



Ministry
of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Supporting British Forces Communities Overseas

Multi-Agency Early Help Toolkit Strengthening Families Safeguarding Children 2020 - 2023

Professionals Toolkit
Working with military communities overseas
Providing Early Help and Early Intervention

Information about this Toolkit

This toolkit shares arrangements for Early Help Strengthening Families, Safeguarding Children within British Forces overseas. The framework provides consistency across military communities and does not replace any strategies/meetings currently used but provides a universal framework to support practitioners, professionals and agencies who work with children, young people and their families.

This toolkit can be used by professionals who are new to the Early Help Process and are potential Lead Professionals. The toolkit can be used by experienced professionals as an aide -memoire, for reflective practice and a guide to support or work alongside colleagues.

This toolkit relates to key workers, practitioners, professionals, services and agencies and to anyone who works with children, young people and families, including unborn babies. This includes anyone who may work with adults who have children at home. This includes agencies such as Health, Education, Police, Welfare and voluntary services; the list shown here is by no means exhaustive.

This toolkit should be used with reference to the Early Help Strategy and the Early Help Implementation Plan.

The Early Help Strengthening Families 2020-2023 Workshop may be used to gain greater knowledge and understanding of using the toolkit in practice. Additional multi-agency workshops and training should be used to understand local need and develop lead professional's knowledge and skills and be aware of new and emerging issues.

This toolkit can be shared within British Forces Communities overseas and holds no personal information. It is recommended that the toolkit is saved within services for easy access. The templates within the document will be published separately and can be printed off as stand-alone forms / letters

This toolkit will be reviewed in January 2022
20200401-Early_Help_Process_Professionals_Toolkit_Version1

Introduction to Early Help

Early Help, also known as early intervention, is support given to a family when a problem first emerges. It can be provided at any stage in a child or young person's life.

Statutory guidance in each nation of the UK highlights the importance of providing early intervention, rather than waiting until a child or family's situation escalates (Department for Education (DfE), 2018; Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2017; Scottish Government, 2014; Welsh Government, 2018).

The central importance of Early Help in enabling children, young people and families to reach their full potential have been a common theme in several reviews commissioned by the UK government.

Effective early help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help
- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child.

Working Together to Safeguard Children Gov.uk: July 2018

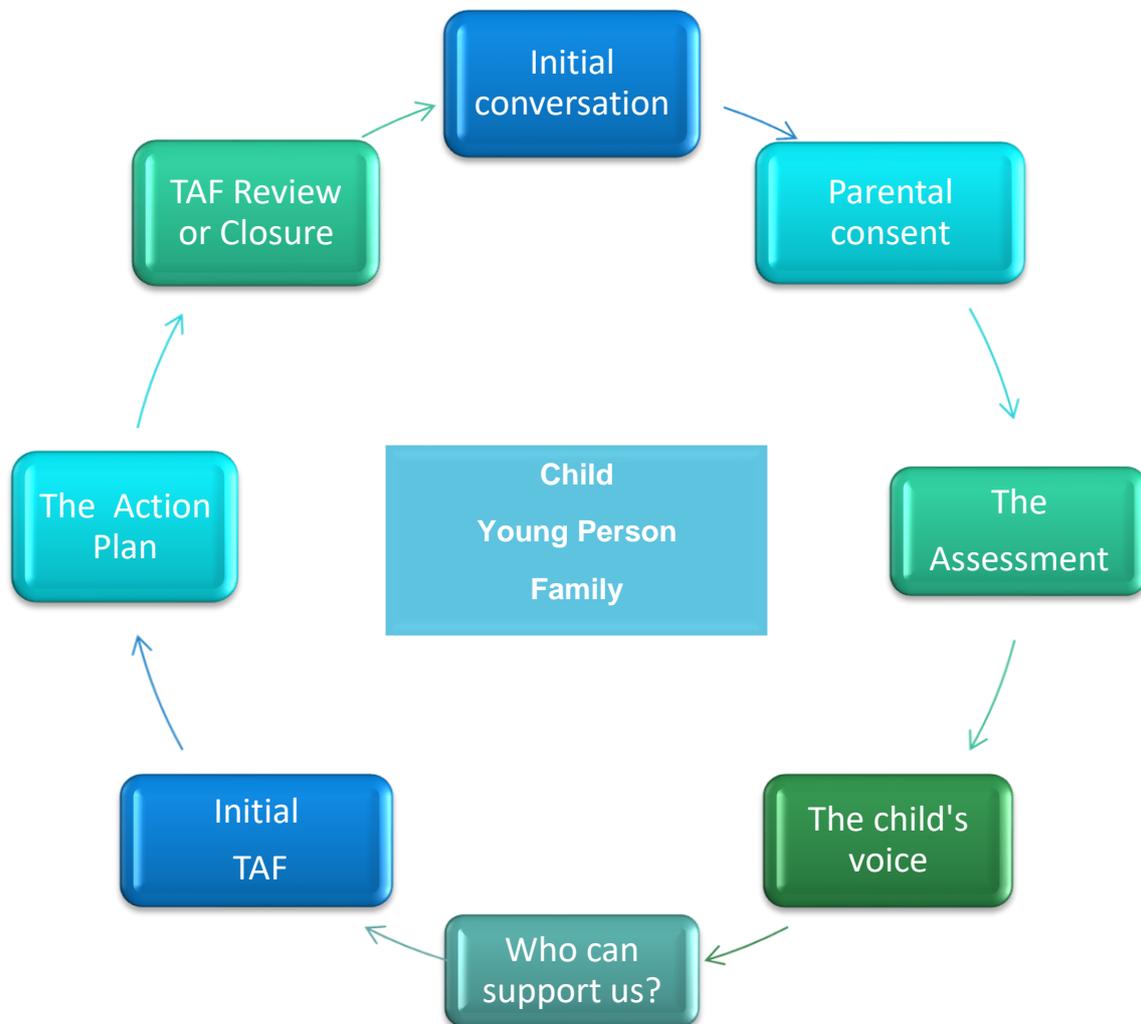
- Give every child the best start in life
- Enable all children young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives

Fair Society Healthy Lives, The Marmot Review; 2010

Our vision is that all children and young people and families within military communities overseas have access wherever possible to well-coordinated good quality and timely Early Help when it is required so needs can be identified and addressed to promote fulfilling family lives.

Where there is an infrastructure to provide Early Help, for example in Brunei and Cyprus, the Early Help offer should be consistent so that children and families have an equitable service. Where there is no infrastructure to provide Early Help, the tools available could be used on an individual basis to work with children and families as an assessment guide / tool.

The Process Flowchart



Section 1 Initial conversation	<p>What is working well? What are the worries? What needs to happen? Discuss the Early Help Process and the benefits for the family?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>'A guide for parents and carers'</i></p>
Parental consent	<p>Discuss sharing information and consent. Gather the initial details. If there is there more than one child in the family that requires support, complete the forms for all children.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>'Consent Letter' 'Personal Information'</i></p>
Section 2 The Assessment	<p>Working jointly with parents/carers gather information to identify needs or worries and identify what is working well. Discuss agencies presently working with the child and family. Include the information from other agencies within the assessment. Discuss the next steps.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>'Assessment Form'</i></p>
The Child's Voice	<p>Listening to children and ensuring their views, wishes and feelings are included in the assessment process. Identify who is the best person to gather the child's views and the child's perspective.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>'Children's Resources'</i></p>
Who can support us?	<p>Identify other professionals who may be able to provide help and support to make the changes.</p>
Section 3 Initial Team Around the Family meeting TAF	<p>Arrange the TAF meeting to bring everyone together to share relevant information and to create an Action Plan. The Lead Professional will be identified.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>'Initial TAF Meeting Minutes and TAF Action Plan'</i></p>
Section 4 The Action Plan	<p>This may be individual work, assessments, programmes for your child and your family. The Lead Professional will continue to work and support the family.</p>
Section 5 TAF Review meeting	<p>To review the Action Plan, to share information of work completed and to identify what other changes may need to happen.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>'TAF Review Meeting Minutes and TAF Action Plan'</i></p>
Section 6 Closure or Transfer	<p>Early Help is no longer required or there is a transfer to another service. i.e. Step Up to Social Care.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>'Closure / Transfer Form'</i></p>

This process flowchart is a guide, it maybe in some circumstances the practitioner starts with the initial team around the family meeting. In all circumstances parental consent and personal information should always be gained.

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Section 1 – Talking to Families about the Early Help Process

Families can approach anyone working with them who can let them know about Early Help and lead them to the right services. Services may identify the child / young person or family who would benefit from Early Help.

Provide information about **The Early Help Process** and provide the **Early Help Leaflet**

Start the *Initial Conversation* with parents/ carers

This conversation explores more than the issue being presented by the parent / carer, young person or professional. This is the opportunity to identify what the family thinks is the most important issue to them. Any issues professionals wish to raise can also be explored.

This is an opportunity to discuss what is working well. Anything that can be described as working well can be viewed as a strength. What are the worries or concerns and what needs to happen next.

The conversation looks to create a genuine open and honest joint working relationship between professionals and families. The outcome of the conversation enables professionals to assess the level of need and decide on the appropriate level of response.

If there are any safeguarding concerns, professionals should follow safeguarding procedures.

The Early Help Process can only take place with parent / carers agreement, explicit consent is required. Complete the **Parental Consent Letter** and the **Personal Information Form** for the identified child.

If there is more than one child with identified needs within the family, complete the parental consent letter for each child with their individual information.

Send information to the **Early Help Database (process tbc)**
using the **Database Template (process tbc)**

Parent / Carer Consent to the Early Help Process

(Please complete, sign and date 2 copies: one for parent and one for the professional)

Date:

Parental Name:

Home Address:

Unit Address:

Child's name _____ DoB: _____

Early Years / School Setting: _____

I have discussed the Early Help process with [professional's name, role, agency] and I have received the leaflet and process flowchart. I agree that my child and family will engage in the Early Help process.

I give consent for [professional's name] to gather information for the assessment to help identify what is *working well*, *identify any worries or concerns* and *identify what needs to change*.

I agree [professionals name] may speak to other identified agencies to gather information for the assessment.

I understand, if appropriate, my child's views will be sought to ensure that their wishes and feelings are taken into consideration.

I understand that the information held about my child/ren and family will be held in accordance to the [agency] information storing practices, I can request further information if I require.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent from the Early Help process at any time.

Yours sincerely

[Parental signature] _____

[Print parental name] _____ Date: _____

Section 1: Child / Young Person / Family Personal Information

Child's Full Name:		Date of Birth:	
		Gender:	
Ethnicity:		Child's first language:	
Family address:		Unit address:	
Parent / Family first language:			
Parents'/Carers' name:		Relationship to child:	Parental responsibility: Y/N
Contact Telephone:		E-mail address	
Parents'/Carers' name:		Relationship to child:	Parental responsibility: Y/N
Contact Tel:		Email address:	

Family Composition including all those living in the family home:

Name:	DOB:	Gender:	Relationship to child:

Details of any significant others not living in the family home:

Name:	DOB:	Gender:	Relationship to child:

Universal Services / Other Agencies / Professionals involved:

Name:	Role / Agency	Contact Details:

Provide a brief summary about the current situation:

*Identify what is working well and any worries or concerns?
Highlight any safeguarding concerns*

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Parental Consent Form completed	Yes	No	
Early Help Leaflet and Process Flowchart provided	Yes	No	

Next steps

Action	Yes	No	Further details (include date/venue)
Assessment to be completed			
Initial Team Around the Child Meeting			
Other information: (consider safety and wellbeing: Step Up to Statutory Social Care)			

Name of person completing this form:		Signed:	
Role:		Agency:	
Address:		Telephone:	
		E-mail:	

Office use only:

Name of person providing the information:	
Date information provided:	
Date of entry to Early Help Database:	
Unique Reference Number:	

The Lead Professional - Role and Responsibilities

The lead professional role is not a job title or new role, it is a set of functions to be carried out as part of the delivery of integrated support. All practitioners working with children and families will have had some experience of being a professional lead with individual children within their day to day job.

The role can be supported by the Early Help Champions, if they are available within the areas or remotely via telephone or skype. A practitioner who may be a potential lead professional should ensure they have attended the Early Help Workshop and other multi-agency workshops.

The lead professional can be any professional who is part of the Team Around the Family and is the most appropriate person best placed to take the lead. Acting as a single point of contact for the child and family and building a professional relationship.

The lead professional co-ordinates the delivery of support services i.e. Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings, identifies changes and distributes minutes as required. The role has the responsibility for reviewing and monitoring the TAF Action Plan and may discuss the work with other TAF members.

The lead professional is not responsible for ensuring that other practitioners' or services deliver the actions they are committed to. The lead professional does not become responsible for the needs of the entire family. Everyone has a responsibility to keep the lead professional informed of the changes.

The lead professional should ensure a safe and planned handover if a different lead professional is agreed or there is a need to make a referral to social care.

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Section 2 – The Assessment Process

This involves working with the child or young person and their family and undertaking the assessment with them. You will need to make sure they understand what information you are recording on **The Assessment Form** and what is going to happen to it. For example: an assessment completed by a healthcare professional will be stored within the individual's healthcare records.

There are different models of intervention depending on the practitioner's role, experiences, knowledge, skills and the service they are working for. The practitioner should use a method and style that suits the child or young person, their parent/carer, and the situation.

Within the assessment it is important to highlight the strengths and resources within the family. Identify what is working well, what are the worries or concerns and provide a summary of what needs to change.

This is a useful focus when agreeing the action plan and helping other agencies to understand the protective factors within the family and identify how they can facilitate change.

It is not expected that practitioners will be experts in all areas of the assessment. Gather information from agencies currently working with the child and their family. For example: An educational report from school can be attached to the assessment.

Ensure the Child's Voice is heard and included within the assessment, this may be through another professional / service who is known to or is already working with the child.

Identify which partner agency would be valuable in supporting the child and family. Consider universal, targeted and complex interventions. Partner agencies can be invited and contribute through the Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings.

The assessment should be used to recognise indicators of abuse and neglect and these responded to through safeguarding procedures.

Consider any immediate actions required from the information gathered in the assessment.

Section 3 – The Assessment Form

Child's/ Young Person's Details:			
Full Name:		Date of Birth:	
Family Name <i>(if different):</i>		Unique Ref No:	
School/Setting:		Class Teacher/ Key Worker	
Practitioner's Details:			
Full Name:		Role:	
Agency:			
Date Assessment Started:			

Practitioner details, name and role:		Agency:		Date assessment started:	
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In this section identify what is working well (strengths), what are the worries or concerns (needs)

Information about the Child

Development of the unborn baby, infant, child or young person:

In this part you should assess the child in the family. Please consider health, education, emotional and behavioural development, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation and self-care skills. Ensure you have captured the child's experiences to date. Attach information/reports or summaries from professionals currently working with the child.

Summary of what needs to happen:

Information about the parents / carers and other factors

Parents/Carers:

Consider: Basic care, ensuring safety and protection; Emotional warmth and stability; guidance, boundaries and stimulation. Consider parental factors that may impact on the needs of the child and family.

Summary of what needs to change:**Family and environmental factors:**

Consider: Family history, functioning and well-being; Wider family; Housing, employment and financial considerations; social and community elements and resources, including education.

Summary of what needs to change:

The Child's/Young Person's Voice:

Provide information of how the child/young person has been involved in the assessment; this may include working directly with the child, observations and talking to significant adults who know them best. If the child isn't involved in the assessment, state the reasons why.

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Information attached from other professionals/agencies

(Consider this information as part of the assessment)

Date of report:	Name of Report:	Professional's Name and Role:	Agency:	Report attached

Comment on any immediate actions necessary prior to the Initial TAF Meeting

Action:	How will this happen:	Expected date action to be completed	By whom:

Provide the expected details of the initial TAF meeting

Date / Time / Venue	
Chair of the Meeting:	

Information sharing and consent

I agree that this assessment can be shared with the following professionals / agencies to provide help and coordinate support to my family:	
	Y/N
	Y/N
	Y/N
Parental comments:	
Name:	Signature:
Date:	
Child / Young Person's comments:	
Name:	Signature:
Date:	

Additional information / comments:	
Practitioner completing the Assessment:	
Name:	Signature:
Date:	

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Section 3 - Initial Team Around the Family Meeting

This is a meeting with the family and the multi-disciplinary team of practitioners. The **Initial Team Around the Family (TAF) Meeting** should be used to gain a fuller picture of the child, the family and to share relevant information, this will include information from the assessment.

Prior to the meeting, the practitioner leading the meeting should talk to the family about what the meeting will be like, who is expected to attend and how information will be shared.

Professionals working directly with the family and agencies who may provide future support will be invited to the meeting with the consent of the family. There may be, some individuals or services that the family do not wish to attend the meeting. The views of the family should be respected.

The meeting will share information about the strengths, needs and the level of support the family needs. The meeting will identify the team around the family and the lead professional, this information is to be recorded in the TAF Action Plan.

Section 4 - TAF Action Plan

This plan can be used as a stand-alone document created from the TAF meetings. It should be reviewed regularly by the TAF and updated as appropriate. The Action Plan can be used by the lead professional to identify the current family situation and the work completed by other practitioners.

The child, young person and family are working with the TAF members to achieve change, this may be within individual work, groupwork, assessments, strategies or parenting programmes.

An expected date for a TAF review meeting should be agreed at the end of the meeting.

The TAF Minutes and Plan will be shared and agreed with the family and sent out to the relevant TAF members. Any disagreements should be noted within the minutes.

Section 3 - Team Around the Family Meeting Sign In Sheet

(Please tick)

Initial Meeting		Review Meeting	
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Date / Time / Venue	
Family Name	
Chair / Lead Professional	

Family Member	Relationship to the Child	Contact Details
Significant Family members unable to attend		

Professionals Name	Role / Agency	Contact Details
Professionals unable to attend		

Section 3 - Initial Team Around the Family Meeting

Date / Time / Venue				
Chair of the Meeting:				
Child's Name:		Date of Birth:		Unique Reference:

Identify the actions from the assessment form that are completed and any outstanding actions

Action:	How will this happen:	Expected date action to be completed		Additional information By whom:

Meeting Discussion:

Include information from the assessment.

What is working well (strengths) What are we worried about (needs). What needs to happen.

Identify any disagreements. Always consider safety and well-being.

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The Child's/Young Person's Voice:

Provide information of how the child/young person has been involved in the assessment; this may include working directly with the child, observations and talking to significant adults who know them best. If the child isn't involved in the assessment. state the reasons why.

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Information attached from other professionals / agencies involved with the child / young person / family

Date of report	Name of Report	Professionals Name and Role:	Agency:	Report attached (Tick box)

Section 4 - TAF Action Plan

Child's Name		Date of Birth		Unique reference	
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Summary of what needs to change

What would we like to achieve?	What actions are required?	Who will help to achieve this?	Expected Date

Parental comments:

Name		Signature		Date:	
Name		Signature		Date:	

Review date of the TAF Action Plan

Date / Time / Venue	
Lead Professional	

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Section 5 - Team Around the Family Review Meeting

The Lead Professional will arrange the **TAF Review Meeting**. Practitioners and services should be invited if they are working directly with the child and the family and are part of the TAF. It should be possible for other individuals to be invited if they could contribute to family support in the future.

The Lead Professional should discuss with the family what the meeting will be like and who will attend the meeting. The Lead Professional should highlight anything that is working well and any known areas of concern prior to the meeting.

Families may wish to have the review meeting with the Lead Professional and no other agencies. This is acceptable, information from the other TAF members should be provided during this meeting. The Lead Professional must agree how the information can be shared the TAF members. In some areas this will be the practice due to the limited availability of services,

If any TAF member is unable to attend the review meeting, a report or summary of work should be provided prior to the meeting. The TAF member should follow up with the Lead Professional after the meeting to gain feedback.

The meeting will review The **TAF Action Plan**

The parents / carers can talk about what changes they have noticed, if any and highlight what is working well, what are the worries and what they think should happen.

The members of the TAF will provide information of their involvement, observations and interventions.

Information from members not present will be shared with the meeting

The **TAF Plan** will be updated and distributed to parents / carers and the TAF members.

The TAF Review meeting will decide the next steps in relation to further dates to review, closure or transfer.

Section 5 – Team Around the Family Review of the Action Plan

Date / Time / Venue			
Lead Professional			
Child's Name:		Date of Birth:	Unique Reference:

Identify the achievements from the TAF Action plan

Provide a summary of what is working well

Highlight any needs still to be completed

Does the child / family require any additional support from partner agencies
Please provide information and how this will be achieved

Parents Views

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Name		Signature		Date:	
Name		Signature		Date:	

Child / Young Person's Views

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Name		Signature		Date	
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Information attached from other professionals / agencies involved with the child / young person / family

Date of report	Name of Report	Professionals Name and Role:	Agency:	Report attached (Tick box)

Provide information on agencies who have completed work and are no longer part of the TAF

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Information on next TAF Review Meeting

Date / Time / Venue	
Lead Professional	

Information of Closure or Transfer

Closure: provide further information

The targets identified in the TAF Plan have been achieved	
The TAF Plan is being continued within a single agency	
The family no longer consent to the Early Help Process	

Transfer: provide further information

There are safety and wellbeing concerns', the Early Help requires the Step Up to Statutory Social Care	
The family are moving or being posted to another location and the Early Help is being transferred to equivalent agencies in the receiving local authority	

Practitioner completing the TAF Plan					
Name		Signature		Date:	

Section 6 - Closure or Transfer

The Early Help Process may no longer be appropriate for a number of reasons. When the decision is made to close or transfer, the Lead Professional will need to review the outcomes of the work completed, highlight the successful work and any actions that have not been completed. This can be completed within the review meetings or with members of the TAF.

Closure: All identified needs have been met and changes have been achieved. The family can be supported by universal services and/or limited targeted services. The TAF can be closed or single agency involvement only.

The family withdraw consent or disengage and there are no safeguarding concerns

The family withdraw consent or disengage and there are safeguarding concerns.

Working with Social Care

Step Up: There are safeguarding concerns and a referral made to Social Care. Social Care can be invited to the review meeting to address whether the family meet the threshold for statutory intervention.

The Statutory Social Worker will take lead responsibility

Refer to the **Step Up / Step Down Process**

Transfer: There may be unplanned endings, for example if the family are posted. With parental consent the Early Help may be transferred to equivalent agencies in the receiving local authority. The command overseas has no influence or responsibilities for services within any other local authority.

Complete the reason for **Closure / Transfer Form**

Inform the **Early Help Database** (process tbc)

Section 6 - Closure or Transfer Summary

Date of Closure / Transfer: _____

Child's Name		Date of Birth		Unique reference no:	
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Final Review Meeting

Date / Time and Venue	
Lead Professional	
Summary of meeting (highlight successful interventions and identify any actions that have not been completed)	

Parental comments:					
Name:		Signature:		Date:	
Young Person's comments:					
Name:		Signature:		Date:	

Closure:

The targets identified in the TAF Plan have been achieved	
The TAF Plan is being continued within a single agency	
The family no longer consent to the Early Help	

Transfer: provide further information

Safety and wellbeing concerns' the Early Help requires the Step Up to Statutory Social Care
The family are moving or being posted to another location and the Early Help is being transferred to equivalent agencies in the receiving local authority

Additional information / comments:

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Practitioner completing the Closure information

Name:		Signature:		Date:	
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Office use only:

Name of person providing the information:	
Date information provided:	
Date of entry to Early Help Database:	
Unique Reference Number:	

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Step Up – Escalating concerns to Social Care

Step Up can occur at various points across the child's life. 'Step Up' describes the process of supporting children and their families when additional, escalating needs occur.

'Step Up' can also occur to specialist services when children's needs are escalating and outcomes are not being met, despite intervention through the early help or TAF process.

The process is acted upon in a timely manner with no gap in service provision to families. It is important that children are held safely in the transition from one service to another.

The Lead Professional will discuss the concerns with the family if appropriate. Social Care can be invited to the TAF review meeting. When statutory intervention is agreed, Social Care will be the lead agency.

Step Down – De-escalation of concerns from Social Care to Early Help

Step down describes the process that occurs when challenges experienced by a child, young person or their family have been addressed, the objectives within the plan for the family have been met and the identified level of need has moved down.

'Step down' is a crucial facet of practice to prevent re-escalation and re-referral. It is important that professionals work together to develop a plan that will sustain positive progress to improve outcomes for children.

Stepping down from statutory services; there are no safeguarding concerns support is still required by the family for ongoing needs.

It is important that Social Care discuss the ongoing needs and recommendations from the single assessment, child in need or child protection plan.

The Lead Professional can attend the social care meeting for handover.

Reference / Useful websites

Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government: July 2018

Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE: September 2019

Information Sharing, HM Government: July 2018

Fair Society, Healthy Lives, The Marmot Review: February 2010

Early Intervention Briefing Paper, Thomas Powell: July 2019

Early intervention foundation www.eif.org.uk

Signs of Safety www.signsofsafety.net

