



Stockport Early Help Assessment Guidance Notes for Practitioners

Commencing an Early Help Assessment

This guidance outlines the Early Help Assessment process. It aims to help practitioners to effectively complete the assessment, support plan, plan & review and closure. The use of the Early Help Assessment must be discussed with the parents/carers and or the child/young person and verbal consent initially obtained to progress the early help process. It is important that the family are involved in the assessment as well as the development and review of any plans.

The Early Help Assessment is an information-gathering tool and is to be used to gather the relevant information to be able to make a decision on how best to support the family.

Family Practitioner Agreement - Consent

This section is to record that consent has been gained by the family to begin the Early Help Assessment. It is important to note that you must have gained verbal consent to begin the process before you create the EHA. Written consent needs to be gained and recorded on the EHA once the family are happy with the content and for the information to be shared.

First Section to be completed – Assessment information

This section is an opportunity to record people present at the meeting, check all relationships are correct and add your practitioner details and any other relevant services.

Early Help Assessment Summary: Needs & Strengths

You can access the full Levels of need guidance for more detail on the safeguarding website:

www.safeguardingchildreninstockport.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Stockport-MultiAgency-Guidance-on-Levels-of-Need.pdf

Section: Family Relationships

You will need to ensure each family member's details are recorded within this section. It is important to capture information on other significant family or friends living in the household or elsewhere; ensure these details are correct, particularly dates of birth and the spelling of names.

Section: Reason for Assessment

What is important for this family? As the practitioner commencing the assessment, you should outline clearly and succinctly the reason for undertaking the Early Help Assessment. It is important that you include the parent/carer and child/young person's views on what is important to them and what they want to change. Some points to consider when completing this section can include the following: Detail how the family was brought to your attention. Describe the key areas of concerns. What is important for the family? Have there been any immediate

support actions put in place to support the avoidance of crisis. If other assessments have been completed, please indicate this.

Section: Child's Health

This covers Health and Life Early years/ school/ College You should explore areas around your immediate concerns to look behind the presenting issues and come up with a more holistic view. Wherever possible you should base the discussion on evidence not just opinion, and indicate what your evidence is. If there are any major differences of view, these should be recorded too.

In this element, you need to consider the child or young person's health, physical development, speech language and communication, behavioural development, emotional and social development, identity and self-esteem.

Elements to consider in respect of the above:

Speech and language

Listening and attention

Understanding / following instructions

Expressing themselves – verbal/non-verbal (e.g. is it the content or the actual speech that it's causing concern, swapping speech sounds, stammering, selecting not to speak, lack of vocab sentence structure).

Social Skills

Interaction with peers (turn taking, initiating interaction, eye contact)

Interaction with Adults

Recognition of feelings

Self-care skills

Toileting

Eating

Dressing

Sleeping

Birth History/ Medical History

Hearing

Vision

Cognition

Behaviour

Behaviour (difficulties with restlessness, impulsivity, difficulty with temper, anxiety, anger, aggression)

Coping with changes in routine, family separation loss, bereavement

Ability to interact with peers

How is behaviour managed e.g. school/home

Gross Motor Skills

Balance, ball skills, willingness to join in Physical Education (how they move, and any issues with movement)

Fine Motor Skills

(Hand grasps, hand-eye coordination, scissor skills, mark making, handling objects, and writing)

The section is broken down for you to consider and record what is working well and what could be better and why?

It is also important to capture if the child/young person has disability and record any diagnosis information and if the child/young person is aware of their disability and diagnosis.

Section: Education

In this element, you need to consider:

Attendance and engagement

Behaviour and relationships

Academic progress

Involvement in activities

Feedback from school/ college learning, including attention

Following instructions

Finishing tasks

Remembering information

Reading, Maths, Spelling.

The section is broken down for you to consider and record what is working well and what could be better and why?

Section: Home Life & Functioning

This element is to consider the impact of wider family and environmental elements on the children's development. The following are to be considered:

In this element, you need to consider:

Support networks

History of involvement with services

Domestic abuse

Contact issues

Criminality and Anti-Social Behaviour

Basic care

Ensuring safety and protection

Emotional warmth and stability

Guidance

Boundaries and stimulation

Relationships within the home

Stability of accommodation

Access to equipment concerns

The section is broken down for you to consider and record what is working well and what could be better and why?

Section: Family and Environmental

This covers two elements:

Adult Health

You should explore areas around your immediate concerns to look behind the presenting issues and come up with a more holistic view. Wherever possible you should base the discussion on evidence not just opinion, and indicate what your evidence is. If there are any major differences of view, these should also be recorded.

The section is broken down for you to consider and record what is working well and what could be better and why?

Housing, Finance and Employment

In this element, you need to consider risk of:

Eviction

Housing repairs

Issues with debt

Employment and benefits.

The section is broken down for you to consider and record what is working well and what could be better and why?

Section: Conclusions, Solutions and Actions

Aims

What are the key aims the Child, young person and/or family would like to address

Conclusions

What are the child/young person's/families strengths and resources, what are their needs – e.g. no additional needs, additional needs, complex needs, risk of harm to self or others?

Outcome

This is where you choose the next step of action, please only choose one option and **always** contact the **MASSH** if you wish to step a case up to Children's Social Care

Plan

This section of the EHA is where you record your plan based on the analysis of the assessment.

It will help you to begin to formulate a plan with the family and other agencies. Worries / risks should be clearly recorded and the impact of these on the child and their family. Family strengths should be recognised and built upon. Differences of opinion with the family's views need to be explored, reflected on and taken into account.

The plan has been broken down into two initial questions:

- What do we want to happen? What are the short, medium and long-term goals the family and professionals want to achieve? How do these relate to the identified needs and risks?
- What would we be worried about if the plan isn't working and what would our next steps be?

The plan itself can added to and actions ended as the plan is reviewed:

1. What are we going to do?
2. Who is going to do it?
3. When will it be done by?
4. Scale of Progress
5. Date Completed

If this case does not move into the TAF process then the plan should be reviewed regularly and not longer than 12 weeks.

Section: Initial Family Outcomes

This section of the Early Help Assessment is mandatory. The answers to the questions are the family’s opinion. As part of the discussions with the family, you should find that you have already covered the answer to the questions within the assessment. You can choose more than one option if necessary.

Section: Comments & Consent

This is the section where you record the views of the family. So that it is easy to capture and record the views and analysis section is broken down in the following way:

- Child or Young Person comments
- Parent or Carer comments
- You also need to advise whether written consent have been obtained and if so, update the consent in the episode to reflect this.

Recording of TAF details – Progressing to Plan & Review

If it has been identified that a TAF meeting needs to be initiated as part of this process, you will need to complete the support plan. The support plan will be the key vehicle through which families; children/young people understand what needs to be changed and how the early help services will work together. The support plan will be reviewed at the TAF meetings, in a timely manner this will usually be six weekly but can be earlier or later but not longer than 12 weeks depending on the need of the family.

The support plan:

Ensure the actions are **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant & Time-based)



Ensure parents understand the plan, Have they got a copy of the plan?

Ensure all people understand the tasks in the support plan they are responsible for, and the timescale, which has been agreed.

Encourage what is working well.

Ensure the plan is updated and reviewed regularly.