



Cumberland Early Help Assessment Training – Pre-course reading

Important

Please read and understand all of the information below before you attend the Cumberland Early Help Assessment Training, it will support your understanding of the aims of Early Help and the Early Help Assessment Process.

Overview

The aim of this training is to increase knowledge and enable practitioners to work more effectively with children, young people and their families using Early Help, and identify needs early to give all children the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

This training will focus on how to complete a good quality Early Help Assessment to ensure it is thorough and robust to meet the needs of children and their families.

Sessions times

Early Help training will start at 9:30am, (please arrive 15 minutes before), and finish at 3.30pm. Tea, coffee and water will be available on arrival and at breaks, but please make your own arrangements for lunch. There will be a lunch break of 30 minutes.

Address details and Parking

Venue	Address	Parking
Whitehaven Copeland Centre.	Catherine street Whitehaven CA28 7SJ.	Charges Apply. Closest Car Park: Sports Centre Car Park, 1 Castle Meadows, Whitehaven CA28 7RG (Staff only parking at Copeland Centre).
Allerdale House.	Allerdale House New Bridge Road, Workington CA14 3YJ.	Free parking when you Log your vehicle registration on arrival.
Cumbria House.	117 Botchergate, Carlisle CA1 1RD.	Charges Apply. Closest Car Park: Cecil St Car Park, 12 Aglionby St, Carlisle CA1 1NX. (Staff only parking at Cumbria House).

A summary of learning from the Supporting Families (formerly Troubled Families) Programme, (July 2025)

- For early help to be effective, it must not be seen as a service, but a system and a way of working. It works best when there is joint responsibility and accountability.
- The programme has demonstrated the importance of stepping in early, to help families and prevent issues from escalating.
- The programme has emphasized data maturity alongside practice transformation to effect meaningful and sustained improvements across the system for babies, children, young people and families.
- A system of support for families has been shown to be more effective when based on relationships, partnerships and collaboration.
- Whole family working is a cornerstone for creating lasting change.
- Measuring both need and outcomes have benefitted understanding and improvement across the system.

Working together to safeguard children DfE December 2023. (Last updated June 2025)

[Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](#)

“Nothing is more important than children’s welfare. Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable, and loving home. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support. This requires individuals, agencies, and organisations to be clear about their own and each other’s roles and responsibilities, and how they work together”.

Please read the excerpt below from Working Together as it as it outlines the importance of Early Help and will explain why we have reviewed the Early Help paperwork, processes and training this year.

Working together to safeguard children DfE December 2023. (Last updated June 2025)

[Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](#)

Section 1: Early help

118.

Early help is support for children of all ages that improves a family’s resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. It is not an individual service, but a system of support delivered by local authorities and their partners working together and taking collective responsibility to provide the right provision in their area. Some early help is provided through “universal services”, such as education and health services. They are universal services because they are available to all families, regardless of their needs. Other early help services are coordinated by a local authority and/or their partners to address specific concerns within a family and can be described as targeted

early help. Examples of these include parenting support, mental health support, youth services, youth offending teams and housing and employment services. Early help may be appropriate for children and families who have several needs, or whose circumstances might make them more vulnerable. It is a voluntary approach, requiring the family's consent to receive support and services offered. These may be provided before and/or after statutory intervention.

119.

The Early Help System Guide provides a toolkit to assist local strategic partnerships responsible for their early help system in their area. Effective provision relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to:

- identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- undertake an assessment of the need for early help which considers the needs of all members of the family
- ensure good ongoing communication, for example, through regular meetings between practitioners who are working with the family
- co-ordinate and/or provide support as part of a plan to improve outcomes. This plan will be designed together with the child and family, and updated as and when the child and family needs change
- engage effectively with families and their family network, making use of family group decision-making, such as family group conferences.

120.

A lead practitioner should co-ordinate the activity around the family, ensure the assessment and the family plan responds to all needs identified, and lead on ensuring the family co-produce the plan. The plan might include the family network. The time commitment to deliver this role will vary family by family depending on the complexity of their needs. Where appropriate, local authorities should engage families, including children, to have a say in who their lead practitioner is, and have a process in place to collate feedback on their relationship with them.

121.

The lead practitioner role could be held by a range of people. More details about which practitioners may act as a lead practitioner, their roles and responsibilities along with additional guidance, are provided in the Early Help System Guide.

Identifying children and families who would benefit from help

122.

Local organisations and agencies should have in place effective ways to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs of individual children and families. Local authorities should work with organisations and agencies to develop joined-up early help services, which can be delivered through a Family Hub model where they exist, based on a clear understanding of local needs. Local authorities should use the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)⁵⁰ to inform their early help offer.

123.

Multi-agency and multi-disciplinary training will be important in supporting this collective understanding of the demographics and needs of the local community, the local practice framework, and the services available to support children. All practitioners working with children and families, including those in universal services and those providing services to adults with children, need to understand their role in identifying emerging problems.

They need appropriate training so that they:

- know when to share information with other practitioners and what action to take to support early identification and assessment
- are able to identify and recognise all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- have an understanding of domestic and sexual abuse⁵¹, including controlling and coercive behaviour as well as parental conflict that is frequent, intense, and unresolved
- are aware of new and emerging threats, including online harm, grooming, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, radicalisation, and the role of technology and social media in presenting harm
- are aware that a child and their family may be experiencing multiple needs at the same time

124.

Practitioners should be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care (EHC) plan)
- is a young carer
- is bereaved
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home⁵²

- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised⁵³
- is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- is suffering from mental ill health
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child
- has a parent or carer in custody
- is missing education, or persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of fulltime education
- has experienced multiple suspensions and is at risk of, or has been permanently excluded

Please familiarise yourself with the information found via the hyperlinks.

Early Help web page via CSCP

[Early Help | Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

This is where you will find all of the information that will aid you in your support for children and families. Please familiarise yourself with content of these pages.

Family Help and Prevention Strategy 2024-2027

[Family Help and Prevention Strategy 2024-2027](#)

This is a relatively short document that sets out how we will make the right help and support available, at the right time, for all our families to build confident, healthy and thriving communities across all of Cumberland

Early Help Assessment Guidance for External Partners of Cumberland Council, (will not be on web page in time for training session on 07-11-25)

[Early Help Assessments \(EHA\) | Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

This guidance document has been developed to support practitioners external to Cumberland Council with the Early Help Assessment process to ensure a high-quality, timely service to children, young people and their families.

It has been developed from feedback from practitioners supporting children and families in Cumberland. It links to the internal standards our children's workforce adheres to but acknowledges the way you work alongside children and families if different.

Please read this guidance thoroughly, it will take you through all areas of Early Help.

Early Help – Partnership and Assurance Team

[Early Help - Contact, Consultancy, Advice and Guidance | Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Details of your Early Help Area Officers and a brief overview of the Early Help - Consultancy, Advice and Guidance they can offer.

Early Help Assessment Processes

[Early Help Assessment Processes.pdf \(PDF, 407.6KB\)](#)

This document explains the process of initiating an Early Help Assessment, (also noted in guidance above).

Consent

[Early Help Assessment Consent for Information Sharing and Storage 2025.docx \(DOCX, 47.15KB\)](#)

[Privacy Notice - Family Help - Partnership and Assurance.pdf \(PDF, 162.1KB\)](#)

Early Help is consent based, and all Early Help work should be undertaken in an open and honest way. This means the families should know why Early Help is being recommended and who information might be shared, how it is stored and how they can access this. These documents outline this.

Information Sharing

[DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers](#)

Multi-Agency Threshold Guidance

[Cumberland Multi-Agency Threshold Guidance](#) and [Understanding the Level of Need and the Practice Response](#)

Early Help Assessment Chronology

[Early Help Assessment Chronology .docx \(DOCX, 423.97KB\)](#)

Chronologies are a vital tool for practitioners working with children and their families, supporting practice in a number of different ways. They are crucial to:

- capture significant events in the child and family's life
- consider the child's felt and lived experience
- understand the source of actual and potential harm impacting on children and young people
- identify protective factors and to decide next steps for intervention in a range of contexts.

Family Help Networks

[Family Help Networks.pdf \(PDF, 659.17KB\)](#)

Networks are a group of people who you have any form of relationship with.

Supporting Families

[Supporting Families – Whole Family Working: Informing Future System Reform Annual report of the Supporting Families programme 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

Additionally

Please ensure you are signed up to CSCP newsletters and five-minute briefings. <https://cumberlandsafeguardingchildren.co.uk/sign-our-newsletters-and-5-minute-briefings>