

The **Early Help Assessment** is for all services working with children to identify families with additional needs as early as possible to ensure they receive the right support at the right time. The assessment is a way of gathering information about children and the whole family in one place and using it to decide what type of support is needed to help a family. The assessment should be used in a timely and organised way with families and reduce duplication of assessment and ensure co-ordination between services.

### Why is it important?

Early help may be needed at any point in a child or young person's life and we seek to offer support quickly to reduce the impact of additional needs and problems that may have already emerged. In Portsmouth, we use the Early Help single assessment to support children and families who have additional needs and sit at Tier 2 and 3 of the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Board Threshold document matrix. In Portsmouth, the Early Help single assessment is also used to identify, assess and provide support to families in line with Stronger Futures priorities.

Children and families with any additional needs (Tier 2) are best supported by those who already work with them. Practitioners will want to engage families in a restorative conversation about how best to support their needs. This will include consideration of completing an early help single assessment.

For children whose needs and circumstances make them more vulnerable (Tier 3), practitioners will require a clear understanding of the child and families circumstances in order to provide purposeful support. When practitioners identify that a family's needs have reached this level a restorative conversation should take place with the family and an early help assessment should be completed.

As part of the Early Help single assessment, a plan of support will be developed and a Lead Professional will be identified. The Lead Professional will work with the family to make sure the plan is put into place, practitioners work together to support the family and identified changes are made.

Practitioners should aim to ensure assessments and plans are completed at the earliest opportunity. The plan should be reviewed on a regular basis (every 12 weeks) by the family and professionals.

### What about the Early Help Single Assessment and information sharing?

An Early Help single assessment is voluntary. This means the assessment and information sharing can only take place with parent's agreement. If the child is old enough they can agree to an assessment themselves.

Early Help Single assessment and review forms should be shared with Portsmouth MASH. Practitioners should send documents securely to [MASH@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

### For more information:

All Early Help documents and practice guidance can be found at <https://www.portsmouthscp.org.uk/professionals/early-help/>

Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership provide regular training course with regards to Early Help. To access training support, practitioners should visit <https://pscptraining.portsmouthscp.org.uk/>