

A guide to the **Early Help Assessment** and **Team Around the Family**



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What is an Early Help Assessment?

Many families, at one time or another, need extra support. An Early Help Assessment is about ensuring that you and your family receive the right support at the right time from the right professionals.

The assessment is completed with you to identify what assistance you and your family need and what to do next. Once an assessment is completed, the person completing the assessment may be able to help you themselves or may refer you to another service. In some cases, it may be more appropriate for a Team Around the Family meeting to be arranged.

What does Team Around the Family mean for me and my family?

The Team Around the Family is just that – a group of professionals that will meet with you and your family to identify how they can best work together to support you to overcome your difficulties. You will probably know most of the people at the meeting but, with your agreement, new people may be invited to offer your family additional support and assistance.

Those invited to the meeting could include children's centre workers, health visitors, school nurses, teachers, housing staff and workers from voluntary agencies.

At the meeting, you and the team will put in place a plan that is based on the needs identified in the Early Help Assessment and it will include actions for the professionals and for you and your family.

To ensure the meeting is co-ordinated and you have a person to contact if you have any queries, a lead professional is appointed at the first meeting. The role of the lead professional is to:

- act as a single point of contact for your family and a sounding board for you to ask questions and discuss concerns
- co-ordinate the delivery of the actions agreed by the practitioners involved in the Team Around the Family process
- reduce overlap and inconsistency in services.

You will have a say on who the lead professional is. To ensure it is working, the plan is reviewed at a further Team Around the Family meeting.

Do I have to attend the meeting and do my children have to attend?

As a parent or carer, you have to agree for the meeting to take place and, for the process to work, you need to be part of the meeting because you know your family best. In most cases, we would like the children to attend at least part of the meeting so they can have their say too, but we recognise there may be occasions when this may not be possible; for example, with very young children.

What happens to my information?

You give consent as to which agencies are given copies of the Early Help Assessment and minutes from the Team Around the Family meeting. Your information will be held securely and be read by the agencies you give consent to.

For more information, contact:

TAF Co-ordinator

 **01895 556144**

 **taf@hillington.gov.uk**

