

## Sharing information

During the Early Help process, there may be a time where the lead and/or other professionals ask to share information. This will be if (at any time) we are:

- Concerned that a member of the family has been harmed or abused
- Concerned that a member of the family is at risk or being harmed or abused.

In these circumstances we must follow the Medway Safeguarding Children Board, safeguarding children procedures. We will seek agreement of the child and family before making such a referral **unless** to do so would place the child at increased risk of significant harm

Remember, it is your choice to have Early Help. This process is designed to help transform your life by finding and resolving any challenges you and other members of your family may have by giving you techniques in how to cope with these challenges

### What can I do next?

To find out more about Early Help, talk to someone you have the best relationship with, this could be a teacher, a youth worker or someone from another service you have the most frequent contact with.

#### Find out more:

[www.medway.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.medway.gov.uk/earlyhelp)

#### Call:

01634 338746

#### Email:

[ehth@medway.gov.uk](mailto:ehth@medway.gov.uk)



# Early Help

A guide for parents and carers



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## What is Early Help?

Early Help can transform children's and families' lives giving them the resilience they need to thrive without professional support.

Early Help is about identifying needs and providing support early on, before matters escalate or become more difficult to manage. The aim is to ensure that families needing additional help have one lead person in their lives, so that they do not have to tell their story more than once.

Early Help is an optional service, and therefore it is your choice whether to have this or not.

## Am I eligible for Early Help?

If you are in a family with children under the age of 18, then you are entitled to Early Help. Someone close to you may approach you and ask if you would like Early Help. This help looks different for every family and may be something to do with your child/ren, their health, school attendance or behaviour. Alternatively, you could have worries about income, debts or housing which is affecting family life. Maybe you or your family have been/are affected by domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol crime. The Early Help process is designed to help address these issues, and put a plan in place to overcome them.

## Where can I get Early Help?

If you would like support, speak to a professional in your life who you have a good relationship with and you trust. If you are unsure who to turn to, you can always contact our team directly, and we will work with you to identify the best person to speak to.

[www.medway.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.medway.gov.uk/earlyhelp)

## What will happen when I ask for Early Help?

Once you have asked for Early Help, the person whom you have decided to lead (the trusted professional in your life) will sit with you and members of your immediate family gathering information. This information will help inform an Early Help Assessment.

An Early Help Assessment may take a number of weeks to complete, but is nothing to worry about. The lead will constantly check with you that the information is accurate and will seek your agreement when it is complete. This is to show a snapshot of your family life now, and is a starting point to see what you would like to change.

Once the assessment is completed, the outcome will be different for every family. The person you spoke with may have an idea of what can help, and help you get access to this, it may be decided a specific service (for example, Family Support Service) could benefit your family and a referral is made, or it could be decided a group of professionals involved with your family come together to discuss how best to help.

In all cases, the Early Help Lead will then work with you to start to develop a plan of action. This shows where you would like to be, and the steps you are going to take to get there. After the plan is complete, the lead will then hold review meetings, which can be face to face or over the phone, with other professionals, or just with the family, to discuss your progress and a chance for you to update them on your journey.

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