



Top Tips for Early Help Assessment

Call a member of the Early Help Team.

Discuss with the child/young person/parent/carer, the reasons for starting the Early Help Assessment process, what it will mean to them and what they can expect. This first contact is critical to successful engagement. A careful supportive discussion about the assessment and how it can help is needed'

Offer to meet at a place of parental choice.

Ensure that you use language that the child/young person/parent/carer can understand (no professional jargon).

Obtain the consent of the child/young person/parent/carer to start the Early Help Assessment process.

Complete as far as possible, the initial Early Help Assessment. You may not be able to complete all of the assessment at this point. Further information may come from the family at later stages and from professionals as they join the TAF. Don't feel that it is your responsibility to complete the whole assessment as there is benefit to other professionals contributing their knowledge of the family.

Please ensure you register the Early Help Assessment using the Registration Form on the CSCP website. The form should be emailed to early.help@cumbria.gov.uk

It is essential that the child's/young person's/parents/carer's thoughts and words as well as your own observations are in the assessment. This is evidence of their involvement.

Ensure that all key adults who are important to the young persons life are included in the assessment. Where necessary consent must be given by parent/carer to contact other family members directly.

Big meetings can be scary so keeping a TAF small until parental confidence is built helps.

Identify the most pressing issues with the child's/young person's/parents/carer's and start to draw up a plan of action with them.

Identify with the child/young person/parent/carer which professionals may be able to help. Positive and persistent offers of help should be made to parents/carer's.

Arrange an initial meeting with the child/young person/parent/carer and the identified professionals (Team around the Family TAF).

Ensure family are properly involved in the process and not just 'agreeing' to what professionals have said. The child/young person and family's comments should be included in paperwork.

Avoid drift by making sure discussion remains focused at each review - if there is no progress or progress slows contact your Early Help Officer for discussion or referral to the Early Help and Family Support Panel.

At the TAF identify with the parent who will be the co-ordinator at this stage, and also who will be responsible ensuring that review dates and venues are organised, and all professionals informed. Complete the Early Help Assessment Family Action Plan.

When creating the plan make sure you copy across What will well being and success look like from the assessment into the left hand column of the Family Action Plan.

Remember to ask yourself and others whether or not you are staying 'child centred', when dealing with adults it is often easy to become focused on the needs of parents/carers.

At the TAF always make a date for the next review meeting (saves time on sending out invitations to next meeting), agree time and venue.

Register the Early Help Assessment with the Early Help Team. The registration form can be emailed to: early.help@cumbria.gov.uk
Do not send a copy of the Early Help Assessment unless required for Safeguarding Purposes or Audit.

When well being and success has been achieved close the Early help Assessment using a closure form available on the CSCP website and return to the Early Help Team at [**early.help@cumbria.gov.uk**](mailto:early.help@cumbria.gov.uk)

If you believe an Early Help Assessment needs to 'Step Up' after a TAF review (in line with the CSCP threshold document contact the Safeguarding Hub using the single contact form:

[**cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/childrenandfamilies/childprotectionteams.asp**](http://cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/childrenandfamilies/childprotectionteams.asp)

If the level of need reduces and the decision is made to Step Down from CIN or CP to an EH Plan the Step Up Step Down pathway available on the Early Help Page of the CSCP website should be followed.
