

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT EARLY HELP ASSESSMENTS & TEAM AROUND THE FAMILY MEETINGS

How can I find out if an Early Help Assessment and or Team Around the Family Meeting is in place, or has taken place with a child/family I am working with?

Please contact the Early Help Co-ordinator & TAF Adviser based in the MASH, who will be able to provide you with further information.

Who do I go to for advice and guidance about Early Help Assessments & Team Around the Family Processes?

The Early Help Co-ordinator & TAF Adviser is able to provide advice, guidance, and support and can be contacted via the MASH. However, if an Early Intervention Practitioner based in Family Support Services is the allocated EHA & TAF practitioner for a family you are enquiring about, then please contact them directly.

Who completes an Early Help Assessment?

An Early Help Assessment is undertaken by an Early Intervention Practitioner based in Family Support Services and this is completed in consultation with relevant partner agencies. Where there are likely to be significant delays with an Early Intervention Practitioner's availability to undertake the assessment, then support will be sought from another agency practitioner to undertake this Early Help Assessment.

Do I have to include parents/carers when completing an EHA?

Parental involvement should always be encouraged. However, if a young person requests an Early Help Assessment and does not want parents involved, they can give consent themselves if competence has been established (Gillick Competence). The Early Help Assessment cannot proceed without either the parent/carer or young person consenting and a consent form must be completed prior to undertaking this.

Can we proceed with an Early Help Assessment without the consent of the family?

An Early Help Assessment is a voluntary process and therefore, parents/carers and children (where appropriate) should be fully engaged in the process. Consent must be obtained.

Who should have a copy of the completed Early Help Assessment?

The family should have a copy of the Early Help Assessment, as well as each member of the Team Around the Family process.

Is an Early Help Assessment required for children stepping down from Child in Need and Children's Safeguarding Social Work Led Services?

No, an Early Help Assessment is not required. If a child steps down to Early Help Services an Early Help Assessment is not required as either the Child in Need Review Meeting or Review Child Protection Case Conference minutes will have highlighted any outstanding identified needs which may require support at Level 2 of the Threshold.

Who should be the Team Around the Family Lead Professional?

The Lead Professional is the named professional who has been identified as the person who will be the family's main point of contact throughout the TAF process. If an EHA has been completed by Family Support services, then an Early Intervention Practitioner will be the Lead Professional during the TAF process. However, if a family have agreed to step-down to a TAF, the allocated Social Worker or Social Work Assistant must identify a lead professional prior to TAF commencing. Decisions about who should be the Lead Professional will be taken on a case-by-case basis and should be informed by the child/YP and their family.

Is there a minimum number of members required for a Team Around Family Meeting?

The TAF process aims to co-ordinate a multi- agency response to a family's emerging difficulties. Therefore, a TAF is only convened when more than one agency is required to support a family at Level 2 of the threshold.

Do I have to include parents/carers throughout the TAF process?

Yes, parents/carers should be included in every TAF meeting, and children/young people should be included when appropriate to do so. If parents/carers are unable to attend a TAF meeting, this should be rescheduled as these meeting should not go forward without a parent/carer being present. Parents/carers must be provided with TAF meeting minutes as the action plan within this is created in collaboration with the family and this should not be altered without parent/carers input.

How often should the TAF meet?

It will differ depending upon the complexities of the situation. Initially it will be more frequent but should be anywhere between 6 - 12 weekly.

What happens if the TAF members believe that the situation has not improved or that it has deteriorated to the stage where there are safeguarding concerns?

Throughout the TAF process, practitioners should be aware of the Threshold Framework Indicators of Need. If the threshold is met to Step Up, inform the parents and the child/YP (if appropriate) that you have these specific concerns and that you are making a referral to the MASH. Refer to the MASH using the MARF and attach the Early Help Assessment. Keep the TAF meetings in place, meeting regularly until the MASH have determined the threshold of intervention.

What happens if a family engages and the TAF process starts with a plan in place and the family thereafter disengage and stop attending and participating in the Family Action Plan?

Always communicate with the family to better understand if there has been a change in their circumstances, and query why the family no longer want to proceed with the TAF process. It may be helpful to gain constructive feedback from the family regarding changing the approach of the TAF, or to change the identified Lead Professional. If concerns around parent/carer engagement persists, contact the Early Help-Co-ordinator and TAF Advisor for further advice/guidance around this. As previously highlighted, if there are safeguarding concerns or the level of need has escalated beyond a Level 2 Threshold, please refer into the MASH using the MARF.

What happens if the family choose not to engage with the EHA/TAF process?

Encourage engagement over a given time and if necessary, via another trusted partner agency known to the family. Assess the impact of no improved levels of support for this child or young person and if you feel that their circumstances are or will deteriorate discuss with your line manager or designated safeguarding lead and consider a referral to the MASH. Please note, that Early Help Assessments and the TAF process are completely voluntary, therefore we cannot compel families to engage with this Early help support.

Should a TAF Process be taking place if the child or young person is open to a Social Worker, for example from the Children's Safeguarding Team, Child in Need Team, Child in Care Team or Youth Justice Service?

No, where the child or young person has an allocated social worker then Children & Family Community Services social work processes are followed with the Lead Professional role being held by the Social Worker. TAF meetings are an Early Help intervention, therefore they are only to be held at Level 2 of the threshold with a multi-agency responsibility for the Lead Professional role.

How should a TAF Meeting be documented?

The Team around the Family Meeting documentation template should be used for each meeting, and this aims to record the main points of the meeting. There is no need for formal minutes or to record everything verbatim. The main purpose of the meeting should be to develop a solution focussed action plan and capture the voice of the family.

Where are TAF documents stored?

All EHA and TAF documentation will be stored on the Mosaic Electronic Social Care Record System. If the Lead Professional is not Early Intervention Practitioner, then the Lead professional must send all TAF documentation to the MASH via MultiAgencySupportHub@gov.gg for this to be recorded on the Mosaic Electronic Social Care Record System.