

# Early Help Assessment Guidance for Professionals

## Introduction

The Early Help Assessment is a tool to assist any professional who is working with children, young people and families. It is NOT a referral form but give a framework to consider whilst working with a child/family. It has been endorsed by Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership as part of The Early Help Strategy for partners within the County.

It should be used where there are emerging welfare or well-being concerns.

## Early Help Assessment

- presenting or emerging needs are unclear or complex
- impact unknown or significant & likely to escalate
- unclear who or what may help/ further significant information required

Parental consent is essential. A signature or confirmation of consent from the parent/carer must be in place.

**When you are completing this strengths-based assessment please use the Signs of Safety approach. If you are not Signs of Safety trained, please contact [earlyhelppartnership@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:earlyhelppartnership@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)**

## Child and Family Details

### Section 1 - Detail of Child/Children/Young Person

<b>Date First Contact made</b>	Section 1 focuses on the general information about the child and family. All children living in the household should be named on the form, although you may not have concerns or provide support for all of them. It is important that families are supported to help themselves, so this section asks about significant people both within, and outside of, the household.
<b>Child/ren's/Young Person's Name/s</b>	
<b>Date of Birth</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Religion</b>	
<b>Disability</b>	
<b>Language or communication needs</b>	
<b>Names of Parent/Carers</b>	
<b>Parental Relationship</b>	Consider the parental relationship – could Worcestershire’s <a href="#">Harmony at Home</a> planning tool and resources be used?
<b>Other people within the household (Names and DOB)</b>	Consideration should also be given to the parental relationship, whether living together or parenting apart, and its impact on the child/ren.

<b>Other family members (e.g. children/parents) not living in family home</b>		<p>These questions are asked to determine what support network the family have, and who could ultimately support them when professionals are no longer involved. Other significant adults could be extended family member; close family friend; or a neighbour that is part of the family support network.</p>
<b>Other Significant Adults not in the household</b>	←	
<b>Additional Information</b>		
<b>Name and contact details of other professionals involved</b>		
<b>What does the child/young person want to happen?</b>	<p>Some questions you could ask might be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child/Young Person's view on services they have received to date – detail any positive impact made</li> <li>• Child's/Young Person's views wishes and feelings regarding their day to day lived experience. Describe the Child's/Young Person's perceptions of their day-to-day life at home and at school. Include extended family and friends they have contact with, leisure / social time including physical activity</li> <li>• Child(ren)s/Young Person's views and feelings about any concerns they may have and what might help them in their life</li> </ul>	<p>The child or young person should always be asked what they want to happen – the child/children's voice(s) should be a central part of the assessment and should influence actions moving forward. If a child is very young or non-verbal, observations of the child's lived experience should be made. It may be relevant to talk to other professionals about what they see/hear/understand about the child's wishes or feelings.</p>

**Thinking about the situation and the child/ren that you are worried about**

- Early Help Assessment **Section 2**

The plan must be written in such a way that it can be owned and understood by the child and family. The family should be directly involved in clarifying what the concerns are, and what the family need to do. This might involve actions with you, or if necessary, using the support of other agencies, to make the situation better.

The questions in the table/s, using the columns from left to right, should assist both you and the family to identify the issues, concerns and necessary actions.

The identification of a lead professional may be necessary if there is a need for someone to co-ordinate the provision of support for the child. This person acts as the single point of contact when other services are involved with that child or family and a joined-up response is required. The choice of lead professional should be informed by the wishes and feelings of the child or young person about who they feel is most appropriate for them.

What are you worried about?	What is working well?	What needs to happen?
<p><i>For example:</i> At this moment in time – what are you most worried about. (*) – are there any specific examples.</p> <p>How worried is the child/young person?</p> <p>How worried is the parent/carer?</p>	<p><i>For example:</i> What works well now to support the child/young person/family when things are going wrong or they are worried?</p> <p>What has been offered to the family before?</p> <p>What support network does the family have?</p>	<p><i>For example:</i> What would make things better for the child/young person/children/family?</p> <p>What does the family want to achieve?</p> <p>Are they willing to accept help (consent)?</p> <p>Would an Early Help Family Plan be helpful to the family?</p>
	<p>As you work through this section with the family, you should ask yourself the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What am I and/or my agency going to do, or have done, to support this child/young person/family?</li> <li>• Do I need to talk to or work with anyone else? If there need to be more people involved, then who should take the <b>professional lead</b> for the family? You need to include other Early Help agencies involved with the family (<i>For example: a school contacting a school health nurse or bereavement counselling, a nursery contacting a health visitor, a health visitor talking to the peri-natal team</i>)</li> <li>• Does the family agree with me about the need for additional support and will they accept the services identified?</li> <li>• Are there any safeguarding concerns? Do I need to discuss the family with my manager or our Designated Safeguarding Lead or escalate my concerns to the Family Front Door? Please refer to Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership’s Levels of Need Guidance <a href="#">Early Help guidance for professionals  </a></li> </ul>	

If the parent/carer(s) are unwilling to give consent, this should be recorded on the form. You can still use the form to record your professional viewpoint and concerns but without consent you will be unable to move a plan forward at this time.

### The Family Plan

- Early Help Assessment **Section 3**

Not all Assessments will lead to a plan. Where a Family Plan is required, this section can be completed by a single agency or by a group of professionals where a team around the family meeting has been convened.

### 3 Early Help Family Plan

Date the Support Started	
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If a Lead Professional is required to co-ordinate multi-agency involvement, they should hold responsibility for ensuring that the plan is reviewed with the family and partners.

3a) Creating the initial Plan	What needs to happen?	
What actions are required as identified by the family?	Who will do this?	By When
<i>Please list the individual actions here</i> <i>Keep targets SMART</i> <i>(Small, measurable, achievable, realistic targets)</i>	<i>This can include the child/young person and parent/carers and other family or friends, as well as professionals</i>	<i>Set dates for each action.</i>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
Set a date for Review of Plan		

Once **Sections 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 4 and 5** (Early Help Assessment) are completed, please submit via <https://ehmportal.worcschildrenfirst.org.uk/web/portal/pages/thirdpartyassessment#ssa>

Retain a copy for your own records.

- When the intervention with the family ends: complete the Early Help Closing Summary form available via <https://ehmportal.worcschildrenfirst.org.uk/web/portal/pages/thirdpartyassessment#ssa>
- Ensure the Early Help Family Plan Review/s are updated

Retain copies for your own records.