

Early Help Assessment for Partners – June 2024

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Does this replace referrals for Safeguarding concerns?

No, it does NOT replace referrals for safeguarding concerns therefore it is important that you follow safeguarding procedures as soon as a safeguarding concern is identified.

2. When is Go-Live?

The original Early Help Assessment went live in May 2022, the revised, more streamlined Early Help Assessment and Child and Family Plan will go live in July 2024.

3. Do the Early Help Assessment developments include Darlington?

No, the Early Help Assessment is for professionals working with Durham's children, young people and families only.

4. What will the phone number be for Early Help Triage if I am unable to use the online Early Help Assessment to make a request for (additional) early help?

The preference is for all practitioners to use the online Early Help Assessment where possible, however if you are unable to then please telephone the usual Early Help Triage Team number on 03000 267 979 (Option 4).

5. Will Locality Early Help Conversations still be available?

Yes, there is no change to Locality Early Help Conversations, and these will remain fortnightly in each of the One Point team area. Locality Early Help Conversation bring together a number of partners to share appropriate and relevant information about a family, agree what support or intervention can be offered and collaboratively agree the best course of action to best meet the family's needs.

6. To access Early Help - does a Team Around the Family (TAF) need to be in place first?

Ideally, we would ask professionals to complete an Early Help Assessment (with the family's consent) and convene a Team Around the Family first. Early Help Advisors can support you with this. However, if you feel that the family's needs are complex and require intensive family support then please don't delay and contact the Early Help Triage Team (either by completing the online Early Help Assessment or telephone - the same information will still be required) to discuss an Early Help Assessment that you would want the Early Help Triage Team to review/triage. If, from the information you provide it does not require intensive family support then the Early Help Triage Worker may ask you to convene a Team Around the Family or invite you to a Locality Early Help Conversation.

7. Do you have to wait 12 weeks before making a request for Early Help Triage to review your Early Help Assessment and Child and Family Plan?

No, you can make a request for this at any time (with the family's consent) if you feel the early help needs of the family are complex and require intensive family support. The guidance is that if you have already completed an Early Help Assessment with a Child and Family Plan and/or Review WITHIN the last 12 weeks you DO NOT need to complete another Early Help Assessment to Early Help Triage to review this, simply email the Early Help Triage Worker at (external email link follows) earlyhelp@durham.gov.uk stating 'Request for Early Help Triage' in the subject title and provide the name(s), DOB, address of the child/ren and your contact telephone number. The Early Help Triage Team now have up to 5 working days to gather information to help inform an outcome which they will then discuss with you within 5 working days of receiving your request for Triage review.

8. Are we able to create an account in LiquidLogic for the Childrens Service Portal before the launch of the new Early Help Assessment?

Yes, there are instructions on the DSCP website on how to create an account for the Childrens Service Portal on Liquid Logic. You will only need to do this once using an individual professional account. If you already have an account created then you will continue to use this and will not require a new one.

9. How will educational professionals create an account on LiquidLogic?

See response to Q.8

10. Is it one account per school or per person?

Per person, an individual professional account.

11. Can the VCS access the Childrens Services Portal on LiquidLogic?

Yes, all partners, including VCS can create an account using an individual professional email address. This will allow you to submit Early Help Assessments, Child and Family Plans/Reviews and make requests for Early Help Assessments to be reviewed by the Early Help Triage Team. Only the Early Help Triage Team will have sight of all of the Liquid Logic information held on a child however partners can telephone Early Help Triage Workers on 03000 267 979 (Option 4) to find out if there is an 'active' Early Help Assessment.

12. Can health professionals usually use Liquid Logic?

Until now Health Professionals and other partners have not been able to use Liquid Logic.

13. Can everyone get a Liquid Logic account?

See Q.8 response.

14. Where will we get the documentation for the Team Around the Family (TAF)?

The TAF documentation consists only of the Child and Family Plan Template which you can link to via the online Early Help Assessment through the Childrens Serviced Portal or it can also be found on the [DSCP website](#).

15. What is the Durham Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (DSCP) website link?

All Early Help Assessment supporting materials for professionals can be found on the DSCP website within the 'practitioners' tab under 'Early Help' and the 'Early Help Assessment and Child and Family Plan', see following external weblink: <https://durham-scp.org.uk/practitioners/early-help/early-help-assessment-and-child-and-family-plan/>

16. How much more will it add to workloads?

We know partners already support families with early help and will document in their own way. For consistency across the Early Help System, we are asking all partners to use the same documentation for an Early Help Assessment (EHA) requiring a Team Around the Family (TAF) and Child and Family Plan and submit it therefore it should not take more time for you. To be most efficient with time it is recommended you have all the necessary information at hand which can be found in the checklist before you start completion of the EHA. If, however you do not have time to complete it in one go, you can save it and come back to it. It is difficult to put a time on how long it will take as the EHA will be proportionate to the family needs. It is estimated that completion of the revised Early Help Assessment and Child and Family Plan will take half of the amount of time.

17. What if you do not have direct contact with children in your role?

If you are able to have a conversation with a family and get their consent for an EHA, find out what their worries are and what is working well then you can complete an EHA with them. If you don't have any contact with a family then we would recommend, depending on the worries, to speak to the child/ren's school, Family Health Nurse or contact an Early Help Advisor on the following external link EarlyHelpAdvisorSupport@durham.gov.uk who can advise on the individual family's circumstances.

18. How do you get voice of the child (VOC) if you don't work directly with children?

If the child/ren's school are involved then you could ask the school if they are able to obtain the VOC or speak to an Early Help Advisor by emailing EarlyHelpAdvisorSupport@durham.gov.uk who will be able to advise on how to obtain the VOC.

19. What if a parent is asking for support but the child is refusing?

It is still important to support the parent/carers so we would advise you still complete an EHA and part of the Child and Family Plan can include how best to engage the child or young person.

20. How do you identify who is best to be the Lead Worker?

The family should decide who they want to be their Lead Worker as it should be someone they feel most comfortable with to be their single point of contact.

However, in the first instance it would be the professional who identifies the worries who would start the EHA process and be the Lead Worker and any change in Lead Worker can be discussed and agreed at the Team Around the Family (TAF).

21. Who will lead a TAF when your role doesn't have any contact with the child?

You can still be the Lead Worker if that is what the family requests and other members of the TAF, within their roles can work directly with the children whilst you support the parent/carers.

22. TAF processes, do school staff have to be Lead Worker on the TAF?

Not all of the time, the family should choose who they want to be their Lead Worker (see response to Q.20) but if the school identifies the worry we would ask school to start the

EHA process and be Lead Worker initially to start the development of the Child and Family Plan. Remember the Early Help Advisor Team can support you with this. If you don't know who your named Early Help Advisor is simply email at the following external link EarlyHelpAdvisorSupport@durham.gov.uk

23. What are other agencies you could link in with?

There are so many services that could support a family depending on their needs including the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). You can ask what support the VCS can offer through the VCS portal at the following external link [https://doitonline.durham.gov.uk/service/VCS Alliance](https://doitonline.durham.gov.uk/service/VCS_Alliance)

An Early Help Advisor could also help you in identifying who best to invite to a Team Around the Family (TAF) depending on the family's needs see the following external link EarlyHelpAdvisorSupport@durham.gov.uk.

24. My team have brief/short-term contact with families, would it be suitable to submit an EHA?

Yes, if you have identified the early help need or the family have approached you asking for help, we would ask you to start the EHA and development of the Child and Family Plan. During the Team Around the Family (TAF) reviews you, with the family, their network and professionals will agree who will be Lead Worker once your support comes to and end so that the TAF and outstanding support can continue without delay.

25. Our clients are the Parent/Carers and not the child so we are not the best person who knows the child, what should we do?

See response to Q.21.

26. Can more than 1 worry for a family be recorded/submitted?

Yes, however, to avoid overwhelming the family we would advise that, from the assessment identifying the family's needs, you have no more than 3-4 worries that you agree to work together with the family to address. As those needs are met, the family/TAF members would agree what next to focus on in the Child and Family Plan. All worries must have a clear outcome (wellbeing goal) identified – what would life look like if the worry was managed? These with any accompanying scaling question is a way to measure progress and form the basis of next steps.

27. Does it always have to be the Lead Worker who completes an Early Help Assessment or makes a request for an Early Help Assessment to be triaged by the Early Help Triage Team or can a Support Worker complete it?

It should be the person who knows the family best who completes the EHA and Child and Family Plan regardless of their role and they would be the Lead Worker, however if they did not want to 'chair' the Team Around the Family (TAF) you could ask another TAF member to. Again, it would be the person who best knows the family making a request for Triage as they will know the necessary information to avoid delay.

28. How would we know of previous service involvement?

Telephone the Early Help Triage Team on 03000 267 979 (Option 4) to ask if there is an 'active' EHA, if there is you will be provided with the Lead Worker's contact details and asked to contact them and become part of the Team Around the Family (TAF) arrangements. If there is not an 'active' EHA in place and the needs of the family do not require intensive family support, you will be asked by the Early Help Triage Team to start the EHA process.

29. Do Midwives continue to do as they do now for requests for Early Help?

Midwives will follow the same process as all partners. Midwives, like other partners who identify early help needs that their own service resource cannot meet and require other service involvement, should convene a Team Around the Family (TAF) following completion of the Early Help Assessment. Remember the Early Help Advisor Team can support you with this. If you don't know who your named Early Help Advisor is simply email at the following external link EarlyHelpAdvisorSupport@durham.gov.uk

The process for Midwives and Health Visitors identifying appropriate families for the Enhanced Parent Support Pathway is unchanged and remains separate to the new Early Help Assessment developments.

30. Is it the same process for referring families on to the Enhanced Parent Support Pathway (formerly Vulnerable Parent Pathway)?

See response to Q.29.

31. How does this fit with the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process?

The EHCP process is unchanged and separate to these Early Help Developments however best practice would be to try the EHA first before the EHCP process. If there are both EHA & EHCP processes running in parallel then it would be best to combine EHCP reviews with Team Around the Family (TAF) arrangements and reference the EHCP in the Child and Family Plan as more often than not the same professionals will be involved in supporting both processes. By doing this it avoids duplication, is more efficient use of time, is a more joined up/coordinated way of working and therefore a better and less confusing experience for the family.

32. Do housing providers need to complete Early Help Assessments, including Social Housing?

Yes, the Early Help Assessment developments are for all partners to use.

33. How does this fit with adult mental health?

If the adult is a parent/carer and their mental health is impacting on their child/ren then we would ask the Adult Mental Health Worker to initially complete the Early Help Assessment and start to develop the Child and Family Plan, identifying other partners to support the child/ren. If you are unsure how to do this or who to invite to the Team Around the Family (TAF), your Early Help Advisor can help, contact (see following external link) EarlyHelpAdvisorSupport@durham.gov.uk.

34. Are EHA just for cases involving children, or can they be for adults only?

The new Early Help Assessment developments are just for Durham families where there are children 0-19 years of age or up to 25 years for those children and young people who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).

35. When will the final Quality Improvement Framework be published?

The 'What Good Looks Like?' which has been developed by partners is available with the EHA supporting materials on the DSCP website. The further Quality Improvement Framework is currently being reviewed and once finalised will be added to the supporting materials.