

Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board Early Help Assessment Form Practitioner Briefing

BSCB launched its revised thresholds document [Keeping Children Safe in Blackpool](#) in September 2017. It was accompanied by the Early Help Assessment (EHA) form which should be used to assess, plan and review the needs of all children where there is an indication of a level of need beyond that which can be met by universal services. A recent audit of 25 completed EHA has identified a number of factors that contribute to good assessments, together with a number of avoidable pitfalls. The audit was of a representative sample of children ranging from unborns to 17 year olds and reviewed EHA completed by a wide range of agencies. 12 had been referred for statutory intervention following the assessment, with the remainder managed at an early help level.

What makes a good EHA?

- ⇒ Provide full details of all children and adults, including who has parental responsibility. Someone else may need to use this information. There should be no 'mystery' people appearing later in the EHA.
- ⇒ Remember dad!
- ⇒ Contact other agencies. If you don't know something about a person or issue it is likely that someone else will.
- ⇒ Don't just state information. Assess what it is telling you about the situation and the impact of this on the child.
- ⇒ Record what the child tells you and incorporate this in your assessment. If the child is non-verbal include observations.
- ⇒ Assess the whole family, drawing on multi-agency information for children and family members you may not have contact with.
- ⇒ Clearly state what your concerns are and why you are completing the EHA now.
- ⇒ Fill in all six assessment domains. If there are no concerns in one area record this as a strength.
- ⇒ Use specialist assessment tools either from the [BSCB website](#) or available to your own agency.
- ⇒ The action plan (which can also be completed as part of the Early Help Meeting Record) should flow from the assessment to address identified need and risks, and build on strengths.
- ⇒ Remember to regularly review the assessment and action plan. This helps to start to build evidence of change.

What is the purpose of an EHA?

Early help is most effective when it is delivered by practitioners that the child and family already have a relationship with. Early help is not something to refer to, but the responsibility of all agencies who work with children and their families. EHA should be completed with the child and family and include agreed actions that they own. If you need other agencies to become involved this should be agreed at an Early Help Meeting, held with the consent of the parents.

EHA are a means to gather information, assess it and plan how to address the issues that have been identified. It may well be that your assessment does indicate a need to refer to Blackpool Council Early Help Services or for statutory intervention, in which case the need for this should be clearly evidenced in your assessment. EHA and MARF should not replicate each other. The EHA should not just be used as referral documents for statutory services, but as an assessment document to determine need and how best to address it.

Where can I get help?

If you need support or advice either about completing EHA generally, or for a specific child or family please call the Early Help Hub on 01253 476259 (9am—9pm weekdays, 10am—4pm weekends).

"The Blackpool Way" training course, delivered by BSCB, is available from autumn 2018 and covers EHA, Resilient Therapy and Risk Sensible. [Book here](#)