

# Early Help Assessment and Family Engagement 7 Minute Briefing

## **1. Early Help Assessment and Family Engagement**

The Early Help Assessment (EHA) is the holistic family assessment tool used at early help level (Level 2, [thresholds of need](#)) in Salford.

Early Help Assessments are completed in partnership with families to explore and develop a shared understanding of their strengths and needs and agree an action plan based on their desired changes.

An Early Help Assessment can include any family or household member. Significant others can also be included in the same assessment if required.

Any practitioner working with a family at an early help level can complete an Early Help Assessment in partnership with a family with their consent.

## **2. Why it matters**

Early help is about receiving the right help at the earliest possible stage. The Early Help Assessment is a tool that can be used in partnership with families to identify their strengths, needs and desired changes to develop a single plan.

EHAs and subsequent multi-agency reviews (TAFs) can aid information sharing between agencies and families. EHAs can prevent families from having to repeat 'their story' by bringing together information held by the family and practitioners into a single assessment to develop a mutually agreed plan.

EHAs help to empower families to achieve change as they are in the 'driving seat' as an active participant in the process of identifying their strengths, needs and desired changes and agreeing *their* action plan.

## **3. Partnership working**

Partnership working requires negotiation as the norm, agreeing each step of the journey together. Early Help Assessments are completed in partnership with families, recognising that family members have knowledge and expertise and that successful outcomes are dependent on the complimentary knowledge & skills of both practitioner and the family being combined.

With the family's agreement, EHAs can be co-authored by the professionals working with them so that it reflects the specialist knowledge held by different agencies.

## **4. Assessment**

The Early Help Assessment consists of [seven areas](#) to be explored with the family. Each of these areas is divided into 'going well' and 'worried about' so that the family identify their strengths and resources as well as their needs and worries.

It is vital that any assessment undertaken with a child reflects their views and lived experience. Tools that can support in capturing the Voice of the Child can be found on the SSCP [website](#).

Completed EHAs should be submitted via the [secure upload](#) webpage.

## 5. Lead professional

The role of the Lead Professional is to take the lead to coordinate provision and act as a single point of contact for a child, young person and their family when a range of services are involved, and an integrated response is required.

There is further guidance and information in the [Lead Professional handbook](#) which has been developed by the Salford Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

## 6. Review / TAF

Early Help Assessments are reviewed regularly, every 4 to 12 weeks. This ensures that a family's plan remains relevant to their desired changes. Reviews allow participants to highlight and celebrate success, reflect upon unsuccessful outcomes, and agree next steps. Although some reviews may be single agency, most reviews are in the form of a multi-agency Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting.

An EHA Review form for recording review meetings can be downloaded from the EHA Website. All completed reviews should be submitted via the secure upload. A guide to leading a TAF meeting can be downloaded from the Early [Help website](#).

## 7. Training

Family Engagement, Early Help Assessment and Thriving Families tool training is provided by [Salford Safeguarding Children's Partnership](#) (SSCP)

The training focuses on:

- The qualities & skills required to work in partnership with families
- How we engage families to work in partnership and develop a shared understanding
- How we engage families to identify desired change, potential actions and how they will be implemented.
- What does a good quality Early Help Assessment look like?
- Supporting tools including The Thriving Families tool.

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### Additional Information

Date of publication: 29 Nov. 21

Visit: [Early help for families](#) • [Salford City Council](#)

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