



The Early Help Service

Empowering families and building community resilience

By Charlene Hornsey, Head of Early Help Service

The Early Help Service's core purpose is to help children, young people and families who need extra support. We work with families, in their own homes and in the community, helping tackle problems before they become more difficult to reverse.

Our Family Hub offer

We provide **12 Family Hubs** across West Sussex, which offer:

- Drop-in services for information, advice and guidance
- Crisis support – such as emergency access to food and utilities
- Support and information for young people aged 11 to 25 on a range of subjects through our 'Find it Out' offer
- 'Find it Out' offer provided within some West Sussex secondary schools
- Access to services provided by our partners such as health clinics and support groups
- Social spaces to meet other families
- Help to access the free entitlement to childcare places

The Family Hub offer includes a proactive community engagement programme that provides opportunities and spaces for all families to access the West Sussex Family Hub universal offer in their local community. The Family Hub teams visit a range of community locations, such as parent and toddler groups, libraries, foodbanks and early years settings, reaching families across all West Sussex communities. So far in 2025, the teams have completed 82 visits, reaching 1406 families.

For more information, or to find your local Family Hub, please visit the [West Sussex County Council website](#).

Working in partnership with schools and settings

The Early Help Dedicated Schools Team provides named link workers to primary schools, secondary schools, the West Sussex Alternative Provision College, further education colleges, special schools and independent schools. By providing a named link worker, we seek to develop a detailed understanding of the school's cohort, needs and challenges, to build a positive and trusting relationship between early help and schools. Our offer includes direct work with children, young people and families, with appropriate consent gained by the school and in discussion with the link worker. We offer Early Help consultations with schools, providing the opportunity to discuss any concerns about a child or young person. During the spring term 2025, 3755 children were discussed with schools, which led to 167 meetings with schools and parents/carers and 139 follow-up calls with parents/carers. There have been 195 requests for support from schools outside of the early help consultations.

For more information about the Early Help Dedicated Schools Team and the support available, please speak to your link worker or [visit our website](#).



Enabling Families – Level 2

The Enabling Families offer consists of a short, focused intervention, where young people or parents/carers can access between 1 and 5 sessions of support with a worker. This offer seeks to help young people or parents/carers resolve issues that are less complex, or singular issues that are having a negative impact on them or on family life. Early Help will work with the individual to identify their goal to help address and adjust the session accordingly. This Level 2 offer aims to empower young people, parents and carers to improve identified needs through a solution-focused relationship and strength-based approach.

For more information on Enabling Families, please [visit our website](#) or speak to your school's link worker.

Support through an Early Help plan – Level 3

Our target intervention offer provides a targeted intervention through the coordination of a multiagency team and plan. This Level 3 intervention involves direct, whole family working, focused on improving outcomes for children in need of help on a range of issues. In March 2025, there were 1343 families supported through an early help plan and 362 plans were closed, with 66% as outcomes met.

How can we support you?

Empowering schools and settings to effectively support families is a key strand of the Early Help Service's work. If you have any questions, or would like more information on any of the interventions discussed in this article, please contact your school's link worker, visit the [West Sussex County Council website](#), or browse our page on [West Sussex Services for Education](#).