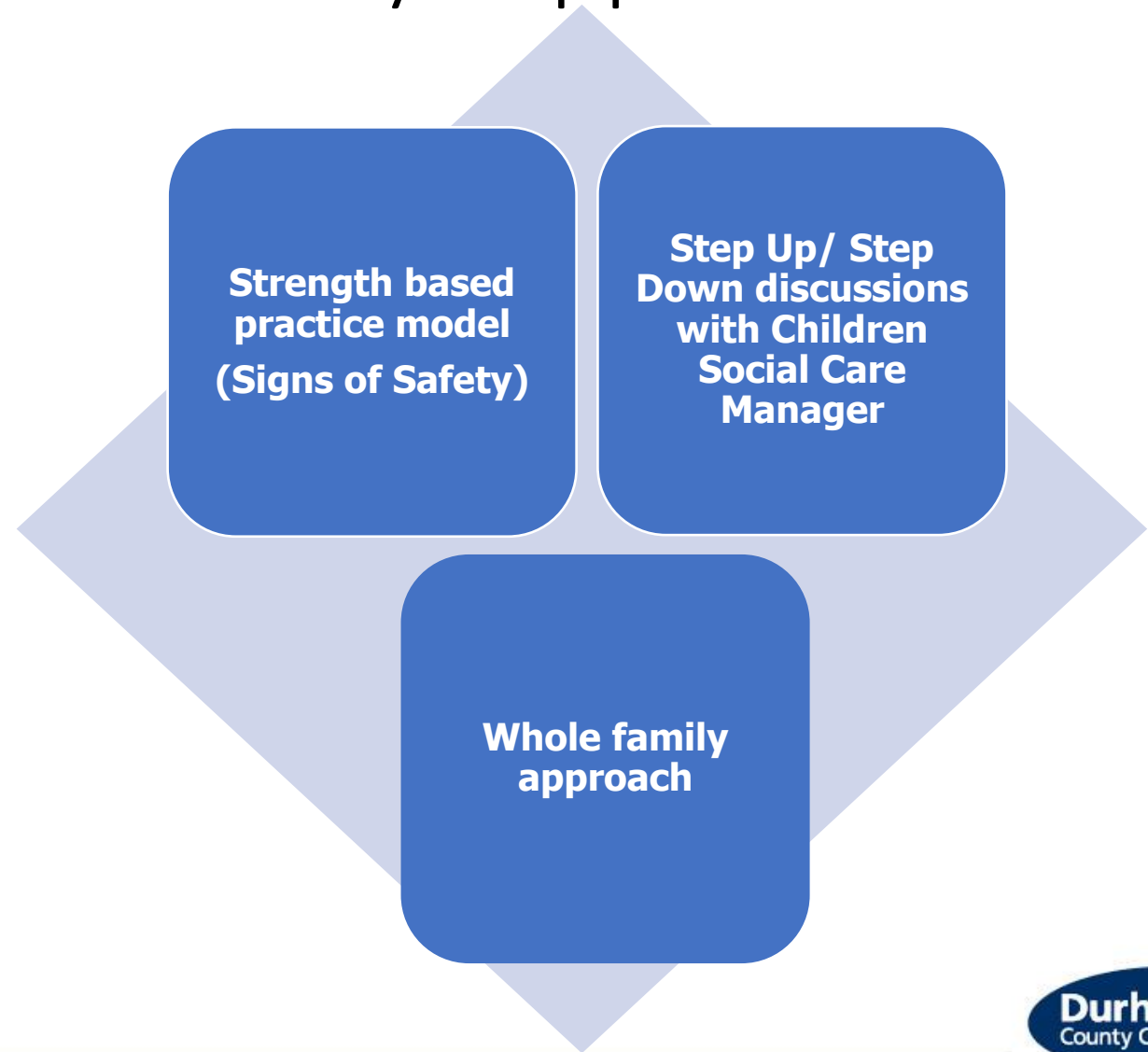


Local Authority Intensive Family Support



7 Intensive Family Support (Locality) Teams

Children and Families with complex and multiple needs



Intensive Family Support Locality Teams

- 7 Intensive Family Support teams working across the County and they consist of a Team Manager, Senior Keyworker, Keyworkers and Family Workers.
- Referrals are received from the front door through an Early Help Triage team and allocated into the service.
- A full Early Help assessment is completed with the family and different professionals work with the family in a 'Team Around the Family' (TAF) to create a plan and provide help and support, using our Signs of Safety practice model.
- Children are at the centre of this work, and a whole family approach is taken with children and young people seen regularly so that we can understand their views and lived experience.
- The whole family working aims to help families to make positive changes and prevent escalation to Children's Social Care. Intense Family Support teams are currently supporting approximately 1,000 children with multiple and complex needs.
- Early Help Operations Managers discuss families with Children's Social Care on a regular basis, to aim to support a smooth transition for families between Early Help and Safeguarding.

Family feedback

"I'm doing well in school now I come all the time, I feel good at the things that I do. I think I'm moving up in History and Maths, I'm 3rd best in my class at Science."

"Our worker was absolutely amazing and made difficult situations so much easier to deal with. Any concerns or worries were addressed and dealt with professionally and comfortably. We all felt comfortable in order to contact our worker and discuss anything with her. An absolute credit to the service."

"X and X helped our family massively, before they came along there was no light at the end of the tunnel but now we are out and through the other side, with a much happier household and the tools and strength to keep moving forward. We can not thank them enough for all they have done and helped us and the little ones achieve. It will be strange not having them around and we shall miss their visits."

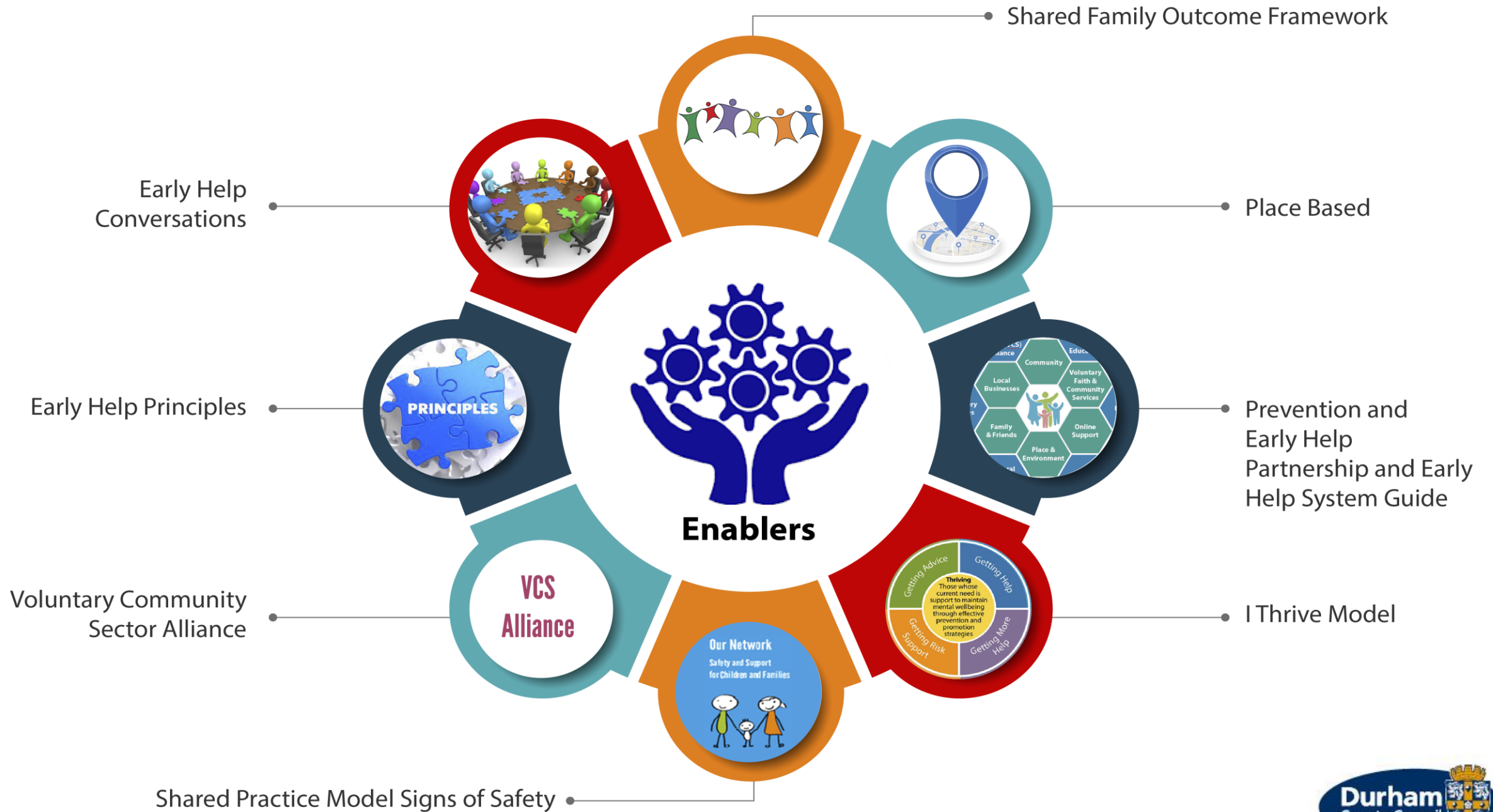
"X helped me see me for me, she helped my relationship with me and mum because she understood me the way she did see. She did everything she could for me and made me a lot happier and made mine and mum's relationship a lot better. I will always be grateful for her."

100% of parent/carers and **98%** of young people are happy or very happy with the support received.

99% of parents/carers and **98%** of young people felt services worked well or very well together to meet the needs of their family.

Partnership Working





Locality Early Help Conversations

- ✓ Access to locality multi agency discussion, 'Locality Early Help Conversation' about child/family you worried about;
- ✓ Use Signs of Safety/Wellbeing model;
- ✓ Better use of all our resources and community assets across the system



Locality Early Help Conversation Collaborative, Multi-Agency Response

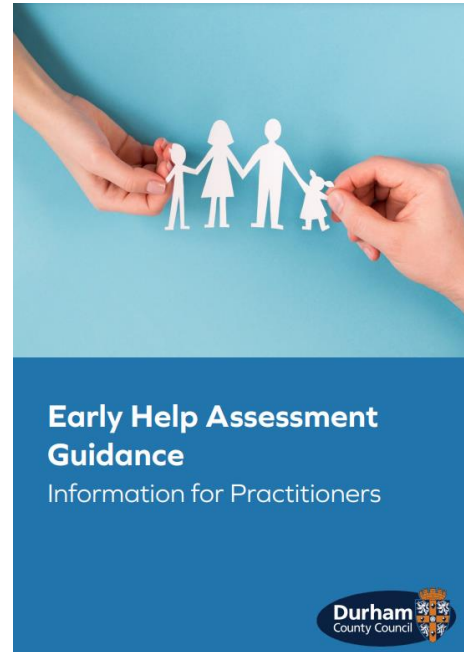
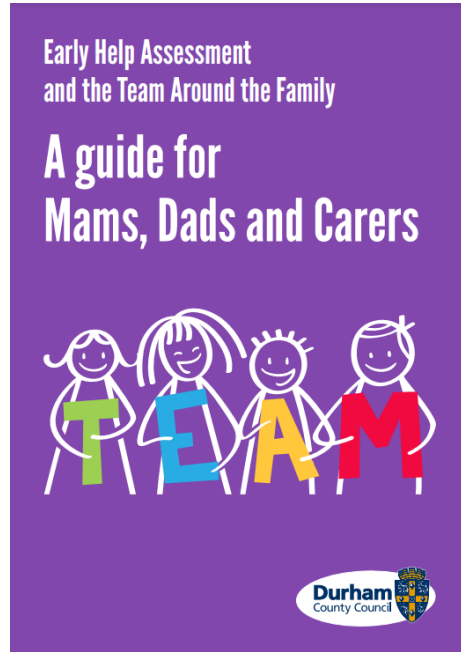
Core Membership:

- One Point Service Family Hub Team Manager
- 0-25 Family Health Service Manager
- Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Alliance Worker
- One Point Early Help Advisor
- Education Representative (School)
- DCC Housing
- SEND and Inclusion
- CAMHS
- Attendance Improvement Officer

Call On Membership:

- Neighbourhood Police Team
- Drug and Alcohol Service
- Probation
- Disabilities Team
- Adult Mental Health Single Point of Access
- Durham Works

Early Help Assessments initiated by partners



1,185
EH Assessments
received by partners
(Apr – Dec 24)

Partners
(based on 1,185 forms):

- Education (51%)
- Health (25%)
- Other (24%)

Quality
Improvement
Framework

National Supporting Families Programme



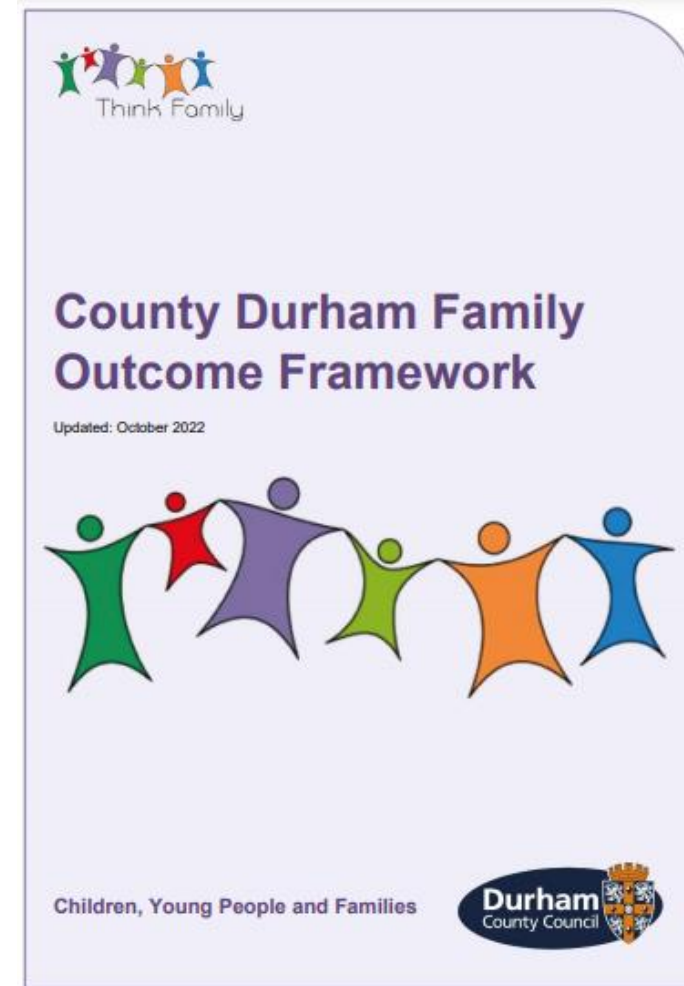
What is it?

What does it mean?

Earned Autonomy

1264 Durham families achieved all outcomes, since April 2024 (83% of annual target)

Durham is ranked 1st regionally and 14th nationally for performance, as of Q2 2024/5



Innovation and national good practice

Dedicated support offer for Dads is now established - Dads Conference, 'Dads Welcome Here' Kitemark, Dads Champions, and the project was highly commended at the Councils Inspiring People Awards 2024.

The Empowering Parent, Empowering Communities - 31 Parent Group Leaders are in place to deliver a range of peer-led parenting programmes such as 'Being a Parent', 'Being a Parent of an Autistic Child' and 'Baby and Us'.

SEND Family Hub offer was recognised as a strength in the 2024 SEND Local Area Inspection.

Parent Carer Panel for Family Hubs has been a real highlight for County Durham, the development of a panel of parents who have helped shape our service delivery.

Durham's **Reducing Parental Conflict programme** has been awarded additional funding to host a 'Relationships Matter' conference in February 2025.

Safe Lives have been commissioned by the government to focus on **Family Voice** and identify how families with lived experience can inform and influence Early Help service design and delivery. Safe Lives will our share best practice nationally.

Early Help are **working in partnership with Durham University** to support research into child and adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA). This will include workshops with senior leaders and parents with lived experience, along with feedback from frontline practitioners who work with families living with CAPVA.



Next steps - Family Help and Social Care national reforms

Aim: Families to receive **high quality support at the earliest opportunity**, so that they can overcome challenges, stay together and thrive

How: Creating a **seamless, non-stigmatising offer of support** underpinned by whole-family approach and working in a strengths-based way. This will be underpinned by the following key components:

- Merging the strengths of targeted early help and section 17 (Child in Need) work, with flexibility on who leads direct work with families to support relationship building
- Utilising multi-disciplinary teams, delivering support out of community-based settings
- Establishing the Family Help Lead Practitioner role – which can include Social Workers
- Creating new Family Help assessments and plans, to identify needs and capture the services to be provided for children and families
- Reform the approach to the front door, to support decision making and reduce stigma

This will form part of an end-to-end system of support – building out of Family Hubs.

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill currently going through Parliament.



National funding position for Family Help and Social Care reforms (2025/26)

The Local Government Finance Statement (LGFS) has confirmed over £500m to invest in preventative services and the rollout of the Family Help and Child Protection reforms in 2025-26.

This will nearly double investment in preventative services. The aim is to rebalance the children's social care system and will enable local authorities to continue investment in preventative services and begin local transformation from April 2025.

The £500m funding comes from 2 separate grants in the LGFS:

Children and Families Grant

The existing £250m Supporting Families programme funding that will be consolidated into a single Children and Families grant, in the LGFS, alongside other CSC programmes, totaling £415m.

Allocations through this grant will maintain their 2024-25 distribution.

Children's Services Prevention Grant

The additional £263m will be distributed through a **new** Children's Services Prevention Grant, set out as funding Family Help and preventative services.

Distributed through a relative needs-based formula.

Questions

?

Answers

?