

# Early Help update for all professionals working with children and young people

Briefing Note

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Early Help is the support that can be provided for a child, young person or family who may have additional needs that cannot be met by universal provision and there is perceived to be no risk of significant harm.

Early Help is everyone's responsibility and any professional working with a child can initiate an assessment.

## **Changes to the Early Help Assessment Form**

In response to feedback from Education and Health professionals there has been a change to the way in which a SEND assessment is requested. Previously there was a separate Early Help Assessment form and it was felt that having two forms caused a level of confusion. Therefore the two forms have now been combined and the emphases are on any professional identifying an additional need, whether educational, developmental, behavioural or emotional.

The principle is that when any additional need is identified with a young person whether social emotional, developmental or educational an Early Help Assessment form is completed. The emphasis is on assessing all aspects of a child or young person's circumstances, developing a plan to meet those needs, and reviewing progress systematically.

Full details on where to find the new form and further information on the process are available on the LSCB website <http://cumbrialscb.com/professionals/earlyhelp/default.asp>

## **Early Help in the SEND process**

From January 2016 there are changes to the Early Help stage of the SEND process. Until now we have expected completion of a SEND Early Help Assessment form. However we have now developed a single Early Help Assessment form that accommodates both the SEND Early Help process and the other generic Early Help Assessment process.

As a result the form to be completed when considering the needs of children and young people with SEND is the newly revised Early Help Form.

The principle is that when any additional need is identified with a young person whether social emotional, developmental or educational an Early Help Assessment form is completed. This incorporates aspects of the old SEND Early Help Assessment form. It is structured around categories

used in the new SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015) and its structure will be echoed in the format of reports written by SEND staff, such as Specialist Advisory Teachers and Educational Psychologists (EPs). The emphasis is on assessing all aspects of a child or young person's circumstances, developing a plan to meet those needs, and reviewing progress systematically. This form will be essential for SENCOs moving through the 'Graduated Response' referred to in the Code of Practice.

### **Closing an Early Help Assessment**

If the child or young person no longer being supported by the Early Help Assessment process, their needs are met or they can be met by a single agency, then the assessment needs to be closed. Use the Early Help Closure of Assessment Form you can find that on the LSCB website here <http://www.cumbrialscb.com/professionals/earlyhelp/default.asp>

### **Feedback on the Early Help Assessment process**

The Early Help Team have received some really positive feedback on the Early Assessment process, this is what a parent told us about their experience.

'The changes happened so quickly that it was hard to believe. The School began to work with both Chloe and Emily immediately to assess how they were feeling. In the space of a few weeks Chloe in particular has grown in confidence and looks and behaves like a different child. She is truly thriving, she has helped to teach year 3's and won an award at school for friendship and kindness to others.

Emily attends Brownies and got an excellent AAA school report of which she is very proud.'

If you would like to share your experiences of being involved in the Early Help process then you can either tell us or contact one of your local Early Help Officers

The Early Help Team is in place to support practitioners understand the importance of Early Help and support the initiation and coordination when necessary. The team can support through a variety of help such as one-to-one meetings, group work with a team, training and advice and guidance.

For any further advice regarding the completion of the Early Help process – visit the Early Help page on the LSCB website [www.cumbrialscb.org](http://www.cumbrialscb.org)