



## The Early Help Assessment (EHA)

The EHA is a simple way to help identify what we are worried about and what is working well for children, young people and families. Professionals work together with the families to identify what needs to happen and this is reviewed every 6 weeks.

## Early Help Assessments in Cambridgeshire

The Early Help Assessment is used for all Early Help requests where a multi-agency approach is required. It leads to:

- District Early Help services
- Support for an existing lead professional. The Early Help Hub will suggest an initial Family Support Plan and they or the District Team will review the closing plan - See our [Think family](#) page for more information.
- signposting to a better-placed service or intervention outside of the Council through the [Cambridgeshire Online Directory](#)

## What is Early Help?

Sometimes families need a bit of extra support. You might be worried about your child's behaviour or development. Or you and your family might experience some changes or difficulties that you can't manage by yourself. Whatever you are worried about, Early Help can support you and your family so that small problems do not become big problems.

- Early Help gives children and families the support they need, at the right time. We listen to your needs and bring together professionals who work with your whole family. This helps make things better for everyone.
- The professionals who know you will assess the needs of your family using an Early Help Assessment. This will help you to get you support as quickly as possible.
- It is a voluntary process. You choose whether to be involved and can withdraw from the process at any time. Sometimes, children and young people can

make their own decisions about whether they need an Early Help Assessment, and who they want to support them.

## Getting help

If you think you and your family might benefit from some support, you should ask a professional who you know. This could be your doctor, or a teacher at your child's school. They can tell you more about Early Help.

You can also contact the Early Help Hub: [early.help@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:early.help@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) or call: [01480 376 666](tel:01480376666) (office hours). If you don't know who to ask for help.

Sometimes a professional may approach you, and ask whether you would like to talk about Early Help and how it could help your family.

## Taking part in an assessment

If you decide to take up Early Help, a professional will talk with you to understand your needs. They will listen to any challenges that you or your family are experiencing and summarise the discussion in an Early Help Assessment. This will consider the needs of your whole family and help everyone understand your family's situation.

The Early Help Assessment will include the things you want to change and things that may be of concern to others as well. The assessment is to explore all of these things, not to place blame. It is important you share as much information as you can because this will help get you the right support. However it is up to you how much you say.

## Consent and recording your information

To work with you we need to talk to services which can help you. We also have to record our work with you. It is important you know how we record and use your information. Please see the [privacy notice](#) for more information.

The Early Help Assessment is entirely voluntary. The professional who gathers the information for the assessment will ask you to confirm that you are consenting to the assessment and have been told about how we keep and use your information. This

allows the information in the assessment to be shared with the services that can help you.

## Services working together

The EHA will be sent to the Early Help Hub. This is a team which will decide which service/s will be best to support your needs. The Early Help Hub will look at the assessment and possibly talk to other professionals who know your family.

If there are several professionals who will support your family, we will use the '[Think Family](#)' approach. This means they will work closely together. One person will become your 'lead professional', and they will co-ordinate the work of the other services. Your lead professional will be your contact for Early Help. They could be from a range of different agencies, for example someone from your child's school, a family worker or health visitor. You may want to suggest a lead professional for your family.

## Family plan

The lead professional may work with one or more services to meet the needs identified in the EHA. They will create a single 'family plan'. The family plan will include:

- the things that you want to see change
- the support that will be provided for you and different members of your family
- goals or measures so that everyone involved knows what to look out for to see when things are getting better

## Checking how it is going

The group of professionals involved with you are known as the 'Team Around the Family'. The Team Around the Family should meet, with you, at least once every three months. This allows them to make sure you are moving towards your goals. They can also make changes to the support you are receiving, when necessary.

# Achieving the goals

When your goals have been achieved, we will hold one last Team Around the Family meeting to celebrate success.