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Early Help

Early help is the term we use in Salford to describe the way we work together with children, young people and their families to prevent problems occurring and provide support as soon as problems emerge or re-emerge

Families may need early help at any time because, as children develop, challenges can emerge. Equally, family circumstances can change, and families can need more support. Evidence tells us the sooner a family receives help, the sooner they are able to improve their situation and prevent the need for longer term support or statutory intervention, where appropriate

Early Help Assessments are tools completed in partnership with families at the 'Getting Help' level of [Support and Safeguarding](#) to identify their strengths, needs and desired changes to develop a family plan.

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Early Help Assessment

[Early Help Assessments](#) are completed in partnership with families to explore and develop a shared understanding of their strengths, needs and desired changes and to agree a family plan. Any practitioner working with a family at 'Getting Help' level can undertake an Early Help Assessment with a family with their agreement.

An EHA can help to empower families to achieve positive change given the process encourages families to take ownership of identifying their strengths, needs and desired changes and in developing their family plan.

An EHA and subsequent multi-agency reviews (Team Around the Family) can aid information sharing between agencies and the family. An EHA can prevent a family from repeating their story by bringing together information into a single assessment and developing a family plan.

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Partnership

Early help in Salford is not a service provision but a collaborative approach. Early Help Assessments are completed in partnership between a family and professionals, recognising that family members also have knowledge and expertise and that successful outcomes are dependent on the complimentary knowledge & skills of both the practitioner and the family being combined (doing 'with', not doing 'to').

With the family's agreement, EHAs can be co-authored by any of the professionals working with them.

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Assessment

The assessment should consider the strengths and needs of the family as a whole. Each area of the assessment is divided into 'strengths' and 'needs', encouraging the family to identify existing positives, knowledge and resources, enabling families to build resilience and independence.

Any assessment undertaken with a child should reflect 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.

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Training

Engagement, Early Help Assessment and Team Around the Family training is provided by the [Salford Safeguarding Childrens 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.

- The Early Help Assessment and other supporting tools including The Thriving Families tool.

- The Team Around the Family (TAF) process.

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EHA Review

Early Help Assessments are reviewed regularly, every 4 to 8 weeks. This ensures that the family's plan remains relevant to their desired changes. Reviews provide an opportunity to highlight and celebrate positive change, reflect upon unsuccessful outcomes and agree next steps. Although some family plans may be single agency, most reviews are in the form of a multi-agency Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting.

A Review and Closure (TAF) form for recording reviews can be downloaded from the [TAF webpage](#). All completed reviews should be submitted via the [Secure Upload](#). A guide to leading a TAF meeting can also be downloaded [online](#).

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Lead Worker

Families accessing early help support will have a 'lead worker', the named practitioner who will be their main point of contact.

The lead worker will lead on the completion of an Early Help Assessment, coordinate the help families need and regularly review progress. The 'lead worker' will often be someone a family already knows, trust and have a good relationship with. Any practitioner working with a family can be the 'lead worker'.