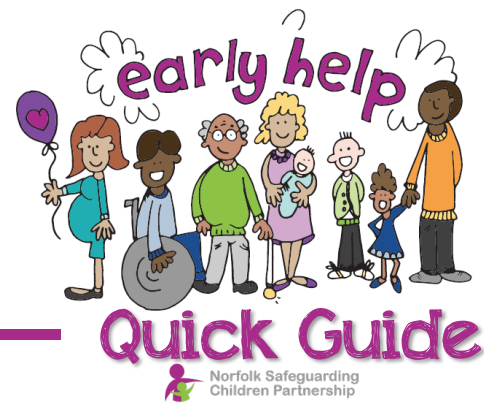


# Early Help: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)



## When should I start an Early Help Assessment?

You should start an assessment if the child or young person's worries are not able to be resolved within the full range of universal provision and now need to get additional support from other services. You need to decide whether the needs identified can be met by involving one other service, or if multiple services may be required. Discuss your concerns with the family (and young person as appropriate). You need their consent to share information with another agency to get additional support. If you decide the child or young person's need can be met from one other service and you have consent, you can refer to the service directly. If you decide their needs require support from more than one service and you have consent, you will need to start an early help assessment with the family.

## How can I check if there is already an Early Help Assessment in place?

Ask the family which agencies are involved & contact those identified. The Community and Partnerships team can review all current recorded activity. They will be able to inform you if a plan already exists and liaise with lead worker so you can work together.

## When should I register an Early Help Assessment?

As soon as the family consent with the early help registration and have agreed to information sharing you can upload information. By registering and updating regular assessments and plans, our early help system can be used to monitor active support. Without this information, the opportunity for practitioners to liaise and avoid duplication is missed.

## What if the family no longer want Early Help Plan, or have withdrawn their consent?

An early help assessment is entirely voluntary. Informed consent is mandatory. Families do not have to engage and if they do, they can choose what information they want to share. If a family decline, it could be that they are not ready to acknowledge issues or address change. Encourage them to think about what their family goals are and what they want for their child or children. Offer signposting to online services and helpline information. Give them your contact details and advise them that they can ask for help at a later date, if they change their mind.

## What if I don't know all the information to complete the assessment?

A good quality early help assessment will require information from the family, children and young people, their natural network and a number of agencies who may be offering support. As lead worker, you do not need to know all the information required for the assessment yourself. However, you are expected to ask the family about other agencies they are working with. This will allow those already involved to contribute to the assessment. A mapping meeting with the family, their network and other worker involved is the best way to start the conversation and collate information.

## Can I attach other assessments to the Early Help Assessment?

Yes, if there have already been comprehensive assessments attach them as an appendix. It is important to ensure information in the appendix that is particularly relevant is highlighted or referenced within Early Help Assessment & Plan.

## If I complete the Early Help Assessment do I have to be the lead worker?

Being the lead worker of the assessment is about working with the family to help them identify their worries and goals. It is the family's choice of how they want to be the lead worker, it may be that they choose the person they have the best relationship with. The people involved can contribute to the plan, but someone will need to take the lead on organising the assessment, plans, meetings and updating this information. Support is available from the Partner & Community Focus Team to any new workers taking on the lead role.

## Does the lead worker have to chair the family meeting?

No. They have the responsibility to ensure the meeting is facilitated and recorded but can negotiate with others for someone else to take on this role. It may be the family wish to lead. If you need further advice on this, contact the Partner & Community Focus Team in your district.

## Who co-ordinates the meeting, chairs the review and writes up the plan?

The lead worker is responsible for calling the family & network together, however responsibility at meetings with chairing and writing up plans and progress should be shared. It is not one person's role

## How often should a family plan be reviewed, and what should happen if there is no progress?

A timescale for subsequent review meetings should be agreed at the end of each meeting. Every 6 weeks is suggested as good practice, but this is at the discretion of the family and agencies. If you feel things are stuck and you need further advice, contact the Partner & Community Focus team in your district. If the situation is complex, stuck or drifting you may want to consider using the NSCP Joint Agency Supervision policy.

## Do I need to register and upload assessments, plans and inform of closure?

Yes, all completed plans should be uploaded to the website after each meeting. The early help database allows Children's Service to track progress and keep a record of how children are being supported.

## How do I access Early Help Assessment training?

You can register for the training on the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership website. If you would like to discuss a request for bespoke training or practice development, contact the Partner & Community Focus team in your district.

## At what age can a young person consent to an Early Help Assessment independent of their parents/carers?

This is covered in the Early Help Assessment Training and refers to the 'Fraser Competency' of the young person. A Fraser Competent young person can agree to a EHA, and if they insist that they do not want their parents/carers to be involved in the EHA process, this can still go ahead however practitioners should highlight how a better outcome might be achieved in partnership with parents.

## What is the difference between Early Help Assessment & Plan (EHAP) & Team Around the Family (TAF)?

EHAP stands for Early Help Assessment & Plan it is the name of the form that is completed with families. TAF stands for Team Around the Family and is the name of the meetings that are held as part of the process.

## Where do I find the Early Help Assessment & Plan paperwork?

You can find the paperwork required on the NSCP website, under the Early Help section.

## What should I do if I have safeguarding concerns when a family has an Early Help Assessment?

If at any time during the process you suspect or find that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from significant harm, STOP and contact the Children's Advice & Duty Service on 0344 800 8021

## What if a child/young person is allocated to social care when they have an Early Help Assessment & Plan?

If a case is 'stepped up' whilst the family has an open Early Help Assessment, then meetings will continue whilst the social worker undertakes a Social Work Assessment. If it is felt the child requires a 'Child in Need' a 'Child Protection Plan' or the child is placed in to care, the Early Help Assessment & Plan will close. The social worker may decide, however that the child's needs can continue to be met at Early Help and will Step the child back down.