

## The Early Help Hub Information for professionals

Most of the time families enjoy their lives and can cope with problems that emerge with the help of their extended family, friends and community. When support is required outside of their network, confident and skilled practitioners, usually from their community, work in partnership with families as early as possible to identify their needs and provide the best services to help prevent problems from escalating, this is identified as Early Help

A key element in providing effective help is to identify and address the risk and needs of vulnerable families and reduce the demand for social care services. In 2014 the council made significant changes to how we coordinate support for children and families have complex needs or where intervention should happen at an earlier stage. One of the changes was to establish the Early Help Hub.

The hub is made up of a team of experienced and skilled multi-professionals, using their knowledge and resource base to support professionals to identify the most appropriate Early Help approach, provider or agency to support the family's additional need. They do this by reviewing and discussing information and assessments with practitioners, ensuring that families are tapped into support that is well coordinated and purposeful.

In order to be able to provide support, it is important that the Hub receives a copy of all Early Help Assessments (EHA) Early Help Forms and referrals that MASH identify as best being supported by early help services

### **What should I do if the family and I have identified that they would benefit from accessing additional early help services?**

The **Early Help Form** and the **Early Help Assessment** can be used to access additional early help services and are available on [www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk](http://www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk) under the assessment section.

An **Early Help Form** may be useful if you do not have regular contact with a child or family (such as in a clinical or advice role, where it is not possible to complete an Early Help Assessment e.g. GP, adult mental health services, housing services), but have identified that the family would benefit from additional support.

The form should be completed as fully as possible and *must* include signed consent from the parent/carer. An Early Help leaflet for families is available to help families understand how they can be supported.

Where more than one service or agency is needed an Early Help Assessment (EHA) should be completed with the family. The assessment is structured to assess the family holistically and to generate discussion on what the needs and strengths of the family are. The assessment also enables other professionals to contribute to the discussion and plan for the family. The information obtained helps identify possible solutions with the aim of achieving desired outcomes.



The **Early Help Form** and the **Early Help Assessment**, including guidance on how to complete the assessment is available on [www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk](http://www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk) in the 'Assessment Support' section.

Email [earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk) if you need support or advice on undertaking the assessment with a family. If you would like support to bring together agencies that are working with a family, a locality Early Help Adviser can support you to do so. This is known as a Team Around the Family (TAF)

### **Should I obtain consent from the family?**

Yes! Early Help is consent based and the Hub is unable to share and store families' information without it. Information is recorded on the Early Help Module which is a secure case management tool, similar to the system used by Children's Social Care

You do not need consent to make an enquiry. Please email [earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk) or contact your adviser

### **What should I do once I have completed the Early Help Form or the Early Help Assessment?**

#### **The Early Help Form**

Once you have completed the Early Help Form post in or securely email the signed copy to [earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk) so it can be logged on the Early Help Module. If there are any queries or the information provided is unclear, the hub will contact you. Please complete the form as fully as possible and ensure your contact details are accurately recorded - if the Hub cannot contact you, it could result in delay.

The Early Help Form will be reviewed and an Early Help service or agency identified. They will contact you and the family to discuss the Early Help offer.

#### **The Early Help Assessment**

Once you have completed the Early Help Assessment with the family please send it to [earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk) so that it can be logged on the Early Help Module. If you are external to the Croydon email network, you should send securely - password protect the document and send the password in a separate email.

You should continue to support the family once your assessment has been submitted as it will form the basis of an action plan that you develop in partnership with the family and other professionals working with the family.

It is good practice to hold a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting within 6 weeks of the assessment. The Early Help Adviser team is available to support you in bringing the plan and TAF together. Please email [earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk) on guidance on how to navigate through the Early Help Pathway. This is also available on [www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk](http://www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk) in the Early Help Pathways Operational Guidance.



## Are there any Early Help services?

Yes. The Early Help Hub has comprehensive information about all Croydon's commissioned early help services and can direct practitioners and families to these. They include parenting programmes, counseling services for adolescents and services available through community partners. Services are also listed in the service directory on [www.practitionerspace.co.uk](http://www.practitionerspace.co.uk)

Where children and families needs are complex the hub can facilitate access to council services such as the Family Resilience Service or Best Start Early Help Support

## Where can I access information on Early Help Training?

The hub has a learning and development programme for practitioners. Up to date information is available on practitioner space in the Learning and Development section and the CSCB website where there is a self-service booking system <http://croydonlcsb.org.uk/>

## What is the relationship between MASH and Early Help Hub?

The Early Help Hub is located with and works closely with Croydon MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub), sharing data and reviewing referrals that do not require further investigation by children social care and might benefit from early help

## Early Help Contact

**Email:** [earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.practitionerspace.gov.uk](http://www.practitionerspace.gov.uk)

**Address:** The Early Help Hub, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, Zone C, Bernard Weatherill House, 8 Mint Walk, Croydon, CR0 1EA.

**Please note if it is suspected that a child or young person is suffering or likely to suffer harm a referral should be made to Croydon MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub):**  
[childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk)

