

The **Lead Professional** will make sure that the child and their parent's or carer's understand what is happening at each point so that they can be involved in the decisions that affect them, ensure the Plan is accurate, up-to-date, implemented and reviewed regularly and consult and work with other people working with the family.

The Lead Professional will be someone employed by one of the services involved in supporting the child and family. When the Early Help assessment and plan is undertaken, there will need to be consideration given to who is the right person to take on the role of Lead Professional. In making that decision, the Lead Professional needs to have the right skills and experience and be able to work with the child, the parents, other family members and any other professionals who support the child.

For families identified as facing multiple challenges (see Threshold document - Tier 3), they may need to have access to a Family Lead Professional who can support all members of the family in accordance with the plan. This is a worker dedicated to the family, someone who the family knows by name, who goes into their home and is alongside them, helping them to change.

The Lead Professional will use a restorative approach when working with the children, parents, carers and relevant professionals. Together they will create a holistic plan which supports the family to make changes that ensure the children's needs are met.

Why is it important?

One of our early help aims is to create strong, restorative relationships between the child and family and lead professional. Families often tell us that there are '...too many professionals involved with them' and that they often receive short-term, inconsistent or conflicting support. The Lead Professional has an important role in building a trusting relationship with the family and those who support them and ensuring the agreed plan of support is effective.

Team around the Child/ Family - The team around the child/ family are the group of people who are providing support for the child/ family as agreed in the Early Help Plan. This should include family members and any other 'informal' sources of support, for example, friends and neighbours as well as more 'formal' sources of support, for example, professionals.

Team around the worker approach - Families often tell us that they want '...a worker for my family, not a worker for each of my problems'. The Lead professional will seek advice and guidance from other specialists to enable them to continue supporting the family. This should minimise the need to refer families onto other services.