



TEA-BREAK GUIDE



Purpose of Early Help

The purpose of Early Help is to put in the right support at the right time so that problems are less likely to escalate to a point where the child becomes vulnerable or in need. Early Help is sustainable so that problems are less likely to re-occur. Early Help can be needed and put in place at any time and at any age. All children, young people and families in Northamptonshire are entitled to receive Early Help. This means offering information, advice, guidance, and support to families as soon as a concern emerges or seems likely to emerge. This is not an additional responsibility for practitioners but an essential part of the 'day job' for all people working with children and families.

What is an Early Help Assessment?

In Northamptonshire our consent based Early Help Assessment Practice Framework is a simple way to help identify the needs of children and families and devise a plan to meet those needs. Its purpose is to provide a co-ordinated response so no-one misses out on the support they need. It is used by all agencies in Northamptonshire who are delivering early help to the families they work with. The EHA can be used to support children and young people between 0 to 19 years, including unborn babies, and can also be used with consent up to the age of 24 (where a young person has a learning difficulty or disability). The person who completes the EHA should act as the Lead Professional (note this may change as the support plan is developed)

What is a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting?

TAF meetings are when the family meet with key professionals to assist the family to produce a support plan and help them achieve their goals. These key professionals can include but are not limited to Midwives, Health Visitors, Schools, Pre-schools and Nurseries, MH support services, Police, School Nursing, GPs, counselling services and Housing. A TAF meeting is usually held every 6 – 8 weeks and should include all professionals that are currently involved with the family. The meeting should be a collaborative and solution focussed approach to improving outcomes for families. If age appropriate, it is best practice to include the child/Young Person in their TAF meeting.

Why would you receive an invite to a TAF?

You will have been invited to a TAF as you are able to offer a service to support with the outcomes identified on the Support Plan. Your service could be a partner agency that is currently working with the family, an agency able to support the family's needs identified in the EHA, or the family have requested that you are invited. This information would have usually been identified during the assessment process by the family.

Expectations and role of a TAF member:

Members of a TAF should all be prepared to play an active role in the meeting, come prepared with updates (or share with the lead professional if unable to attend) on their allocated actions and be ready to offer further services to meet the needs of the family. Prior to the meeting, they should gather the voice of the child/children for their own setting (if applicable) and during the meeting, consider actions that they can take to support the family. Members should observe progress and communicate appropriately with all parties, including the family in an open and honest way and be prepared to take over the role of Lead Professional if it is in the best interest of the family.

Who can support and advise you around Early Help Framework Processes?

You can contact your Partnership Coordinator to discuss Early Help Assessments, and to seek advice and guidance on next steps. You can also contact CFSS@nctrust.co.uk which is our central point of contact for all queries.

What next?

Reminder: If you are the Lead Professional you must ensure that you upload your Early Help Assessment, and all of your subsequent Support Plans through the Early Help professionals page:

[Early Help – Professionals | Northampton Children's Trust \(nctrust.co.uk\)](https://www.nctrust.co.uk/early-help-professionals)