



Merton
Safeguarding
Children Partnership

Early Help Assessment and Team Around the Family

A Guide for Parent / Carers

Every family has its ups and downs and sometimes you or your child/ren may need extra support. The services that work with you and your child/ren will want to find solutions for you all as soon as possible and we believe every family should receive the right support, at the right time, from the right place. We want to help you find solutions to small problems before they turn into big ones, and we do this by completing an Early Help Assessment.



Early Help Assessment (EHA)



If you or your child/ren need extra support, someone working with you or your family, for example, a health worker or a teacher might suggest an Early Help Assessment is completed to support your family. They will lead the process and be your Lead Practitioner.

The Early Help Assessment is a simple, easy to use form. This helps you and your Lead Practitioner think about what is working well for you and your family, if there is anything you are worried or concerned about and what extra support you think might help. Together with support from other practitioners/services working with your family, you will think about the next steps and create an action plan. We call this a family plan.



The types of things an Early Help Assessment can support you with:

- if you're struggling to get your children to school on time
- helping you with your children's behaviour and development – things like setting boundaries and routines
- if you're feeling you just can't cope and it's all getting too much – so feeling overwhelmed
- if any of your family are drinking a lot of alcohol or using drugs
- if you are in a relationship that is making you unhappy or scared
- if your family are struggling to communicate - maybe there are lots of arguments
- Not having a job and struggling to provide for your family
- if any of your family are involved in crime or anti-social behaviour – and maybe you're at risk of losing your home

We want to make sure all young people in Merton have a great future where:

- Children are happy and have good opportunities to develop skills
- Children are safe at home and in the communities where they live
- Children are enabled to live healthy and fulfilling lives
- Children receive a good education, suited to their needs, which supports them in staying safe and achieving their potential

What is a Lead Practitioner?

A Lead Practitioner is someone who works with you and your family and acts as a first point of contact. You can speak to them at any time about any concerns or issues that you or your family are experiencing. They will also make sure that everyone working with you and your family is doing what they say to support you.



Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting



After completing an Early Help Assessment, it may be suggested that you, your family and everyone working with your family attends a meeting to make sure you get the best support. This is called a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting. You can also invite extended family members and close friends to this meeting if you feel they could support the family plan.

A Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting helps put the right support in place and supports you and your family to move forward. You and members of your TAF will meet on a regular basis, usually every 6-8 weeks, to see how the family plan is working, if anything needs to change or if you need some extra help. You and your family's views at these meetings are really important. This is your time to share your concerns and your successes.



When you and your family, the Lead Practitioner and everyone working with your family, agree that extra support is no longer needed. The TAF will close, and meetings will no longer be needed. You and your family will then be able to continue to access support from services within your local community.

Who will have my family's information?

The information you and your family provide will only be shared with the people who need to know about it, and only with your permission. You and your family will be central to the Early Help Assessment and drawing up your family plan, and we won't make any decisions without your involvement.



The only time we will share information without your permission is:

- To help a child who is at risk of harm
- If we need to help an adult who is at risk of harm
- If we need to help prevent or detect a serious crime

How do I access support?



You can speak to any professional currently working with you or your family, for example, a health worker or a teacher, if you feel you need extra support.

You can also access information, advice, and guidance from our Family Information and Support Hubs (FISH).

Family Information and Support Hubs (FISH) give you the chance to speak to an Early Help Support Coordinator about any issues that may be affecting your child/ren or family. The Early Help Support Coordinator will offer support and guidance, helping you access relevant information and services to help you.



Sessions take place Monday – Friday, with a mixture of face-to-face and telephone appointments available.

Appointments can be booked via Eventbrite:

[Book a Family Information & Support Hub session](#)

