Welcome to Tower Hamlets

Early Help

E-Awareness
What is Early Help?

Early Help describes how we identify and provide support to children, young people and their families, as soon as problems start to emerge.
The Early Help Approach

“The Early Help in Tower Hamlets will work in partnership with families and young people to overcome difficulties and build the resilience that will equip them to address challenges and seize opportunities in the future”

Debbie Jones,
Director of Children and Culture
Tower Hamlets
The Early Help Concept

If addressed early enough the emergent needs of children and their families can be prevented from escalating...
Do you know who is responsible for delivering Early Help?

Answer: All of the above!
Early Help is PARTNERSHIP and it is everyone’s responsibility
Case Study

Tom has just started secondary school and is 11 years old. His teacher is increasingly concerned about Tom’s poor school attendance and dishevelled appearance.

The teacher telephoned the Early Help Hub (EHH) to seek advice.

The EHH advised that the case met the threshold for Early Help. However, they needed more information about the family and asked for a full Early Help Assessment (EHA) to be completed.

The EHA revealed that Tom’s mother had on-going mental health needs and was not coping. The case was passed on to the Social Inclusion Panel for additional family support.

Can you identify the professionals that could be involved with Tom and his family?
Who is responsible for Early Help?

All professionals working with Children and Families in Tower Hamlets, including:

- Health / CAMHS
- Schools
- Housing Providers
- Voluntary Sector
- Children’s Centres & Day Care Providers
- Police & Fire Service
- The Local Authority
- Employment Agencies
Who could benefit from Early Help?

‘Working together to safeguard children’ also identifies specific groups of children who would benefit from early help.

Professionals should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for children who:

- Have a disability or additional needs
- Have special educational needs
- Are young carers
- Are showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect
- Are showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- Are in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence
Which of these needs can be supported through Early Help:

- Preventing family breakdowns
- Parenting skills
- Irregular attendance at school
- Financial difficulties/debts
- Children with learning difficulties
- Parental alcohol misuse
- Risk of school exclusion
- Parental mental or physical ill health
- Vulnerable young parents

**Answer:** All of the above!
The Early Help Continuum of Need and Thresholds Guidance

Children and families that need Early Help often have a range of needs that have different levels of severity across a continuum:
LBTH Continuum of Need

1. Universal
   - Most children's needs are met by their families or Universal Services, which are open to all families including those with additional needs.

2. Universal +
   - Single agency primarily working with family to meet additional needs.
   - Low level additional needs should be met within a universal service.

3. Early Help Assessment (TAC/TAF)
   - Lead Professional - Early Help Practitioner
   - Meets the criteria for formal targeted services delivered as part of the early help offer. Multiagency intervention with a lead professional identified.

4. Level 2
   - A statutory threshold has been met.

5. Level 3
   - High level needs are unmet. Meets the threshold for social work assessment and support (Section 17 Children Act 1989).

6. Level 4
   - Single Assessment
   - Lead Professional - Statutory agency/worker
   - Child at risk of significant harm. Meets statutory threshold for child protection (S47 Children Act 1989). May also require accommodating (Section 20 Children Act 1989).

7. Information sharing with consent (1)
   - Universal services underpinning all levels of interventions.

8. Advice & Guidance
   - Children's needs
   - Parenting Capacity
   - Family and Environmental Factors

(1) Unless detrimental to the child
Practitioners can use the Continuum of Need and the LSCB Multi-Agency Threshold Guidance in order to understand the needs, strengths and risks associated with vulnerable children, young people and families.

Early Help will focus on the delivery of support and interventions to children and their families who have needs at level 1 and level 2 of the continuum.
Early Help Responsibilities

- Engage with whole families and work to their strengths
- Be brave enough to stop things that are not working
- Be clear and consistent about the expected outcomes
- Focus on preventing problems and building resilience
- Undertake Early Help Assessments to identify need
- Work WITH families, colleagues and partner agencies avoiding where possible doing TO or FOR and never doing ‘Nothing’ where action is needed
- Take a holistic approach that addresses the children’s needs in the wider family context to help identify underlying issues and strengths across the family
- Identify a trusted lead professional who can coordinate the support from other agencies
- Enable targeted Early Help interventions
- Work together to significantly improve outcomes for the whole family not just the child or adult
- Identify children, young people and families likely to benefit from Early Help

The best of London in one borough
The Early Help Assessment (eEHA) has replaced the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

It is a tool for practitioners to assess concerns about a child or family that you are working with.
Who can carry out an eEHA?

Any professional working with a child/family where there is a need to provide support for additional needs of the children.

This includes the third sector (private, voluntary, independent and community organisations).
This could include, but is not limited to:

- Schools and nursery nurses
- Personal advisors
- Health and fitness providers
- Health professionals
- Youth workers
- Family support workers
- Housing providers
- School support staff / Teachers
When to carry out an eEHA?

An eEHA might be needed when:

1. You are concerned about how well a child is progressing or they/their parent has raised a concern with you.
2. Their needs are unclear, or broader than your service can address.
3. When an assessment would help identify the needs and could engage other services to help meet them.
Whole family assessment

Allows practitioners to develop specific outcomes/actions relevant to the needs of the individual/family and includes all members of the family.

Consent based approach

Undertaken jointly with families and empowers families to help themselves.

Any agency can use the tool

Outlines roles and responsibilities of all multi-agency partners involved with the family and promotes information sharing.
A good assessment will include:

- Conclusions based on current and historical information, having taken into consideration all key players.
- All professionals known to the family having contributed to the assessment.
- Clear outcomes that measure the success of the intervention.
- Clearly identified needs, risks and strengths.
- The family’s history having informed the findings and decisions.
- The child/family’s thoughts and feelings are included.
- Input from both parents (and partners if applicable).
Case Study

School have noticed a change in Matilda’s behaviour, she is more withdrawn. Mother told school that Matilda made a comment that she wanted to kill herself. Parents are separated and Matilda lives between both homes. There is some acrimony between parents and school feel parents are giving conflicting messages to Matilda.

The school carried out an eEHA with input from an early intervention worker from Children’s Centres and Health, with both parents present and taking into consideration Matilda’s thoughts and concerns.

During the process of assessment the professionals supported the family to talk through and identify issues and empowered them to come up with a plan that met their individual needs. Most importantly Matilda was able to contribute and felt valued.

List what worked well and any other good practices that you could include.
A Lead Professional (LP) will be identified as soon as there is a requirement for an eEHA. The Lead Professional will:

- Act as a single point of contact for children, young people and their families so they are kept well informed and can discuss their progress and any concerns with one person.
- Undertake the eEHA and lead the subsequent process.
- Co-ordinate the delivery of actions agreed in the TAF and ensure that the package of support is regularly reviewed and monitored.
- Act as a single point of contact for all professionals.
Whole Family Assessments / Team Around Family (TAF)

Whole family working means transforming services from a number of unconnected professionals with their own assessments, thresholds and measures, to integrated, family-focussed, outcome based working that includes the voice of all family members.
Principles of whole family assessments

- All family members are included in the assessment
- One lead professional
- Collaborative working with partners
- Accurate genogram
- Parent and children’s voice evident in assessment
- Whole Family Reviews and action plan

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Improved outcomes for families and reduced demand on costly specialist services

For families with multiple problems an integrated “whole family” approach that recognises and deals with their interconnected problems is most effective

Children and families only need to repeat their story once
Case Study

Family Composition:
Mohamed – 16, male
Aleya – 14, female  
Fatima – 8, female
Mrs Begum— mother  
Mr Ahmed – father

Referral:
Referral from Police, London Ambulance Service and the Hospital due to Mohamed being found alone by members of the public heavily intoxicated with alcohol. He was taken to hospital and a referral was made to MASH. As it didn’t meet the threshold, it was referred to the Early Help Hub for Early Help support.
As an Early Help Practitioner, what are the first steps you would take to support this family?
Example answers could include

- Start building a relationship with family.
- Gather information about the family with their consent.
- Talk to all the family members, including Mohamed about their concerns and identify what help they need.
- Speak to other professionals and arrange a team around the family to identify the Lead professional.
An eEHA was carried out and the following concerns were raised about the family.

- Mohamed is NEET
- Mohamed was found intoxicated and alone
- Fatima (8) is still bed-wetting and has speech delay
- Parents argue regularly, which is impacting the children’s emotional well being

For each concern, what service can you identify to help support the family?
Example answers could include:

**Mohamed is NEET**
- Workpath
- Identify youth worker/mentor/youth group to engage Mohamed in positive activities in the community

**Mohamed was found intoxicated and alone**
- Referral to young people’s drug and alcohol service to educate Mohamed around risks of alcohol misuse

**Fatima (8) is still bed-wetting and has speech delay**
- Check with school to ensure speech has been assessed
- Advise parents to speak to GP for referral to enuresis clinic.

**Parents argue regularly, which is impacting the children’s emotional well being**
- Referral to Positive Change Service with parents permission
Case Study

Katie has created a social media account and posed as a 40 year old man to request another young person from school, send her indecent images. This was apparently a prank.

The case was redirected to Early Help as Katie has not previously come to Police attention and Police confirmed no offences had taken place. Mother has consented to Early Help support and implemented consequences for her daughter’s behaviour and Katie wrote an apology letter to the victim. The school are aware of the matter and have addressed it internally. There have not been concerns of this nature previously.
Can you list some of the responsibilities and activities that would be undertaken during the Early Help Intervention.

Using this list, formulate a plan and actions to support Lucy.
Examples could include

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify Lead Professional</th>
<th>Complete Early Help Assessment to identify needs and possible interventions</th>
<th>Ensure regular Team Around Family meetings take place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offer parenting support</td>
<td>Ensure Katie’s internet activity is monitored regularly</td>
<td>Parental controls / privacy settings on electronic devices and social media accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify service(s) in or out of school</td>
<td>Educate Katie about online grooming/exploitation and staying safe online</td>
<td>Identify any other relevant service that could support and educate Katie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Early Help - Signs of Success

- Improved mental and physical health and well-being
- Improved school attendance and attainment
- Reduction in families needing specialist statutory services
- Increase in parents accessing and sustaining employment
- More families in safe, secure environments and homes
- Reduction in ASB and crime

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Single Point of Access

The Children and Family Services Hotline: 020 7364 5006 (open 9am to 5pm)

1. School admissions and exclusions
2. General advice (Early Help Hub)
3. Concern about a child; child protection
4. Family Information Service
The Early Help Hub

The Hub is available to handle Early Help enquiries from the general public, partner organisations and local services.

The EHH has four main functions:

- Provide information and guidance
- Screen cases to ensure the right intervention is provided
- Support practitioners and services to complete assessments
- Help to convene Team around the Child/Family meetings
For further information and key documents:

**LBTH Early Help Website**

- Early Help One Minute Guide
- Early Help Strategy 2018-21
- Early Help Practice Handbook
- Thresholds Guidance
- Early Help School’s Guidance
- Early Help Training Webpage