

Universal Early Help Family Assessment

Guiding Principles

September 2021 (to be reviewed no later than September 2022)

Early Help Family Assessments seek to empower families to tell their story about their current circumstances (including the referral presenting issue). We do not expect to know their full story within 6 weeks, only what the family are ready to share during that time.

The EHFA is one of the tools that we use to fulfil our purpose of giving practical and emotional help, with love and care, so that families can feel stronger. The assessment also helps us to build relationships that create the conditions for change, work in strength-based relationships with families and for families to leave us stronger than when they found us.

The assessment period starts as soon as the family is allocated to the Family Worker.

Section 1. General information

- General information about the child and family that are being assessed is pulled through from the person summary

A practice excellence Early Help Family Assessment should explore :

Subject children / young people

[Recorded in section 1. Family membership](#)

- List all the unborn / children / young people in the family with full details of their DOB, gender, address and ethnicity
- List date that each child / young person was seen
- If any children were not seen during the course of the assessment, give an explanation

Parent (s) / household members and other significant adults

[Recorded in section 1. Family membership](#)

- List all the parent (s) / household members and other significant members family with full details of their DOB, gender, address, ethnicity and relationship to the children

Does the child / young person have SEND?

[Recorded in section 1. Family membership](#)

- Tick relevant box
- If 'yes', tick any additional needs that the child / ren may have

Involved professionals

[Recorded in section 1. Family membership](#)

- List all involved professionals and details of their involvement

Is the child / young person privately fostered?

[Recorded in section 1. Family membership](#)

- Tick relevant box

Early Help service completing the assessment

[Recorded in section 2. Information on the assessment](#)

- Tick relevant box

What has led to the family being assessed?

[Recorded in section 2. Information on the assessment](#)

- Think about the reason that the family was referred for support from an Early Help service
- Detail the presenting issues
- Include details of the child's needs in a way that is understandable to the family

Significant events leading up to assessment

[Recorded in section 2. Information on the assessment](#)

- What important things have happened to the family to date?
- List all significant events, in chronological order and consider how these events may be affecting the family's current situation
- Include events listed in the CSF contact and EHRD

What work has been done to date?

[Recorded in section 2. Information on the assessment](#)

- Include details of contact with the family and any work carried out with them to date

Plan for assessment

[Recorded in section 3. Agreed timescales and planning assessment](#)

- The Family Worker and the Team Manager / supervisor should meet to discuss planning, purpose of the assessment, any risks or considerations and timescales at the point of allocation and record :
 - 'Have the first language, ethnicity, fluency in English, religion, GP, school and the current address of the children and family been recorded on the Person Summary front page?
 - What is the purpose of the assessment? The family chronology and impact on the current situation
 - What work will be carried out e.g. who will be seen / spoken to (family / professionals etc), what reports / records will be read?

- The family composition, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, social background and identity of the family and whether it may impact on the work with the family, the assessment and service delivery
- What are the issues in terms of race, culture, disability, religion, sexual orientation or class? Does anyone in the family have any special needs that may affect their ability to take part in the assessment, i.e language or communication difficulties, and how will these be addressed?
- The date boxes should also be completed at the point of allocation by the Team Manager / supervisor – target completion date should be maximum 28 working days after allocation. The midway review date should be 15 working days after allocation
- All children in the family should be seen within 10 days of the assessment being initiated
- The plan should be a list of bullet points that set out an understanding of the referral reason, purpose of the assessment, who will be seen and / or contacted for information
- Both dates should be copied to the Family Worker and the Team Manager's Outlook calendar as a joint calendar invite

Voice of the Child / ren (VOC) / Voice of the unborn

Recorded in section 4. Child and family background and social history (Child / young person's / unborn child's situation and story)

- Introduce yourself to the child / ren within 10 days
- Find out about the child / ren's character and personality from the child and mother / father / male carer's perspective (VOC)
- Explore the child / ren's wishes, feelings and behaviour from the child / ren and mother / father / male carer's perspective (VOC)
- Consider cultural identity of the child / ren
- Explore Social GRRRAACCEESSS and analysis of any impact on unborn / child and their needs
- Explore friends, relationships, and being close
- Health and development (network checks, explore with the family)*
- Consider what all of the above tells us about the child / ren in the family

***IEYS – be explicit about child development (developmental milestones), ACEs and healthy child programme**

Children 0 - 5 years

Consider the needs of the unborn child

- Explore parents preparation to parenthood, was the pregnancy planned?
- Begin to understand the quality of the parent relationship – is it loving, secure reliable?
- Consider parental resilience and capacity for safe stable nurturing relationships
- Explore any unresolved, persistent conflict between parents

- Explore possible parental ACEs and impact on parenting
- Consider the home as a positive learning environment from pregnancy
- Understand possible risk factors e.g. domestic violence in the home, dogs within the household, substance abuse in the family, mental health issues in the family and parental experience of maltreatment when they were themselves a child
- Explore and observe the parent / child attachment and parenting capacity
- Consider attunement between parents and infants (i.e. parents being sensitive to infant cues and setting up a good 'serve and return' interactions, in which the baby is leading)
- Consider parental mental health problems which have the potential to interfere with a mother's and father's ability to respond sensitively to their child's needs
- Examine the parent / carer commitment to ante-natal and post-natal care, attendance and appointments
- Consider whether the parent / carer is coping well emotionally following the birth of their baby and accessing universal support services where required
- Explore Social GRRRAACCEEESSS and analysis of impact on unborn and their needs

Consider the needs of children 0 – 5 years

- Explore immunisations / developmental checks completed and any identified needs requiring support
- Explore and observe the quality of the parent-child relationship and attachment
- Explore early communication, language development and personal, social and emotional development
- Consider whether parents have a clear understanding of developmental milestones and whether these are being met.
- Explore the parent / carer understanding and appropriate responsiveness to the health demands of their child, including oral health, appropriate A&E attendance
- Explore parent's preparation in seeking a nursery provision and taking up free entitlement
- Explore Social GRRRAACCEEESSS and analysis of impact on child and their needs

Parenting

Recorded in section 4. Child and family background and social history (Parent's and other adults circumstances and family relationships)

- Understand how the mother / father / carer feels about being a parent and their experience of being parented
- Explore mother / father / carer's history and family functioning and their capacity to parent
- Consider mother / father / carer's ethnic and cultural identity / context and how this influences their parenting or the family dynamic
- Explore what "being close, caring for your child" means for this family
- What day-to-day routine and boundaries look like
- How the family has fun
- How the family supports the child / ren learning and development
- Looking after your child (basic care needs)
- Understand the parent they would like to be

- Explore Social GRRRAAACCEEESSS and include analysis of any impact on parents and their needs

Parents and siblings

Recorded in section 4. Child and family background and social history (Parent's and other adults circumstances and family relationships AND child and family background and social history)

- Start to understand the family make up and history
- How do the family get on together?
- Find out about the sibling's character and personality from the child (VOC) and mother / father / carer's perspective (VOC)
- Mother / father / carer's health and emotional and social well-being (network checks, conversations with mother / father / male carers)
- Explore the mother / father / carer's ethnic and cultural background and if / how it contributes to their identity
- Speak to the children's father and incorporate their views into the assessment
- Getting on together as parents

Family and Friends

Recorded in section 4. Child and family background and social history (Child / young person's / unborn child's situation and story AND Parents and other adults circumstances and family relationships)

- Explore how extended family and friends support the family, how is this influenced by culture?
- Life events and changes
- Begin to understand the families work and social life and links to their community and networks
- Past family experiences, coping and well-being

School and Early Years

Recorded in section 4. Child and family background and social history (Child / young person's / unborn child's situation and story AND Parent's and other adults circumstances and family relationships)

- Explore child / ren's experience of early years setting / school with child / mother / father / carer (VOC)
- Explore mother / father / carer's and child / ren attitude to learning
- Complete network checks with setting / school (attendance, punctuality and academic attainment / development)
- Relationship with Early Years practitioners / teachers and staff from child and mother / father / carer's perspective
- How does the school / nursery / early years setting / childminder contribute to the child's cultural identity?

Where there is a young carer in the family, describe their responsibilities in the household

Recorded in section 4. Child and family background and social history

- If this does not apply, write N/A

Community and wider circumstances

Recorded in section 4. Child and family background and social history (Other important information)

- Explore relationship with neighbours and community
- Explore the family's sense of belonging within their community
- Do the family feel safe and secure in their community
- What help and support does the family access in the community
- Detail information about the family housing, financial, income, employment and immigration status
- If applicable, describe how these may impact on the family situation

Previous professional involvement including what changed / happened

Recorded in section 4. Child and family background and social history

- Record details of agencies involved, reason for involvement and outcome (including dates)
- Ask the family if they have ever received support for the current presenting issues from anyone else?
- What worked and why?

How many visits were undertaken to inform the assessment?

Recorded in section 5. Assessment of the current situation

- Include the number of home visits and face to face contacts

Information and documents collated to inform the assessment

Recorded in section 5. Assessment of the current situation

- List of sources of information (Police Merlins, case notes, discussions with professionals, meetings with the family etc)

Father / male carer's views

Recorded in section 5. Assessment of the current situation

- Have the father / male carer's views been included as part of this assessment? This should be included for all families where appropriate
- Include rationale / explanation regarding father's / male carer's views / involvement in the assessment
- Explore Social GRRRAACCEESSS and include analysis of impact on father / male carer and his needs

In order to complete section 5 of the current EHFA : Assessment of the current situation, consider :

1. What strengths / positive attributes have you seen within the family? (Family strengths and protective factors heading in this section)
2. What support do the family need and who can help? YEH – use the [4Ps framework](#) to comment on the functions that the child / young person may be trying to fulfil with their behaviour. Comment on the unmet needs for each child using the headings on the [assessment triangle](#). (Needs and risks identified for the children / young people / unborn child and other family members heading)

3. What are the issues that you have identified with the family? Tick as many as apply (Factors identified at assessment)
4. Can the strengths be used to support the needs? (What is your overall analysis and professional judgement heading)
5. What does the story so far tell you about the current situation? Use theoretical knowledge (e.g. child development, attachment), training etc to support with this (What is your overall analysis and professional judgement heading)
6. What will happen if nothing changes? (What is your overall analysis and professional judgement heading)
7. What barriers might the family face to achieving their goals listed in the plan?

***YEH – use the 4Ps framework to help you to analyse the information gathered via direct work with the family and make a professional judgement about how to move forward**

CSE risk assessment

Recorded in section 5. Assessment of the current situation

- Use the risk assessment tool (with the young person where possible) to get as much information as possible to make a judgement on whether the young person is vulnerable to, being groomed for or already being abused through CSE
- The tool contains a series of statements that give an indication of a young person's level of involvement in CSE, and each statement carries a score that when combined gives a picture of the level of risk the young person faces and the best response to help keep them safe
- See also the CSE policy and procedure for social workers

Resilient Families outcome measures – baseline

Recorded in section 6. Resilient Families outcome measures – baseline

- Use your professional judgement to identify whether you have no, low, moderate or high concern regarding the presenting issues listed
- The benchmark / baseline levels of need scores must be completed within 2 visits of the assessment start date

Brief closure record

Recorded in section 7. Brief closure record

- Summary of progress made during the period that the family worked with you
- Reasons for brief closure
- Include any outcomes achieved with the family and their views on this

Reason for closure : further exploration

Recorded in section 7. Brief closure record

- Further details regarding the reasons for brief closure

Things to consider :

- Which RFP tools will you use

- Understanding (U1), <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/resilient-families-practice/tools-for-exploration-and-assessments/strengths-and-needs/#main>
 - Exploration Prompt Cards (R2) <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/resilient-families-practice/tools-for-reviews-and-endings/review-prompt-cards/>
 - Exploration (E2) <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/resilient-families-practice/tools-for-exploration-and-assessments/family-map-relationship-map/#main>
 - Quick Wins (P3) <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/resilient-families-practice/tools-for-exploration-and-assessments/quick-wins/#main>
 - Goal Setting (G1 and G2) <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/resilient-families-practice/tools-for-goal-setting/making-smarter-goals/>
- Which other tools will you use to understand the family and their story ([Tree of Life](#))
 - Additional requirements from individual teams (risk assessments, pre-measures etc)

N.B if you have been unable to explore any of the areas in sufficient depth during the assessment period, state how you have considered this part of the family story and how you plan revisit it as you progress through the Helping Process.

In order to complete section 8 of the current EHFA : Plan, think about :

The goals in the plan should be developed in partnership with the family and the network. The family should take ownership of their plan and there should be actions and responsibilities included for them. The goals should be SMARTER.

<https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/resilient-families-practice/tools-for-goal-setting/making-smarter-goals/#main>

You should consider using the My Plan <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/resilient-families-practice/tools-for-plans/> and Taking Action <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/resilient-families-practice/tools-for-plans/implementing-the-plan/#main> tools to help you develop the plan with the family.

Name	What needs to change?	What is the goal?	What actions need to be taken?	Who will be responsible?	When will this be done?
Name of the family member that the goal relates to	<p>Get the family to imagine how things will be different, be specific about what needs to change for each child</p> <p>Must be linked with reasons for referral and identified needs</p> <p>Work with the family to be clear about what they want to achieve and how they will recognise success</p>	<p>What do the family want?</p> <p>Include short, medium and long term goals which will help to support positive changes in the family</p>	<p>What do the family in partnership with the network need to do to achieve their goals?</p>	<p>Name of the family members or professionals that are responsible for contributing to achieving each goal</p>	<p>Record the date that each action will be completed or if it is an ongoing piece of work, write 'ongoing'</p>

In order to complete section 9 of the current EHFA: CCE Response Plan, use the following procedure :

All CCE documents and templates are on the Guidebook here
<https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/early-help-guide/family-early-help-covid-guidebook/fscf-procedures-during-covid/general-policies-and-procedures/>

If you have concerns about a young person being at risk of criminal exploitation, you should start the CCE risk assessment. Early Help episode on the child's record. The risk assessment will help staff to identify the level of risk a child is facing from criminal exploitation. It should not be used to determine whether child is being criminally exploited. Professional judgment should be used to establish this.

Review CCE risk assessments should be undertaken at 6 monthly intervals prior to review meetings to establish whether risk has increased or reduced.

If the scoring outcome of the CCE risk assessment is less than 25 but the practitioner feels that there is still lots of unknown information and that the score is not reflective of the potential risk, the outcome of the episode should be 'CCE initial response meeting'.

A score of 25 – 45 indicates that the child / young person is possibly being targeted / groomed for CCE and a score of over 45 indicates that the child / young person is likely to be involved in CCE. In both circumstances, the outcome of the episode should be 'CCE initial response meeting'.

The CCE initial response meeting is a multiagency meeting involving parents and the child / young person that should be convened and chaired by the service holding the case.

If this outcome is selected, section 9 of the current EHFA: CCE Response Plan will be prepopulated (see below) :

Name of young person	What needs to change to reduce risk and increase support?	What actions will be taken?	Who will be responsible?	When does it need to be done?
Name of the young person	What circumstances need to change?	What will professionals and family members do?	Name of professional or family member who will be responsible for the actions	Specific date when the actions will be completed

Review CCE response meetings can be held if necessary, for example if insufficient information was available at the initial response meeting. Otherwise, the CCE meeting plan (which has now been added to the EHFA) can be reviewed at the child's TAF review meeting.

Outcome of the assessment

[Recorded in section 10. Comments and signatures](#)

- Tick relevant box

Child (ren) / young person's comments

[Recorded in section 10. Comments and signatures](#)

- Record the comments and thoughts of each child about the intervention to date (NOT just the assessment document) in the box

Parent / carer and other adult's comments

[Recorded in section 10. Comments and signatures](#)

- Record the comments and thoughts of the significant adults about the intervention to date (NOT just the assessment document) in the box

Details of practitioner completing the assessment

Recorded in section 10. Comments and signatures

- Complete your name and contact details

Manager's comments

Recorded in section 10. Comments and signatures

- The manager should record their comments and reflections on the work completed with the family and the assessment document
- The manager should also comment on any unauthorised timescale extensions

Has the child / parent consented to this assessment being shared with other professionals? Has the EH consent form been signed and uploaded?

Recorded in section 10. Comments and signatures

- Tick the relevant box
- Family Workers should record the date when the contents of the assessment were shared with the family and the professional network (including the name and designation of the professional) in the case note section of the child's file

Restrictions on sharing information

Recorded in section 10. Comments and signatures

- Record any restrictions on sharing information and any services that the family have not consented to sharing with