

Early Help Assessment

Frequently Asked Questions

Q Should a EHA be completed if it is believed a child is suffering or at risk of harm?

No, if a child is at risk of harm then the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures should be followed immediately.

Q If there is a current initial or core assessment do I need to do a EHA?

Initial and core assessments are specialist assessments carried out by social workers. If either is in place then there is no need to complete an Early Help Assessment. However you will need to request a URN number, obtain a copy of the assessment and follow the EHA process.

Q Is there a central database or team that will store the completed EHA's?

The **original** EHA should be held by the agency that completed the assessment and a **signed** Copy sent to the early help team. Earlyhelp@barnsley.gcsx.gov.uk. The agency may also send a copy of the EHA with consent, to other involved agencies as required.

Q Which children and young people is the EHA for?

Most children will not need an EHA. An EHA should be undertaken when a practitioner feels that a child or young person may need additional support (beyond that available from a single agency)

Q What happens if consent is withdrawn after it has been given?

In these circumstances you will need to speak to the practitioners involved and notify them that consent has been withdrawn. This would need to be recorded clearly on each agencies file record in respect of the child; young person and family. You will need to send notification to the early help inbox who can record the withdrawal/cancellation of consent from the database via a closure form.

Q How do we manage the processes, administration etc. for EHA's within agencies?

Each agency is expected to develop its own administration systems/processes in relation to EHA. Alongside this it is expected each agency follows the Early Help process by requesting a Unique Identification Number (UIN); a copy of the signed EHA and closing paperwork along with a closure reporting form to the Early help inbox so that the information can be recorded on the system.

If you have any concerns or questions about your agencies processes you should speak to your manager, EHA lead or email the Early help inbox, earlyhelp@barnsley.gcsx.gov.uk

Q Who gets a copy of the EHA form?

The agency completing the form should keep the original signed copy, the young person and parents/carers should get a copy of the form unless doing so would put the child/young person at risk. Other agencies may get copies of the form if the family/young person has agreed this. A copy of the signed Early Help Assessment should be sent to the Early Help inbox earlyhelp@barnsley.gcsx.gov.uk

Q How are we (practitioners) to manage the risk around when consent is refused especially when there are not established child protection relationships?

If you are concerned about a child's welfare you must follow your agencies child protection processes, this is to manage risk. The DFE is clear that the EHA is a consensual process. Where there are not significant child welfare issues all that may be possible is to get agreement with the family to some or part of the process and this may be all that can be achieved at this stage.

If an EHA has been refused this must be logged within your agency so that a record can be kept or any involvement.

If you have requested an UIN number for an EHA and the EHA has been partly started but consent has been withdrawn this must be followed via completing the closure reporting form to the Early Help inbox, earlyhelp@barnsley.gcsx.gov.uk

Q What do I do if English isn't the family's first language?

Translators should be used when completing an EHA with a family. You should follow your own agency's procedure; however the Big Word website is a useful resource. www.bigword.com If a parent or young person has literacy difficulties you must also ensure they are able to understand the information being recorded.

Q How long will an EHA take to complete?

This will depend on how much you already know about the family and how complex the child/young person's needs are. Following your conversation with the child, young person and their family the EHA may only take a short while to complete, but the EHA process may involve a longer relationship with the family. However the EHA monitoring process requires you to send a signed scanned copy of the EHA assessment within 3 weeks from the date of starting the assessment.

Q As a practitioner who has completed an EHA and identified required support from another agency- how do I know that a child/family is progressing?

Every EHA will have a lead practitioner assigned (this will be agreed within the TAF meeting) who will maintain contact with the family to establish how they feel they are progressing. The lead practitioner acts as a single point of contact with the family and for practitioners. The EHA is a process and **not** a referral form therefore you maybe required to maintain some involvement with the family by attending regular Team Around the Family meetings. The Team Around the Family meetings are opportunity to share information and provide updates regarding work completed and progress made, therefore attendance at meetings is paramount and if you or your agency can not attend to send a report of your involvement so that this can be shared in the meeting to progress the needs of the family.

Q Is the EHA another way of recording your concerns/intervention?

Yes, but it also allows you as practitioner to broach questions with a family in a non threatening format- a EHA is a joint assessment between family and practitioner, it is not done to them but with them for mutual benefit. It is a way of recording those strengths and needs of a child as well as developing a plan to meet those needs. This can also be used as a support tool when referring to other agencies.

Q Will teachers/schools be accessing the training?

Yes indeed many educationalists (from early years, primary and secondary), all schools and care settings will be engaged within the training along with many other professionals for multi disciplinary teams i.e. social care; health. The training 'Helping you with Early Help' is regarding working in a whole family way; engaging families and sustaining involvement; working in an open and transparent way to gain the trust and respect of families and partners. Alongside how to work in a solution focused way/ building on the strengths of families to build resilience and understanding and respecting other practitioners perspectives, services and roles.

Q What happens to join up sibling information?

The EHA is completed on one family and has the opportunity to record and identify the needs of all children within the family. Where different agencies are involved a Team Around the Family meeting should be held to share information and ensure a smooth package of support is provided.

Q What happens if the child/young person does not want the parent to sign?

In most cases it would be good practice to encourage the child/young person to involve their parent/carer. The practitioner would need to satisfy themselves regarding the competency of the child/young person if the parents/carers are not involved. If you do not have parental consent you must record why in the additional information box in the consent section of the form. Practitioners need to refer to the HM Government Guidance- Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioner's

Q Will the forms be available online?

Yes the forms are available on the website and can be located either through the Early Help toolkit at www.barnsley.gov/integratedworkingtoolkit or through the Barnsley Family Information Service <https://www2.barnsley.gov.uk/services/childrens-health-wellbeing-and-social-care/information-for-practitioners/integrated-working-in-childrens-services/toolkit/forms-letters-and-leaflets>

Q How does an EHA get updated if more than one agency is involved?

When an EHA is completed a date for a Team Around the Family meeting should be set and the lead practitioner should co-ordinate this. A Team Around the Family meeting should be where agencies involved with the family come together to share information and provide an update of their involvement alongside identifying any pieces of work to meet the families needs.

Q Do minutes of meetings have to be recorded?

Individual agencies should take their own notes for their records. The lead professional should complete a copy of the Team Around the Family Action Plan and ensure this is updated and shared across all agencies where consent has been given.

Q If all work has been completed and the EHA is no longer required what do I do?

Following agreement with the TAF and with consent from the family, the Lead professional sends a copy of the final action plan and closure summary along with an email to the Early help inbox Earlyhelp@barnsley.gcsx.gov.uk

