

**Cumberland  
Council**

# **Cumberland Family Help and Prevention Strategy (Children and Families) 2024 - 2027**

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# Foreword

We are delighted to introduce this ambitious new Cumberland Family Help and prevention strategy.

The strategy sets out how we will make the right help and support available, at the right time, for all our families to build confident, healthy and thriving communities across all of Cumberland.

We want to deliver more effective prevention and family help. We will make sure that support is accessible to all, co-ordinated, and provided early enough to stop problems becoming bigger. This will help families to become more resilient and improve the lives of children and young people.

Providing prevention and early help to children and their families is a priority for the Cumberland Family Help and Prevention Board and aligns with the National Supporting Families Outcome Framework.

This strategy is a commitment to Cumberland's children and families. It sets out how Cumberland's investment will change, prioritising early help and preventative support to children, young people and families at the earliest opportunity.



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# 1. Our Vision and Commitment to our Children and Families in Cumberland

We have designed the Prevention and Family Help strategy based on demand and what matters to families. We have worked together to develop our services so that the children, young people and families in Cumberland can be supported to live happy, healthy and safe lives with help from the right support, at the right time, if and when they need it.

**Family Help is not a service but a way of thinking and working. It is a collaborative approach between services and families that provides support as soon as a need is identified.**

We will provide innovative, inclusive and compassionate services that nurture the growth, development and well-being of every child. We believe in creating a community where every child receives the right support at the right time through collaborative partnership working.

The Prevention and Family Help strategy will work through a joined-up approach using our practice model to work with individuals and families. We will support wellbeing using a locality-based structure and a single point of contact for professionals.

By co-locating and bringing these services into one structure we can ensure support is available regardless of age or location, that it is integrated with partners and uses community assets.

All staff with Prevention and Family Help will work using a strengths-based approach. There will be development of school and community support from staff across the early help service, which will be available across Cumberland.

Cumberland Council have committed to a set of values that underpins not just what we do, but how we strive to do these things.

**Fig 1. Cumberland Council Values**



**Ambitious**



**Collaborative**



**Compassionate**



**Empowering**



**Innovative**

This Family Help and Prevention Strategy 2024 - 2027, aims to:

- Improve access to information, advice, guidance, support and help.
- Develop a core local offer of Family Help and Prevention support.
- Improve the quality and co-ordination of Family Help and Prevention services.
- Empower children, young people, their families, and communities.
- Increase engagement from children, young people, and families.
- Support the delivery and commissioning of evidence-based programmes and initiatives tailored to local need.

## 2. Why we need family help: Challenges and Context

Most importantly, evidence shows that providing timely Family Help is much more effective at improving outcomes for children and families than reacting later. There is also evidence that this approach has a positive impact in reducing the demand and costs associated with more intensive safeguarding and crisis support at threshold level 4.

Cumberland covers a large geographical area with many people living in rural areas. 53% of Cumberland's population live in areas classed as rural, the county is sparsely populated with 91 people per km<sup>2</sup>. Approximately 72,313 children and young people aged 0-25 live in Cumberland, this equates to 26.4% of Cumberland's population. 14 of Cumberland's areas as classified as being within the 10% most deprived areas in England, and many rural communities have limited public transport links, poor access to services and experience social isolation.

**Fig. 2 Map of Cumberland**



### Fig. 3 Needs Analysis

- 2,812 children and young people (0-25) have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) in Cumberland.
- 8,214 children on free school meals with over 35% in parts of Whitehaven, Workington, Carlisle and south Cumberland.
- 10,410 contacts into safeguarding hub in 2023/24.
- There was a 100% increase in referrals to mental health services.
- The percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception year is 65%, which is significantly worse than the national average.
- One in five children aged under 16 live in relative low-income families, higher than the national average.
- 10.5% of children in Reception Year (aged 4-5 years) in Cumberland, are obese compared to an England average of 9.2%.
- The under-18 conception rate is significantly higher than the national average (17.7 births/1000 compared to 13.1/1000).
- Less than 50% of babies are being breastfed at 6-8 weeks of age.
- The rate of hospital admissions due to substance misuse and alcohol specific conditions is higher than the England average.
- The rate of hospital admissions in children and young people due to intentional & deliberate injuries, mental health conditions and self-harm are all higher than the national average.
- 5,223 children and young people are in receipt of SEN support in Cumberland

## Children, Young People's Voice and Experience

The voice of children, young people and their families is central to our Family Help and Prevention offer and key to ensuring that the support we offer meets the needs of our families and that they are engaged in the offer of support to achieve long term, sustainable, change. We listened to over 1,000 children, young people and their families through our initial consultations held online and in person across Cumberland.

Our children, young people and families have told us:

### Fig 4. Quotes from our children, young people and their families

"I would have loved to have had access to perinatal support back when I was on maternity leave- to have had more health visiting input to know I was doing a good job- just more support to reassure me as a parent and also access to weigh in clinics and feeding support from a HV alongside the peer support I received" **Parent**

"My life would be so much easier if we didn't have to fight for every little thing for our son. Nothing comes easy when you have a child with additional needs." **Parent**

"Better support pre-birth and around confidence, parenting, housing opportunities and benefit entitlements and access to essential items - all in one place would have helped early years after having a baby/child enormously." **Parent**

"More support for teens who are struggling emotionally and with their mental health. There is a gap in this area I feel" **Parent**

"Accessibility rather than more services" **Parent**

"Much more face to face so you get more of an understanding of the people involved, less fob offs from professionals. Much more family centred hubs not just under 5s or under 12s we as parents have responsibility until 18 and even after that age we still look after our kids" **Parent**

"Feeling that you might get judged for how you feel. When people try to make fun of you without you not realising." **Young Person**

"Awareness that 'coping' parents need support to." "A family hub that isn't specifically for problems but general access. Many families would feel stigmatised accessing help in case others knew. A general community 'drop-in' hub could provide expert help without it being obvious that was the purpose if a family's visit." **Parent**

"Building relationships with family, friends, colleagues or other community members... can help reduce stress and build resilience to frustration." **Young Person**

"I don't think it's clear or easy to find info on what services are available where or for who. Maybe this is because I haven't needed help, but I wouldn't know where to start and I've not heard of friends talking about some great services they accessed." **Parent**

"I need someone who can believe in me" **Young Person**

"In my experience help is only there for people when they are in crisis" **Parent**

"It's quite boring as there are not many clubs or places of interest in my area for me after school or on weekends." **Young Person**

"I don't ask for help as I have anxiety and worry they might not believe me or understand." **Young Person**



# 3. National Context

In Cumberland, we are designing our Family Help approach to meet the specific needs of Cumberland children and their families and using national programmes and guidance to support us in this:

## Supporting Families programme

This national programme is about building resilience by providing whole family support at the earliest opportunity, where joined up local services are able to identify families in need and provide them with the right support at the right time. The Early Help System Guide developed by the Supporting Families programme includes a strong set of recommendations for local systems to consider, including a multi-agency workforce development plan, shared practice models, and a cross-disciplinary commitment to whole family working.

## Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

Changes to national statutory guidance for Children's Services, **Working Together to Safeguarding Children**, places early help and preventative services on a statutory footing. The role of the regulator, Ofsted, will give equal regulatory oversight to the effectiveness and impact of early help and prevention on children.

## Independent Review of Children's Social Care

The report states that early help should improve children's lives through supporting and strengthening family relationships and resources to enable children to thrive and keep families together, helping them provide safe, nurturing environments that children need.





## National 0-19 Healthy Child Programme Policy

This guidance sets out details of a modernised health visiting and school nursing service delivery model that is 'Universal in reach – Personalised in response'. It replaces '4-5-6' models for health visiting and school nursing. Universal, Universal Plus and Universal Partnership Plus have also been replaced and instead reference is made to universal, targeted and specialist services. This revised model has been developed with a range of stakeholders to reflect changes to how services are commissioned and provided locally, and aims to provide a greater emphasis on the assessment of children, young people and family's needs and the skills mix to respond.

## Best Start for Life – Early Years Review

The core offer for Cumberland Family Hubs is built on the best start for life report including seamless support for new families, a welcoming hub for the whole family, information available when families need it, and an empowered start for life workforce.

## Stable Homes Built on love

Following the publication of **Stable Homes Built on Love**, children's services leaders across the country have been invited to reimagine Family Help, to make sure all children and families can get the right help at the right time, no matter what they need or where they come from and make it easier for children and families to get help.

## Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

If children and young people are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes in contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

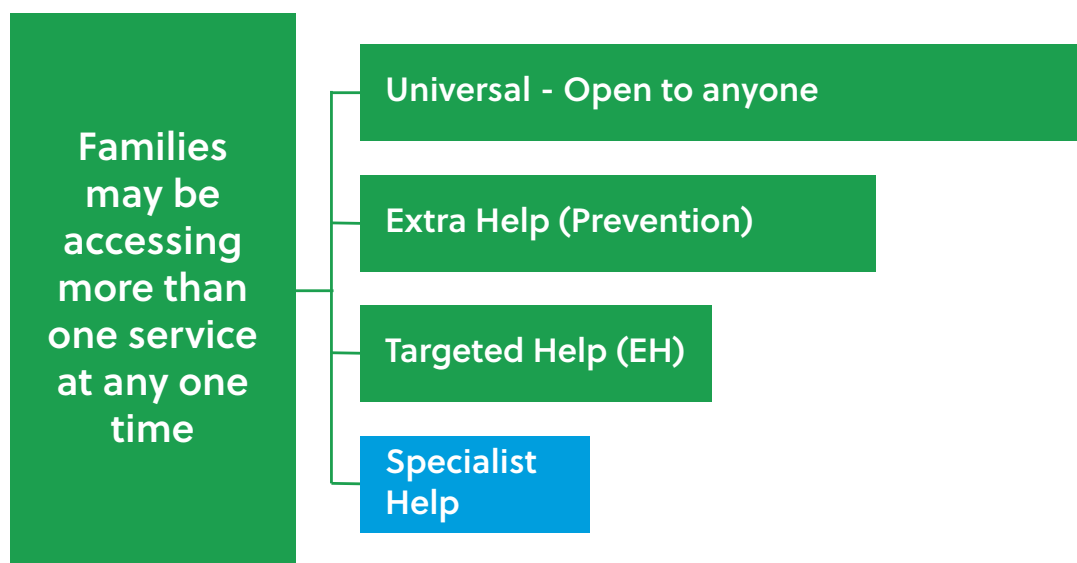


# 4. What do we mean by Family Help and Prevention in Cumberland?

All children, young people and families may require some level of support at various stages in their lives, from support pre-conception; support in early years; support to access education; support with health needs or support in response to key life events or changes in circumstances.

Family Help and Prevention in Cumberland is aimed at preventing or reducing the need for statutory or specialist interventions wherever possible.

**Fig. 5 Access to Services**



In terms of definition, 'Prevention' refers to activities to stop a social or emotional problem appearing in the first place or increasing further.

Prevention is about encouraging and empowering children, young people and their families to be more proactive about their health and wellbeing, increasing independence and reducing the need for more intrusive or intensive services.

Family Help and Prevention should be a focus of all of our interactions with children, young people and families - from people using universal services and community groups, to an initial request for information and advice, to assessment, care and support planning and reviews. Prevention should also be part of strategic planning and service developments.

At its simplest form Family Help and Prevention can be an offer of information, advice, guidance or signposting from an individual, or a hub, right up to a multi-agency co-ordinated early help plan with a lead professional that requires written consent.

As statutory guidance highlights 'at every interaction with a person, a local authority should consider whether or how the person's needs could be reduced or other needs could be delayed from arising' (DHSC 2016).

# 5. Our Family Help and Prevention Approach and Model

For Family Help to become systemically effective it should be viewed as an approach rather than a specific programme or service. Our Cumberland Family help and Prevention approach is based on building valued and trusting relationships with the people our families meet when seeking information, or support.

We will continue to build on the successful partnership approach we used to develop our Cumberland Family Hub Model, which will give families seamless transitions from one level of help and support to another, within a well-designed system. The model will be flexible and can be designed to suit differing locality needs, and to evolve as circumstances change over time.

We will deliver this approach by the following delivery model of co-located multiagency teams providing a single access point to Universal and Family Help services for families with children of all ages (0-19) or up to 25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), with a great Start for Life offer at their core.

Co-location of services and professionals will make it easier for families to access the services they need, including Start for Life services, and this can include both physical locations, outreach support (spokes and mobile) and a strong virtual offer.

**Fig 5. Family Help and Prevention Delivery Model**



**Main Hubs:**  
Full Prevention and Family Help Multi Agency Teams



**Spoke Hubs:**  
Services offered based on need in local area (Family Help and Prevention offered in other venues; Community Hubs)



**Mobile Hubs:**  
Services offered based on need in local areas as an outreach model.

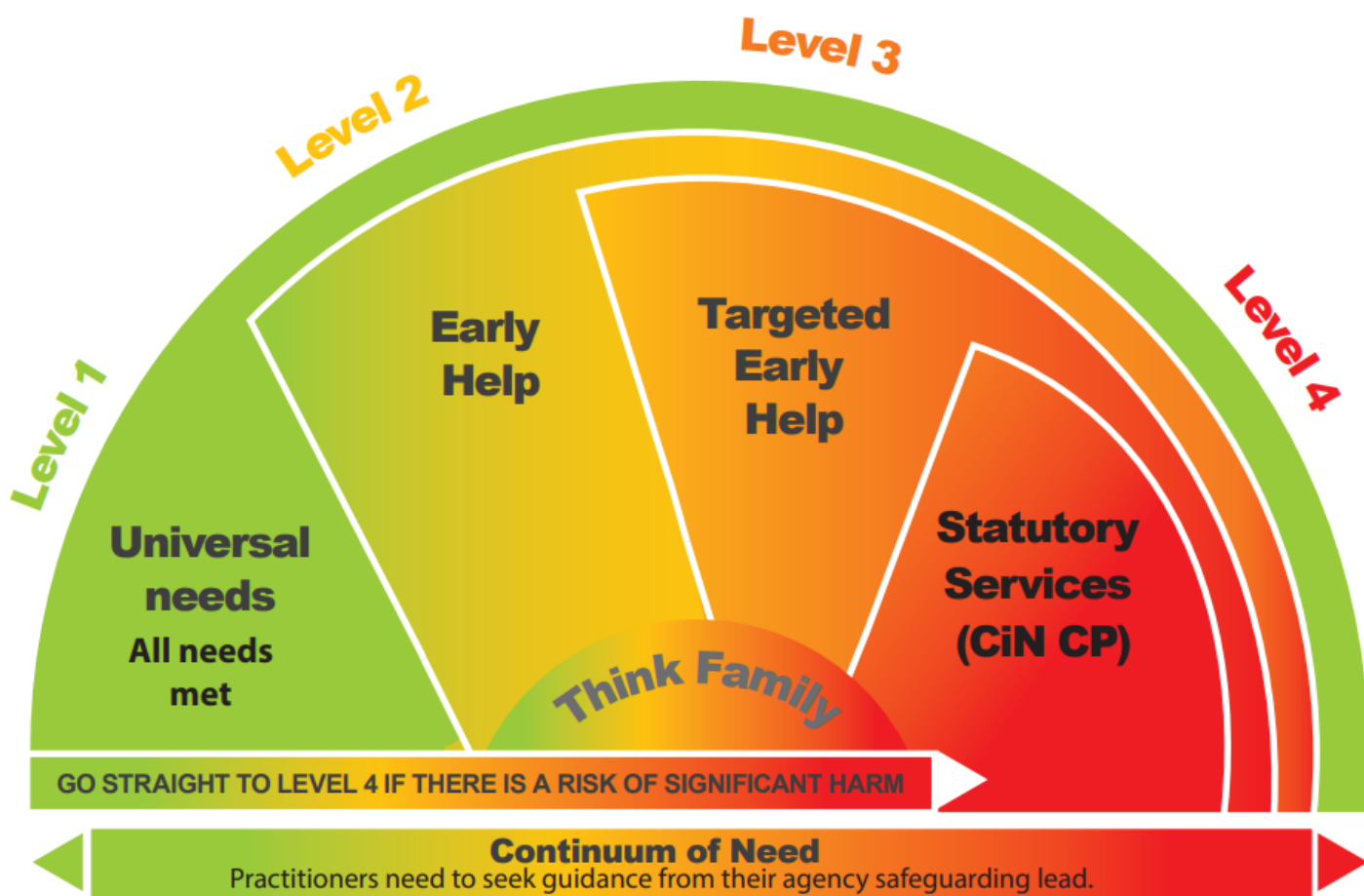


**Digital Hubs:**  
One stop digital offer available to all families in Cumberland.

Cumberland's Safeguarding Partnership's Threshold of Need framework has been developed and is intended as a multiagency guide to ensuring children, young people and their families access the right support at the right time.

For the purpose of this strategy, the term "Family Help and Prevention" is used to describe all interventions at levels 1-3. Family Help can be provided through a single agency or multi-agency response and as appropriate to the needs of the child, young person and their family.

Fig 6. Cumberland Continuum of Need



## 6. Performance and Outcomes

We will develop a joint performance and outcome framework for our Family Help and Prevention partnership which will drive the delivery of our Family Help vision. We will have a range of indicators about the quality of practice, measuring what matters to children, young people and families and taking a fully holistic view.

This framework will be integrated with other outcomes frameworks under development (e.g. Supporting Families; Best Start in Life, Healthy Child outcomes). The framework will have a real emphasis on understanding family voice and experience, measuring change and empowering families to sustain positive change.



# 7. Key Indicators of Measuring Success

We anticipate need may increase initially as our support offer to families and young people becomes more visible and accessible. As we respond to this and provide the help families need, we expect this to stabilise and reduce higher levels of intervention in time; this means that in time we will see:

- A reduction of contacts to the front door.
- Number of families making progress against the goals in their help plan.
- Number of families who are satisfied with the support they receive.
- Reduction in the number of families who require a social work intervention.
- Increase in the % of children in early years settings who are school ready.
- Increase in the % of children who are a healthy weight.
- Reduction in number of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System and a reduction in re-offending rates amongst young people.
- Number of multi-agency practitioners and community members trained in Early Help related courses.
- Reduction of children with fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- Improvement in school attendance.



## 8. Governance

The implementation and progress of the Cumberland Family Help and Prevention Strategy will be overseen by a multiagency Family Help partnership Board, whose membership will include a wide range of partners along with the Statutory Lead Member for Children's Services and Executive Member for Lifelong Learning and Development. A Terms of Reference will be developed with the intention that the Board meet quarterly, with a delivery group also supporting the progress of the Strategy. The Board will provide an annual update to the Executive.



## 9. A Final Thank You

With thanks to the children, young people and families of Cumberland who took time to contribute their views and lived experiences to the design of this Prevention and Family Help Strategy, and to our many partner agencies who have shown commitment in supporting this systems transformation together, to improve outcomes for children and young people in Cumberland.

