



Early Help Assessment (EHA) Guidance

The early help assessment is a strength-based assessment that aims to identify a plan of support to meet the needs of the family and prevent things from escalating into crisis. The assessment and plan belong to the family and consent must be gained before starting an early help assessment.

What makes a good early help assessment?

- **Timeliness** – It can be daunting for a family when they seek support. When they have taken the step to ask for and accept help, we need to respond as quickly as possible to help get a plan in place before things become more complex or harder to help to improve and avoid where possible the family reaching crisis.
- **Curiosity** – Professional curiosity is exploring and trying to understand what is happening within a family, rather than making assumptions or relying on a single source of information without considering the wider picture. Practitioners should observe, listen, ask direct questions and reflect on all information gathered from different sources.
- **Consider history** – It's important to ask about and understand the family's history, any patterns of previous support and reasons for this. What has been helpful or not before? What has changed and led to the current situation. Complete a chronology with the family, particularly if the family have multiple needs and have received lots of support previously. As part of this ensure all relevant family members are explored and record and link them on Liquid Logic.
- **Language** – The language we use when working with families is crucial in supporting relationship building. Always be respectful, use non-blaming language, say what we mean with honesty and transparency. Don't use professional jargon or abbreviations and check out that the family understands what has been said.
- **Be Strengths based** – Focus on what is going well for the family rather than working in a deficit model. Help the family to see where things are going well and why, as often when things are in crisis it can be hard for them to see their family strengths. Help the family to consider when things were better or what worked before and to help find solutions together.
- **Consider the network** - Ask about all family friends and connections, dads, grandads, uncles, boyfriends, friends can sometimes be missed from our work yet have a vital role in their children's wellbeing and development. Complete a genogram with the family to help understand their whole network and the nature of the current relationships with each family member.
- **Record meaningful Information** – If you are recording information in the EHA, ensure it is relevant and useful and has a clear purpose, don't just cut and paste emails where information isn't useful or explained within the assessment.

- **Identity** – Consider the identity of the family, explore what is important to them, their likes and dislikes and what makes them who they are. Consider their culture, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender, disability and how this could be impacting on their self-esteem and any current needs.
- **So what?!**– Always consider the ‘so what’ of all information and interactions with the family, what does what you have heard or seen mean to the family? What impact is it having? What is the worry? What is the strength? What needs to change?
- **Please complete and consider the supporting families questions.** The EHA is the tool we use to identify which families meet the criteria, ensure support is provided to address these needs and then make successful claims that provide crucial funding back to our support services.

All the above tips are explored in our early help assessment training, so please book a place to gain a deeper understanding or to refresh your knowledge of leading an early help assessment:

To book training via Education Stockport: [Support Services by Stockport Council \(educationstockport.uk\)](https://educationstockport.uk)
If you encounter any difficulties creating an account or signing in, please contact bstraining@stockport.gov.uk

The following sections will give you give you guidance and prompts when completing the EHA.

Communication/ language or learning support needs for any family members

Please consider where support may be needed and provide the detail:

- Any SEND, leaning needs or disability
- Other language as first language

Reason for Early Help Assessment

Please use this section to record why the family are in need of support, considering:

- The reason for any referral to TAS, MASSH, Family Help etc.
- The family/child's view on why help is needed
- Any significant event, harm or trauma that may be contributing to the family worries
- Any previous history, such as previous early help or social care support

Do your family have any other support or assessments?

Please use this section to record any other support in place that needs to be considered as part of this assessment:

- Any other plans such as an EHCP, SEN support plan etc.
- Support from any other service such as Adult Social Care

Tell us about who is in your wider network

Please use this section to explore the network:

- This could be a family member or friend who is, could, or has previously offered help
- Ask the family if any key people in their network are aware they need any help or support?
- Ask the family if you are able to talk to identified network member, consider if they can attend the EHA/TAF meeting?

Voice of the Child/ Young Person

Please use this section to record the child or young person's views that can be gained through direct work, observation and all your interactions with them. This box does not need to be completed before your assessment, you have the flexibility to complete this as you build your relationship with the child. Please remember to include the child's views throughout the whole assessment too.

Children, young people, their families and professionals in Stockport co-produced seven 'I' statements shown below, highlighting the outcomes we want all children and young people to achieve. This is the 'Outcomes Framework' which underpins everything we do. Consider these when working with the child or young person to help gain an

understanding of their views, their views, wishes and feelings. We want all children to be able to say these things, so consider what needs to be in your plan if the child/children you are working with can't currently say these seven I statements below:

****I feel part of my community**** **** I enjoy good health and wellbeing**** **** I am confident to be able to reach my goals**** **** I am happy and have people I can trust****
****The people who care for me are enabled to do this**** ****My voice is heard and acted upon**** ****I feel safe****

In this section you should then be able to provide the child's account of their life at home and in school, the activities that take part in, what makes their life good, fun, boring and what makes them feel sad, happy etc. You will understand what they say would help make things even better for them. A good thought to hold in mind is: when the child is an adult and reads this section they would say that I understood them well and what their life was like?

Summary

The five areas below will help you to talk with the family about what is going well for them and to explore the areas of need. Explore these areas with relevant family members to gain an understanding of what life is like for them from their individual perspectives. With consent, speak to relevant agencies that can share information. Please remember to include the child's views.

Early Years and Education

Family Strengths and Worries

Consider the strengths and any worries related to the following- Access to nursery/childcare, child development, SEND, school attendance, engagement in school, achievements, and goals. If you have identified in the 'other support' box earlier in the assessment that there is an EHCP or SEN plan in place, ensure this is explored further here.

If there are no needs for the family in this area record what is working well:

Freya's school attendance is 98%, she told me she loves school, especially now she is in the same class as her best friend Rebecca.

Mrs Smith, Freya's class teacher says she is a pleasure to have in class, she is chatty and confident and is meeting all her expected learning targets.

Where there are needs identified record clearly what they, how they are impacting and any opinions of the family and involved professionals:

Callum's school attendance is currently 72%. Mr Davies, his class teacher is worried that Callum is getting further behind in his learning because of this and gave examples of Callum not getting the grades he is capable of in his recent exams. Mr Davies said Callum should be on track to achieve grade 3 in all of his subjects, but Callum is currently achieving grade 1's.

Callum says that school is really difficult, he doesn't find learning easy and says he feels 'thick' compared to his mates and this makes him not want to go in. He says he knows he has an EHCP now because he can't learn as well as some of his mates, but he doesn't think it's made any difference. Callum wants to do well at school and would like to do a carpentry apprenticeship when he leaves so he can do something he is good at and earn some money.

Gill and Dave (Callum's mum and Dad) feel that Callum did really well to go into school and sit his exams while he is feeling so anxious, they said they feel really proud that he did this, but they want to work with school to make sure he has the support to go in more often and get the best grades he can. They feel that some teachers don't take his learning disability seriously and don't put in place the support that has been agreed. Gill said that when Callum won't get up for school the home is really stressful for everyone as there is shouting and arguments and it's a bad start to everyone's day. Freya said she feels really worried about Callum when he stays in bed all day and that her Mum sometimes cries in the car when she and Freya go to school without him.

What Needs to change

Use this box to complete a summary of what change would look like for the family. You don't need to record how this will happen as this will be considered when the family plan is completed.

Callum, Dave, Gill and Mr Davies would all like to see Callum feeling supported in school and making progress with his learning. We would like to see Callum going to school more often.

Freya would like to feel less worried about Callum and her Mum and for there to be less arguments at home.

Supporting Families criteria

You will then select all the supporting families criteria that links to the above area. This will be repeated with all relevant criteria for you to identify in each of the 5 areas.

● Supporting Families Criteria

Are all the children in the family getting a good education? E.g. attendance, participation, engagement and behaviour, any risks of becoming NEET or SEN needs.

☐ Need Identified ☐ Need Not Identified



- Average of less than 90% attendance (authorised absence optional) for 2 consecutive terms

☐ Yes ☐ No



- Average of less than 50% attendance unauthorised and authorised for 2 consecutive terms

☐ Yes ☐ No



- Not able to participate and engage with education - motivation, emotional regulation and behaviour difficulties, risk of, or subject to, exclusions, concerns around suitability of Elective Home Education, child is off-roll and not receiving an education otherwise, risk of NEET

☐ Yes ☐ No



- Child's special educational needs not being met

☐ Yes ☐ No



For children under 5, including unborn children, do they require any additional support to ensure good early years development? E.g. are physical health needs being met, are the children meeting developmental milestones?

☐ Need Identified ☐ Need Not Identified



- Child's (0-5 yrs) physical health needs not met (e.g. wasn't brought to an appointment, concerning accidental injuries, dental hygiene)

☐ Yes ☐ No



- Child's (0-5 yrs) developmental needs not being met (e.g. communication skills/speech and language, problem-solving, school readiness, personal social and emotional development)

☐ Yes ☐ No



Have any actions been identified for the family? ☐ Yes ☐ No



Please answer all of these above supporting families questions. If you select any supporting families criteria, complete the actions box to summarise what actions you think will be needed to create change for the family and address the identified needs. This information will be pulled through to the plan page of the EHA, to help you to create a plan for the family. If the family have no identified needs in this area, select no and move to the next section.

You don't need to discuss which supporting families criteria are met with the family, please just focus on discussions about needs, strengths and solutions when working to complete the EHA. The supporting families tick boxes will not print off when you are ready to print and share your assessment with the family to make it more user friendly.

Family Relationships

Family Strengths and Worries:

Consider the strengths and any worries related to the following - Parent and child relationships, sibling relationships, parental relationships, parental conflict. Parenting, routines, and boundaries. Extended family/friends support, access to and engagement with the community.

What needs to change?

Use this box to complete a summary of what change would look like for the family. You don't need to record how this will happen as this will be considered when the family plan is completed.

Please complete the supporting families criteria which will be shown below this section on Liquid Logic as detailed above on page 5.

Physical and Mental Health

Family Strengths and Worries:

Consider the strengths and any worries related to the following - Access to GP/Dentist, developmental checks, medical conditions, disability, self-identity, self-esteem and wellbeing, sleep, diet, self-care.

What needs to change?

Use this box to complete a summary of what change would look like for the family. You don't need to record how this will happen as this will be considered when the family plan is completed.

Please complete the supporting families criteria which will be shown below this section on Liquid Logic as detailed above on page 5.

Staying safe at home and in the community

Family Strengths and Worries:

Consider the strengths and any worries related to the following – Safety at home, online and in the community. Anti-social behaviour, links to crime, supervision.

What needs to change?

Use this box to complete a summary of what change would look like for the family. You don't need to record how this will happen as this will be considered when the family plan is completed.

Please complete the supporting families criteria which will be shown below this section on Liquid Logic as detailed above on page 5.

Finances, employment and housing
Family Strengths and Worries: Consider the strengths and any worries related to the following - Debts, financial situation. Employment, skills, and aspirations. Housing, arrears, home conditions.
What needs to change? Use this box to complete a summary of what change would look like for the family. You don't need to record how this will happen as this will be considered when the family plan is completed.
Please complete the supporting families criteria which will be shown below this section on Liquid Logic as detailed above on page 5.

Lead Practitioners Analysis

Lead professional summary
Use this section to show your analysis of the information gathered and your conversations with the family about this. Give a summary of the current situation and what needs to happen next. Give your views on any potential level of worry and what could happen if things don't change.
Think about the following when completing your analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider the 'so what' question – what does all the information gathered mean for the child, their wellbeing and safety and their day-to-day experiencesConsider what is the cause of the problemTriangulate your information – don't just rely upon one sourceConclude with a decision or recommendation – think what is happening in this child's life and what is needed to make the worries about their situation improve

Child or Young Persons comments on assessment
This is the child/young person's section to share how they feel about the assessment. Do they feel the assessment has captured the current situation, is there anything else they wish to add.

Parent/ carers comments on assessment

This is the parent/carers section to share how they feel about the assessment. Do they feel the assessment has captured the current situation, is there anything else they wish to add.

Plan

Use this section of the form to create a plan of action to address the needs identified in your assessment. The Plan will pull through to your team around the family meeting each time you hold a review, so it can be updated throughout the EHA process.

- Remember that plans should be SMART, Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time Based.
- Focus on solutions rather than the problem. Actions should reduce the worries identified in the EHA.
- Listen to the family and to what they want – the family and children's voice should influence the plans
- Plans should be multi-agency, don't take on all the actions and remember that the family should have actions too.

What are we going to do?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done by?	Are we on track, yes or no?	Date completed
Use this box to record a clear action as agreed with the family	Use this box to record who will own this action	Use this box to record a timescale for the action to be completed	Use this box to record if the action is on track	Use this box to record the date when the action has been complete

Agreed review date: Always arrange the date of your next meeting while in the current meeting.

Consent

Please complete the below consent information and ensure the family understands what they are consenting to. A family can withdraw their consent at any time during the EHA process. **Ensure the family is given a copy of their assessment once finalised.**

Here is the link to the Family Help Service and Supporting Families Programme privacy notice that should be shared with families.

<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/privacy-notice/family-help-service-including-supporting-families-programme>

Consent	
I understand the information that is recorded on this form and that it will be stored and used for the purpose of providing services to:	The parent/ carer/ young person will need to agree to these statements. Please explain them and then tick the relevant tick box on liquid logic.
I have had the reasons for information sharing and information storage explained to me and I understand those reasons.	
I agree to the sharing of information as agreed, between the services listed:	Please list all the services here that the family agree to the sharing of information with.

Decisions and Further Actions	
Suggested Outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan and Review (Team Around the Family) . Date of meeting: <input type="checkbox"/> Step up to Children’s Social Care (Ticking this box on Liquid Logic will NOT result in a step up being initiated. Please ensure that family help colleagues discuss with your team leader. Education and colleagues from across the partnership contact the MASSH) <input type="checkbox"/> Early Help Episode Closure (Please ensure all EHA’s are closed down when they come to an end, this will ensure Liquid Logic data gathered is accurate)
Reasons for these suggested Outcomes	
If the Early Help Assessment was not completed within timescale’s, please give the reason why	
Managers Comments	If you are a partner agency who authorises your own EHA please leave this blank
Authorisation Date	

Team Around The Family Meeting Outcomes (Plan and Review meeting)

Team around the Family Meetings should be held around every six weeks to review progress of the plan, at the beginning of the process you may feel they need to be more often to make sure the family have the support they need.

Depending on the age and wishes of the child/ young person invite them along- this is their plan! Some children may only want to attend for part of the meeting, some may prefer to write their feelings down, be creative and flexible to ensure the child’s voice is heard at the meeting.

Ensure the family are given a copy of their updated plan following each TAF meeting.

Early Help Closure Record

Supporting Families Needs and Outcomes.

Please use this section to answer the supporting families criteria questions, this is where we capture how all the support given has made a difference to the family and their needs have been met.

Need met – Please select if your work and plan has successfully addressed this need for the family. There are some issues that families face that will remain in their lives, for example if you selected 'Are the parents/carers experiencing good physical health' you may have a parent/carer who has a long term physical health condition or disability that was identified in the assessment that now has the correct support to minimise the impact of this condition and this would be a need met. For example, a diabetic who is now on medication and taking this regularly or someone with a mobility issue who now has adaptations to their home and the aids they need.

Partial meet – Please select this if you think progress has been made and all support is in place ready to achieve an outcome, for example, the parent or carer is now attending counselling to address their mental health or Housing are now supporting and actioning home repairs.

Need not met- Ideally we should not be closing an EHA where need is not met or partially met, but there may be some circumstances where this does happen, for example, if the family withdraws consent for the EHA or if the level of risk means the case has to step up to social care for statutory intervention.