



## Warrington Safeguarding Children Board Early Help Strategy 2014 - 2016



*“Every child and young person in Warrington should be able to grow up safe from maltreatment, neglect, bullying, discrimination and crime – receiving help when they need it in a timely and effective manner”*

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## What is Early Help?

Early Help is intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families, or with a population most at risk of developing problems providing the right help at the right time to support change and improved outcomes for children. It is about offering help to children and young people across the continuum of need from universal provision to services for children with low level problems to those families with complex needs up to services provided by social care.

Services can be “stepped up” to social care from Early Help or “stepped down” from social care to Early Help in order to provide seamless service provision to families based on an assessment of need. Early Help services should be provided as required in the early years of a child or young person’s life (including pre-natal interventions) and then at all ages and stages of a child’s life until they reach adulthood including throughout primary school years and teenage years.

Early Help allows for support to be put in place at the right time to meet families’ needs prior to issues reaching crisis point and to reinforce families’ own skills to determine their life course and therefore reducing poor outcomes and inequalities for children and young people. It also helps to break the cycle of families being dependent on services by empowering and enabling them to do things for themselves making them more resilient and independent. Finally, it has a positive effect on cost effectiveness.

Early Help is not about specialist services for children, young people and their families. Specialist services are there to support families who are experiencing significant difficulties. These services are provided by social care for children who are at risk of harm. Early Help is about stepping in to prevent difficulties becoming chronic and helping families overcome difficulties as early as possible. It is also about identifying harmful patterns of care as early as possible, such as those that may be contributing to neglectful patterns of care and intervening early.

For the purpose of this strategy the Children and Young People’s Partnership has decided that the following definition of Early Help will be used by all agencies delivering services across the borough:

**“Early Help is intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families, or with a population most at risk of developing problems. Early help can be provided at any development or age milestone in a child or young person’s life.”**

**Our Vision: “To ensure that every child and young person in Warrington is safe and has the opportunity to reach their potential.”**

## **1.0 Introduction**

We are aware that there is some very good quality delivery of early help services by partners to children and young people in Warrington; however, this must be systematic across the Borough. We want to improve our strategic oversight and planning of our early help offer to ensure the right help is provided at the right time in order to make a real difference to the progress and experience of our children and young people early.

Our ambition is that we will provide effective help early for families who request services, but we will be confident with families who may not want support but need it. We want to deliver effective coordination of partnership provision that avoids duplication through a badged offer that is accessible and easily understood by practitioners and families. We need to improve both the quality and number of our early help assessments including Common and Whole Family Assessments so that we can rigorously analyse needs and develop effective plans. We want coherent strategic joined up leadership from key partners to deliver strong teams around a complex and unique range of professional skills and abilities to maximise the impact we can make on the experiences and progress of children and young people (Local Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan 2014-2016).

See Appendix 1 for Supplementary Information.

## **2.0 Vision**

2.1 In order to be fully effective Warrington’s Safeguarding Children Board has agreed the following multi-agency principles of Early Help to guide and support all services delivered in the Borough:

- i. Early Help is ‘everybody’s business’ particularly if we are to intervene at the first signs of potential issues.
- ii. All children and families within the borough of Warrington achieve the best possible outcomes from services to provide a solid foundation from which to continuously develop as a family unit.
- iii. High quality, evidence based and timely interventions are provided to support children and families.
- iv. Children and their families are recognised as equal partners who identify their own needs and appropriate services to support them. Families are central to defining and addressing the problems that they face and they are key partners in the process.

- v. There is collaboration between all partners, settings and agencies to ensure close working relationships, working across organisational boundaries and the development of best practice to support families.
- vi. There are joint commissioning arrangements, with providers across all sectors, and we work in partnership to deliver integrated services for children and young people.
- vii. All children and families have a right to receive appropriate high quality services, and should have equal access irrespective of ethnicity, religion, disability, sexuality, gender or socio-economic status.
- viii. Services will safeguard and promote the health and well-being of children and young people.

2.2 Services will be delivered within available resources and deliver best value, against this strategy and other related strategies.

We acknowledge that agencies, will already be addressing their own distinct needs, and meeting a range of individual key performance indicators (KPI's) against a variety of policy drivers. However, this strategy aims to provide an overarching umbrella for the delivery of all Early Help services for children, young people and families in Warrington.

A critical element of implementation and evaluation of our Early Help Strategy is the acknowledgement that this is a long term process. Whilst some interventions may be brief the effectiveness may be longer lasting and a measurable impact may only be clear sometime in the future.

### 3.1 Strategic Objectives

Strategic objectives, therefore, are:

- The overall aim of Early Help is to build resilient families who are able to find their own solutions to challenges and create a happy, healthy home.
- All work with the family starts with listening to what the child or children's view is, and the listening needs to continue.
- The delivery of the agreed family support model including an assessment, a plan and a family meeting.
- Early Help assessment tools can will be supported by the use of the Graded Care Profile and when applicable the Signs of safety tool. Assessments should be used by all agencies as the gateway to Early Help support with the consent and engagement of parents. We will also continue to apply learning from the Complex families

work and the Think Family approach to assessments. Early Help assessments will not be used as a referral document, but can be used to support a referral.

- There should be one named person leading any multi-agency support plan for the child and family.
- Effective working between practitioners working in Children's Services and Adults Services is critical in order to deliver a Think Family approach. Understanding the impact on parenting of adults who may have specific problems of their own with respect to mental ill health or drugs and alcohol misuse is important for all practitioners and also understanding the impact on children and young people's wellbeing when living in households in which there is domestic violence. In cases where parent carers may be the cause of stresses within the family, for example adults with mental health or substance misuse issues, or perpetrators of domestic abuse, they will have distinct and separate needs that inhibit the capacity to parent successfully. These will need to be addressed as part of the overall response to the family's need. The needs of the parent must not, however, overshadow the needs of the child and the child's timeframe must inform all planning.
- The offer to children and families should be clearly defined so that they (and people working with them) know what to expect.
- Services should be monitored against a range of quality measures which will include the views of the child and their family.
- The Early Help strategy should be implemented in a way so that innovation takes place within an evaluation framework.
- The assessment of family needs must begin antenataly and will be built on throughout the course of the child's life. We do not want to miss the opportunity for some really low level support for some families which will prevent them needing the full package of Early Help support.
- This strategy is owned by the Warrington Safeguarding Children Board, and is implemented by all partner agencies that commission and/or provide services.

This strategy is predicated on and requires full commitment to multi-agency working requiring consistency of approach, application of thresholds and pooling of resources.

## 4.1 Purpose

The strategy will set out how all partners will work together to plan, commission and deliver a range of provision to support children, young people and their families at the earliest opportunity. This means providing low level services at the right time to meet family's needs and to keep them in control of resolving their issues and problems.

The aims of the strategy are to:

- i. Define what we mean by Early Help in Warrington and articulate the principles that underpin the future development and delivery of services.
- ii. Set out Warrington's Safeguarding Children Board's ambition for the development of Early Help services.
- iii. Review relevant policy context, guidance and best practice at national and local level.
- iv. Identify the local needs of children and young people, and their families in Warrington as articulated in our JSNA.
- v. Describe an integrated service delivery model that ensures high quality and best value.
- vi. Identify how partners intend to jointly commission services, and provide integrated service offers.
- vii. Identify key priorities for action and implementation.

It seeks to ensure that:

- i. We maintain, develop and enhance the range of Early Help offers available across the borough.
- ii. We build community capacity and resilience and reduce reliance on services.
- iii. There is a shift of resource from specialist services to Early Help provision, and that we maximise the potential of all existing available resources to facilitate this.
- iv. We develop a workforce that is able to provide Early Help, and that we encourage a range of providers from across the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- v. Ensure that there is shared understanding, commitment and sign up from all partners in relation to delivery of a badged Early Help offer. By a Badged Offer, we mean an offer of a variety of early help services delivered by partners that:
  - Meet a required standard.
  - Deliver real difference to the progress and experience of children and young peopleServices that meet this standard and deliver on requirements will be marketed under a visible and recognisable logo and quality mark

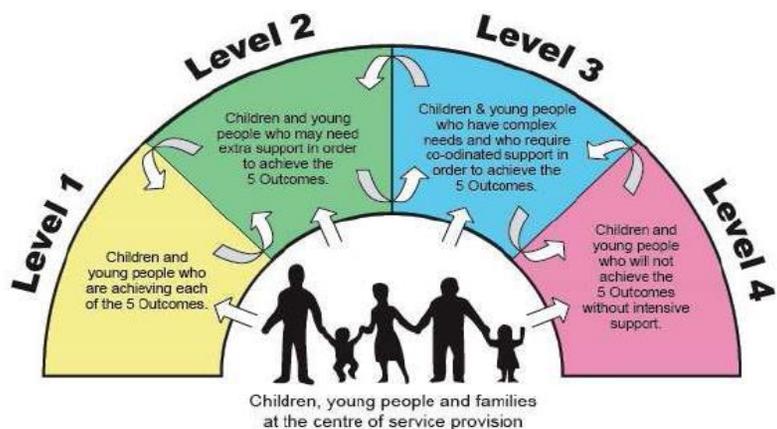
## 5.0 Implementation

This strategy will be implemented by the Partnership and the Board will scrutinise implementation and impact. It is a key element of our overall vision to improve outcomes for the children and young people of Warrington and enable them to achieve their full potential.

The Strategy has been developed following a series of consultation processes in order to strengthen and improve the Early Help Warrington offer. The strategy is a two year strategy. An annual review will be undertaken by the Board.

## 6.0 How Will it Work?

The Warrington Family Support Model provides an agreed integrated pathway that applies to all children and young people from conception to the age of 18 years. It recognises that all service responses must be directed at preventing vulnerability and meeting the needs identified at the lowest level of intervention. Early recognition, intervention and prevention are essential in order to achieve this.



Use of the definition of Early Help detailed in this strategy advocates that the Early Help offer covers services from community and universal level, children and young people at Level 2 (children whose health or development may be affected) and Level 3 (children whose health and development is at increased risk of being affected).

The provision of Early Help services should form part of a continuum of help and support to respond to the different levels of need of individual children and families. For the model to work, all practitioners, whichever organisation they work for or service they represent, must be able to understand the threshold/level of need, recognise the shift in a child or family's needs which mean that a multi-agency assessment of need is required, and this will involve the use of **WSCB Threshold Document** and **WSCB Escalation Policy**. **Having a threshold document** which everyone works to is imperative.

Each practitioner has an individual responsibility to initiate a standard multi-agency assessment which will be the **Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or a Whole Family Assessment** and which may be the gateway to other specialist assessments such as the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) or DASH (Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment). This does not necessarily mean that the initiator of the assessment is the lead professional for the plan. The **lead professional** needs to be the right one for the child and their family.

Even though this is not a statutory assessment, it is just as important to the child and family that there is a full commitment from all partners, in the knowledge that this preventive intervention may reduce the need for further agency intervention in the future (which we know can be costly).

A **Family Support Plan** will be agreed with the child and their family at the **Family Support Meeting**. The CAF or Whole Family Assessment (containing family information and including a genogram) will be finalised at this meeting. The outcome of the meeting will be a co-ordinated **"Family Support Plan"**.

The Family Support Plan" will set out the child and family's perspective and describe the **Early Help offer** to the family:

- What the child and family want to say.
- What needs to happen.
- What will be offered and when.
- Who the lead professional will be.
- Who will be responsible for each action.
- How we will know it has made a difference.

- The child and family should be full partners in the plan and should be given a choice wherever possible and as locally as possible. Services must be **responsive** to the child and family needs.

To ensure that the assessments and plans can be quality assured, there must be a multi-agency investment in the workforce through training, information technology support and a **quality assurance** process. Without this we will not know whether we are making a difference to individuals and families or learning how to improve our offer to families. All agencies need to be clear how they are managing their part in the process, understand what their workers are doing and ensuring there is the necessary support and supervision including challenge and risk assessment.

Implementing the Warrington Early Help strategy will not happen without an **infrastructure** to support it, particularly in the early stages – we know from that co-ordination and support for staff are a critical part of the implementation process.

All partner agencies must contribute to creating this infrastructure that supports this co-ordinated approach. Organisations must be clear about the role, responsibility and accountabilities of their front-line staff and support them to meet those accountabilities, giving them the tools to do their job:

- All lead professionals should have the same level of training and underpinning knowledge.
- It is vital that there is consistency both in the working practice of staff and the way those staff work across boundaries. Practitioners need to be able to trust each other's assessments so they are not continually repeated.
- Each partner organisation will be responsible for ensuring that their own staff implements the strategy as described, but the Chief Accountable Officer holds the ultimate accountability. Warrington Safeguarding Children Board will regularly assess the effectiveness of the Early Help strategy. A key part of this strategy is to identify where both duplication and gaps are present and for this to inform commissioning.

## 7.1 What We Want to See

- i. Children and Young People are safe, aspire and achieve their full potential, regardless of the circumstances in which they are born.
- ii. Families being empowered and supported to take control of their lives and to be able to tackle the challenges and problems that face them.
- iii. Families being supported in their local communities, and avoiding the need for statutory agency involvement.

- iv. All agencies working with children and families in Warrington are committed to Early Help. This means that there are no wrong front doors and all agencies work to address the needs of families whether that need falls within their immediate area of professional expertise or not.
- v. A diverse range and mix of service providers with a capable and confident workforce, equipped with the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to support children, young people and their families.
- vi. A whole systems, integrated approach to strategic planning, commissioning and service delivery.
- vii. The participation of children, young people and families, and all stakeholders in service developments.

## **8.0 How Will We Know If We Have Made a Difference?**

The assessments and plans are high quality and the outcome for the child and family can be evidenced as improved, by monitoring the Family Support Plan outcome measures.

All Early Help services share the responsibility for improving outcomes for the family as well as their service-specific outcomes. We can track progress against a range of national and local indicators as detailed below

## Data set

Outcomes we want	How will we know
We know all about children and young people in Warrington and what their needs are and how they are doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of children 0-17</li> <li>• %children (0-15) living in poverty</li> <li>• % school age children BME</li> </ul>
We know about groups of children with particular needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of children in need (open cases) with a disability</li> <li>• Number notifications of children privately fostered</li> </ul>
Children in specific circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults identified as a victim of DV through adult safeguarding process and adults with an open primary/secondary client type of substance misuse with an open relationship as a parent matched to current children in need.</li> <li>• Number of children missing from a)home b) education</li> <li>• Number of children vulnerable to child sexual exploitation</li> </ul>
Children young people and families are able to access early help when they require it and it is effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Whole family and CAF assessments</li> <li>• Number of Initial Planning (Family Support) meetings completed</li> <li>• Number of Review Planning ( Family Support) meetings completed</li> </ul>
Thresholds are clear and appropriate, planning and decision making is effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and rate of referrals to Children's Social Care</li> <li>• % of referrals to Children's Social Care which are repeat referrals within 12 months.</li> <li>• Number of children in need (s17)</li> </ul>

## 9.0 Governance

The Board will monitor impact of the delivery by partners of the strategy. Performance will be managed via the Early Help Subgroup, which will report directly to the Board. Individual agencies will be responsible for meeting their own performance management arrangements, which the Board expects will incorporate targets for delivering the wider strategy and monitoring outcomes.

## 10.0 Work Plan

Action	What We will Achieve	Impact
Audit 1. Audit to be undertaken and submitted August 2014. 2. Report to WSCB September 2014.	1 Obtain a baseline on the existing performance of agencies around early help. 2 Report findings to Board.	The right help at the right time is making a difference  Escalation of support is recognised when needed
Develop Strategy 1. The Early Help Strategy agreed.	1. Strategic framework for Early Help delivery in Warrington 2. Impact of harm from neglect monitored	Partners strategically prioritise Early Help services  Partnership agreed to use Graded Care profile and Signs of Safety to monitor impact of harm from neglect and to monitor impact of interventions to reduce harm
“Early Help Warrington” 1. delivery of a Badged Offer, that meet a required standard and is marketed under a visible and recognisable logo	1. A quality standard for services badged “Early Help Warrington”	Families and practitioners to be assured of service provision to reduce risk

<p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Multi agency training on Neglect, DV and CSE has a focus on early help</li> <li>2. Practitioners understand how to use the Threshold Document including when to escalate</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Neglect, CSE and DV is identified early and responded to reduce risk</li> <li>2. Cases are stepped up and down effectively</li> </ol>	<p>Training impacts on practice and outcomes for children. See Training evaluation report to board.</p>
<p>Joint working with Adults Services</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Joint working between WSCB and WSAB</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Effective pathways for Adults Services to work with Children's Services across the partnership early</li> </ol>	<p>Parents with mental ill health, who misuse drug and alcohol and perpetrators or are victim of DV get the right help and their children are protected early</p>

## Supplementary Information

### 1. National Context

- 1.1 The central importance of Early Help in enabling children and adults to reach their full potential has been a common theme in a number of Government reviews (egg Munro, Marmot, Tickell, Allen, Field) concerned with aspects of Early Help that have been commissioned by the Coalition Government. They have all independently reached the same conclusions on the importance of providing help early in order to improve outcomes for children and young people, with concerns that range from preventing abuse and neglect to helping parents achieve the aspirations they hold for their children. In her review Professor Munro comments that since preventative services d more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services, that paying attention to coordinating services is essential.

### 1.2 Local Context Needs Assessment Key Messages

What do we know about Warrington?

We know that Warrington has particular challenges, explored in more detail in the separate document the Warrington Joint Strategic Needs Assessment:

- There is a wide variation in children's life experiences (outcomes) despite a generally positive overall picture.
- Educational attainment of children and young people from some vulnerable groups, particularly children in care, is significantly worse.
- There are higher rates of self-harm in young people.
- Children in Warrington enter into care later than average, and of these, many are out of area placements.

We know that there are particularly vulnerable children, young people and families in Warrington. They are more likely to experience difficulties in their lives and they may need support in overcoming them. We know that these children, young people and families are likely to be:

- Where there is child and family poverty, because of low income or a dependency on benefits, or where the main wage earner is unemployed.
- Where a member of the family has mental health problems.
- Families in difficulties with housing or who are homeless.

- Where there is domestic violence or abuse.
- Where there are substance misuse issues within the family, particularly parental substance misuse.
- Where there is a history of crime and anti-social behaviour in the family.
- Where children or young people are regularly missing school or college.
- Where young people are not in education, employment or training.
- Where children or young people are carers for other members of the family.
- Where teenagers are pregnant or are parents themselves.
- Children who are at risk of entering or re-entering children's social care, particularly where there are repeat enquiries to Warrington Children's social care.
- Those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Families where the ability to parent is limited.

We also know that there are a range of factors which will collectively impact on family capacity and resilience particularly:

- Welfare reform.
- Where there has been past trauma.
- Where there are multiple needs within the family.

**1.3. Warrington Health and Wellbeing Board have published its Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-2015. Children and Young People and prevention and Early Intervention / Help are identified as two of the five top priorities within the Borough.**

The number of children and young people across the Borough is likely to increase. The birth rate in the most socio-economically deprived groups is almost twice that of those in the wealthiest. This will further increase the proportion of children vulnerable due to socio-economic deprivation.

The number and proportion of children and young people living in the poorest areas is expected to increase in the future. We need to ensure that the gap in outcomes for those at the greatest risk of vulnerability due to their socio-economic circumstances is reduced.

The health and well-being of children and young people in Warrington although improving in many areas is in some poorer than that seen across England as a whole:

#### 1.4. The priority areas for action identified within this report and reflected in the Early Help Strategy include:

- Early years focus; so that a higher proportion of children aged 5 have a good level of development when they start Primary school. This is essential to improve the life chances of local children.
- Outcomes for children living in poverty, we need to reduce gaps in attainment for children living in the most socio-economically deprived areas of the country.
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco, Warrington is already seeing higher rates of hospital admissions related to the use of drugs and alcohol. Both local and national health related Survey's highlight the proportions of Primary and Secondary school children already using alcohol, drugs and tobacco is increasing
- Parental health and wellbeing. Reducing the impact of parental health and behaviours on their children and providing support particularly in relation to those areas that result in increased childhood vulnerability such as mental health, domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse.
- In Warrington, neglect has been prioritised in the Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) Business Plan 2014-16, as they want to support improved services and outcomes for local children and young people impacted by neglect. To support this the WSCB Neglect Strategy 2014-16 establishes the strategic aims, objectives and priorities for Warrington's approach in tackling neglect and identifies a number of guiding principles underpinning all work around neglect. It is informed by:
  - Research.
  - The Ofsted thematic review "In the child's time: professional responses to neglect: March 2014).
  - The Ofsted thematic review "What about the children? Joint working between adult and children's services when parents or carers have mental ill health and/or drug and alcohol problems: March 2013.
  - The Ofsted and Care Quality Commission thematic review "Protecting disabled children: thematic inspection: August 2012".
  - Practitioner feedback (both from a practitioner event on neglect and an audit of 12 cases involving neglect that included practitioner forums).
  - The views of children and young people and adults who were neglected, parents and carers (from home visits following the neglect audit).

## 2.1 Population

Warrington's resident population stands at 205,150 (mid-year estimate 2013) which represents an increase of 1,450 (0.7% points) from mid-2012:

- Total: 203,700
- Males: 101,000 [49.6% compared to 49.2% nationally (England and Wales)]
- Females: 102,600 (50.4% compared to 50.8% nationally)
- 0 to 15: 39,000 (19.1% compared to 18.9% nationally)
- 16 to 64: 130,700 (64.2% compared to 64.1% nationally)
- 65 and over: 34,000 (16.7% compared to 17.0% nationally)

## 3.0 Deprivation

Overall deprivation appears to have worsened very slightly for Warrington:

- Warrington's new average score is 18.5 from the 2010 Indices, compared to 17.9 in 2007.
- Warrington now ranks 153rd out of 326 local authorities on the measure of 'Average SOA score'. This places Warrington within the 47th centile, meaning 53% of local authorities within England are less deprived than Warrington. This is similar to the position in 2007.
- Warrington has a wide gap in all areas of economics, lifestyles and wellbeing between the inner wards where about 56% of children are subject to child poverty, in comparison to 5% in the outer wards of the borough.

## 4.0 Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People in Warrington

Children and young people under the age of 20 years make up 24.0% of the population of Warrington; 8.5% of school children are from a minority ethnic group. The health and wellbeing of children in Warrington is mixed compared with the England average. Infant and child mortality rates are similar to the England average.

The level of child poverty is better than the England average with 15.1% of children aged under 16 years living in poverty. The rate of family homelessness is better than the England average.

Children in Warrington have better than average levels of obesity: 7.8% of children aged 4-5 years and 16.8% of children aged 10-11 years are classified as obese. In 2012, 76 children entered the youth justice system for the first time. This is a lower rate when compared to the England average for young people receiving their first reprimand, warning or conviction. Children and young people account for 24% of the Warrington population.

- Population projections (ONS) There is an overall rising trend in the number of births in Warrington, following similar patterns to that seen regionally and nationally.
- The more deprived areas of Warrington tend to have higher levels of children in low-income families but nearly all wards, including the more affluent, have seen increases between 2007 and 2011; the current (2011) overall Warrington percentage of children in low-income families is much lower than both the North West and England.
- Warrington has a relatively low proportion of children from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds compared to regionally and nationally but, as in keeping with the North West and England and Wales, has a larger proportion of children from BME backgrounds when compared to the overall population of Warrington.

In Summary:

- The population of children and young people (CYP) aged 0-19 in Warrington is estimated at 48,800 (24% of Warrington's population).
- Of the 0-19 year-olds in Warrington, 51.7% are male and 48.3% are female. Warrington's overall population comprises 49.6% male, 50.4% female.
- The breakdown by broad age-band for Warrington, regional and national is shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Percentage of Population by Broad Age Group, 2012**

Source: Office for National Statistics, Mid 2012 Population Estimates

Age	Warrington	North West	England
0 to 15	19.1%	18.8%	18.9%
16 to 64	64.2	64%	64.1%
65 and Over	16.7%	17.2%	17%

## **5.0 Early Help Services in the Borough**

We recognise that there is an extensive range of provision within the Borough and this is set out in the Early Help offer for families and practitioners. We believe that effective Early Help requires a whole family approach and encompasses all stakeholders working with children, young people and families. This includes Health, Police, Probation, Schools/Education, Children’s Social Care, Adult Services, Housing, Faith groups, Voluntary and Community organisations and the wider public.

**UNIVERSAL SERVICES**

**Appendix 2**

