Early Help Assessment and Plan

Top Tips

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1. When a concern arises. Get the parent or carer to complete the online request for support/consent form as they are best placed to have all the relevant information (or do with). This sets the scene that we are working with and not doing to. When uploading consent, it's always best practice to do this alongside the family as they will be best placed to give you all the information you need (such as dates of birth for family members).

2. When uploading, you will receive an FSF number. This can then be used as a marker which can be placed on future correspondence and confirms that the upload has been successful.

3. You can then arrange the first meeting. This is the opportunity to invite all professionals who may be able to provide specific support with different elements of information gathering. Remember the roles of the members of the Team around the Family. Working Together in a multi-agency way.

4. Have a copy of the Continuum of Needs available to assess worries at the start and throughout to gauge progress or new concerns.

5. Wishes and Feelings must be gained for each child in the family and forwarded to the Lead Professional at least three days prior to the meeting. Remember these must be shared with the parents/carers before the meeting (even if it is only 5 minutes before)

6. Children and young people are integral to any meeting and they may wish to attend. If this is the case, allow them to join after any adult conversations have been held (possibly at the end)

7. At this meeting, agree who will chair the meeting and a second person will take minutes on a word document. Minute taker to make sure that Lead Professional receives full minutes before closure of the meeting.

8. First segment of the meeting to be spent on completing a family tree. When completing a Genogram/Family Tree with the family, ensure that the key used is agreed with them and not enforced by professionals and the remainder of the meeting to be spent on mapping what's working well, what are the worries, what needs to happen and next steps.

9. This is where the family and the team around the family are able to formulate the worry statements and goals along with scaling where actions and goals will be identified. This may be completed in one or two meetings.

10. Always ensure that you have a good understanding of the network and any recent changes. Remember that the existing network will be in place after the plan is closed and they will be able to offer continuity.

11. Knowing what the network are willing to do and continue to do alleviates feelings of pressure on the professionals in the plan. Remember that this is a Family-Owned Plan.

12. Always ensure that you have asked about absent members of the network. If there is an absent parent who has not been contacted, please ensure that the reasons for this are recorded and make all efforts to include them depending on individual restrictions and circumstances.

13. Nominated person to copy and paste minutes from meeting into relevant sections of the Early Help Assessment and Plan

14. Always check your language. Does everybody understand what is being said? Avoid acronyms and professional terminology at all costs. The Voice of the child/family should be present throughout the process. Use their language and statements.

15. Always use the Early Help page on website to download the most recent documents as this will ensure you have up to date versions.

16. Ensure that as many of the Network as possible can take part of the review meeting (either in person or virtually If this is not possible, always ensure that professionals (including siblings schools) and other agencies offer an update and Wishes and Feelings **at least three days before any meeting**.

17. Ensure that a review date is placed in the calendar at the beginning of each review meeting. This ensures that there is agreement before people leave and cuts down on a lot of admin work in trying to get calendars to agree.

18. Place time in your calendar now to ensure that all actions and tasks can be completed as soon as possible after any meeting (such as sharing copies of plans and uploading)

19. The person who initiates the Early Help Assessment and Plan is the person who identifies the need for support. This does not mean that they will be the Lead Professional. It is the family who make this decision as they need to have a good, trusted relationship with this professional. The specific responsibilities of a Lead Professional are:

- Ensure meetings are held
- Information is recorded and uploaded
- Main point of Contact for family and the network

Team around the family responsibilities:

- Chair meetings
- Take minutes
- Upload
- Provide updates/reports
- Shared safeguarding responsibility
- Being part of a solution focused approach
- Actively involved for the duration of their involvement with the family
- On setting a date, agree roles for next meeting

20. Always ensure that all children have their voices heard, even those who may not appear in the worries as they are still integral. They will be impacted by every aspect of the worries and goals.

21. Ensure the style and method of sharing information with the family is agreed and appropriate. This may include pictorial form, certain colours and paper format etcetera.

22. Ensure that every member of the plan has a copy of the document following each meeting and this has been uploaded.

23. If you feel that there has been little or no progress after several meetings, consider whether the worries need to be remapped and if there is a Complicating Factor in the worry statement which is hindering progress. It may also be the case that no progress is possible and if this is so, the plan must be closed and uploaded. Use the descriptor of Needs to assess risk and if not heightened, continue to close the plan using the closure form as this concludes the Information Sharing process (and ensured General Data Protection Regulations are being followed)

24. If you feel that a call to Children's Advice and Duty Service is required, ensure that you have gained consent to do so and use the Continuum of Needs as this will help you to collate your worries and express them to the duty Social Worker. As much information/clarity should always be sought prior to this call to make the process more effective and targeted.

25. Feel free to add new actions on the plan.This will help everyone see what still needs to be achieved

26. Always contact the Family Hub if you require any help/guidance or additional signposting.

27. Bookmark the Early Help page of the website for Uploading consent, the assessment and reviews as this can save time. It is also your go to for most recent documents

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