

Practice guide

Family Help & Social Care

Early Help – Restore, Warrington

Background, purpose and rationale

Restore launched in April 2020 for expectant parents who were less than 20 weeks gestation who had children removed from their care previously and there is a likelihood the current pregnancy would result in removal. In February 2022 we expanded the offer to include fathers who had children previously removed from their care and are expecting a baby with a new partner (who may or may not have had children removed from their care). We also extended the offer to support first time parents where there were 'high risk indicators' such as significant substance misuse, domestic abuse, parental mental health, chronic homelessness, and others, where there is a likelihood that the current pregnancy would result in removal.

Restore was initially designed on the licensed PAUSE model, we creatively tailored it to the needs of families, data analysis and demand in Warrington and removed restrictive criteria for parents to be actively using contraception to be enrolled on the 18-month programme. Restore offers support at the very earliest opportunity in pregnancy until the child turns five years' old.

What we did to improve children's outcomes and policies/experiences

Restore seeks to improve outcomes for babies and their families by offering support at the earliest opportunity. This allows practitioners to build relationships and trust, and complete meaningful work with families and an Early help Assessment, before the next phase of the pregnancy and possible social care involvement. We remain working with the family until the child reaches five years' old (if the child remains in the care of their parents). The same allocated Family Support Worker is in place during all transition points such as stepping up, pre-birth assessment, legal gateway, pre proceedings, until the outcome is for the children to be permanently removed from parents' care. We accept referrals at any stage of gestation, the earliest we have had being 5 weeks. This means that we can start support with things such attending health appointments, connections with other services, and building relationships to bridge the gap into social care, which is where support can breakdown due to previous experience with statutory services. Alongside practical family support, the team are trained in evidenced-based parenting and complete different modules with parents based on the stage of pregnancy and following the birth of the child. All practitioners are trauma-informed and trained in systemic practice and Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) tool for measuring neglect. Restore successfully bid to become early adopters of the Graded Care Profile 2 Antenatal tool (GCP2A) for measuring neglect during pregnancy.

What was the impact?

Of the 101 Families known to Restore since April 2020, 68 babies have been born whilst open to Restore (67% born). Of the 68 babies born, 46 babies have remained with their families following the birth.

Currently 67% of Restore babies have remained in the care of their parents. Whilst 33 % (22 children or approximately 4 per year) have been removed from their parents' care.

Cost avoidance has been evidenced at various points of the programme and currently stands at £2,492,437. Minus the cost of the staff team (£153,957), the total cost avoidance is a minimum of £2,338,480. This has been calculated based on court costs, social worker salary, intensive families' first workers and foster placements.

42 unborn/babies are currently open to Restore. These consist of 30 Active families –where intervention is being completed at various levels of need, Child in Need, Child Protection and Team around Family (TAF). Additionally, there are 12 Light touch families -Restore Light Touch programme is a reduced offer, where it has been identified that the families are open to continue to make and sustain positive change, and it's important to reflect this in our support offered to our families - this is guided by supervisions. TAF reviews are extended to 12 weeks, however, families on light touch have access to their allocated worker, where required, and can be switched back to active support at any point, dependent on need.

"From my point of view, as the parent who had had children removed, she has not once made me feel judged or uncomfortable and I feel she has a true understanding of what goes on in family court cases. She feels like the 'safest' professional to me". – Parent

"The Restore programme in my opinion has been the most 'available'. I felt very supported throughout by both Restore Practitioners. The Programme provided the family with a whole different approach to Social Care/Support which again, I feel, has been crucial to the success of Permanency for Baby. The Case opened to myself in November 2019 and closed in Sept 2020. The support of Restore, as evidenced above, was a leading factor in myself being able to step away. Parents have also felt confident with this decision and are continuing to engage fully with the Programme" - Child in Need Social Worker

"Some great evidence of strong relationships-based practice and all this was started during Covid too. It's been a tough few months being involved in things like this and most importantly seeing the impact for children and families is just great. You have set the benchmark high" - Head of Service, Children's Social Care

"Children in Warrington benefit from effective early help services. Since the last inspection, there has been continued investment in early help services. This includes, for example, the strengthening of the Restore project, which successfully supports parents who had children previously removed from their care."
Inspection Local Authority Children's Services June 2024, Ofsted

Resources

[Restore 7 Minute Briefing](#)

[Born into Care: Developing best practice guidelines for when the state intervenes at birth - Nuffield Family Justice Observatory](#)

Contact

Carlie Mills, Early Help Locality Manager (Lead for Restore).

Carlie.mills@warrington.gov.uk

Lisa Atkinson- Early Help Team Manager - Restore

Latkinson@warrington.gov.uk