

Early Help and Preventative Services (EHPS) focus on working in partnership as part of a whole system approach to delivering support to the most vulnerable children, young people and families. The Kent Family Support Framework provides a clear pathway for families whose needs are defined as *intensive* in the Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) Inter-Agency Threshold Criteria for Children and Young People.

This updated guidance is to support schools and partners by detailing the approach to be taken when requesting support for families. This will help to ensure access to the right services at the right time.

### *Early Help Notification*

Schools and partners should work together to identify the needs of families at the earliest possible opportunity. Wherever possible, those needs should be dealt with at *universal* or *additional* levels, by those already known to the family taking an holistic approach and providing support through their own resources or networks.

Where it is thought that *intensive* support is required, practitioners should request support using the Early Help Notification form with consent from the family. EHPS offer a range of support as shown in the Early Help Leaflet.

It is vital to explain the steps of the process to the family, gain their consent to share information and to their involvement and participation in the process. Consent includes agreement to pre-registration at the family's local Open Access provision and the option to opt out of receiving information. Families should be given or made aware of the Privacy Notice available at [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk).

The updated Early Help Notification form (September 2016) must be used. It should be completed as part of a robust discussion with the family including children and young people and must include:

- ✓ Key information relating to the family ensuring all fields are completed, where appropriate. School details including attendance rate and UPN are required for all school aged children
- ✓ All relevant addresses and contact details clearly stating who lives at each address
- ✓ Evidence of joint working by including the details of other services, agencies and practitioners supporting the family who may or may not have contributed to the notification
- ✓ Detailed information of the request ensuring all fields are completed to prevent delay. The analysis of information is used to identify appropriate support and if insufficient the notification form will be returned to the notifier. The following must be included:
  - \* The reasons for making the request ensuring the issues, concerns and identified risks are included as well as why *intensive* support is needed
  - \* A summary of recent or current work with the family by any agency involved e.g. this may involve more than one school as well as other partners e.g. health and housing who should be contacted and asked to contribute to the notification. Outline what went well and what is yet to be achieved
  - \* The views of the family are vital. The voice of all family members including children and young people should be evidenced. This is essential where emotional health and wellbeing support is requested
  - \* Be clear about the intended outcome and what is hoped to be achieved with support from EHPS

Families must be given a copy of completed notification form. The notifier must retain the original signed completed copy of the notification form.

Notification forms should be sent to Early Help Triage using the **EHPS Notification Upload Tool**. Enter the basic contact details, attach the notification form, press submit and take a note of the reference number. The link and guidance on how to use the Upload Tool can be found in the Early Help toolkit – [www.kelsi.org.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.kelsi.org.uk/earlyhelp)

## *Early Help Triage*

The Early Help Triage team process all Early Help Notification forms. This process includes:

- ◆ Checking of information on the notification form and if insufficient, unclear or inconsistent requesting further information by contacting the notifier
- ◆ Gathering further information relating to the family from KCC systems to form an holistic view of the needs and risks of the family
- ◆ Considering safeguarding issues and where necessary, liaising with notifier and Specialist Children's Services
- ◆ Advising the notifier of the outcome of the Triage process and providing advice and guidance, where appropriate
- ◆ Recording all information on a case management system which allows the request to be received by the District Early Help team for allocation

Practitioners may contact the Early Help Triage team – [earlyhelp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@kent.gov.uk) or 03000 419222

## *Assessment and Planning*

The District Early Help team will, where appropriate, allocate support from an Early Help worker in a Unit or a commissioned service. Alternatively, additional one to one support or targeted provision from an Open Access children's centre or youth hub may be provided. Advice may include sign-posting or guidance for the notifier.

The Early Help worker will contact the notifier to discuss the request prior to contacting the family and continue to liaise with the notifier throughout the process. The Early Help worker will meet with the family to undertake an assessment and agree an outcomes focused family plan which will be reviewed regularly with the family and key agencies supporting the plan. The Early Help worker will use the Signs of Safety approach to working with families to develop their resilience and increase their capacity to help themselves.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, the Early Help worker will discuss these with their manager and refer to Specialist Children's Services if appropriate. If the school or partner has concerns, they should discuss these with the allocated Early Help worker in the first instance unless there is an urgent safeguarding concern. All partners working with the family should work together ensuring they are kept informed of any decisions taken.

## *Review and Closure*

Following regular reviews of the planned outcomes, the Early Help worker will discuss and agree an exit strategy with the family, school and other relevant agencies prior to ending their involvement. Where ongoing support is agreed, the Early Help worker will liaise with the relevant service or agency to ensure effective transition to universal services. Families will be invited to provide feedback on their experiences to support the continuous improvement of our services.