

### Top tips for Family Support Meetings

Think about the meeting in three sections

- Preparation
- The meeting
- What happens next

#### Preparation

Be clear about the purpose of the meeting

Consider who needs to attend and invite them

Consider the involvement of Parent and Child/Young person when setting the time and venue:

- Do parents work?
- Are there younger children who need child care?
- Are there any barriers to parental and child/young person's participation e.g. language, hearing, accessibility of venue?

Balance between pressures to convene meeting quickly with availability of people to attend

Ask people who are unable to attend to send a written report

Prepare the parent and child/young person

Is the venue suitable, private, accessible and comfortable? Don't forget to book it!

Give consideration to who might be the most appropriate person to act as Lead Professional

#### Follow pro forma for meeting

- Check details of parent and child/young person for accuracy
- Do introduction and take apologies
- Explain the reason for the meeting
- Review agencies currently involved and services being provided
- **First FSM** - discuss the Early Help Single Assessment (EHSA) looking at strengths and outstanding areas of need
- Consider priority desired outcomes
- List actions to be taken, by who and in what timescale
- Identify Lead Professional (Key Contact)
- Agree process for review
- Ensure that everyone present has had the opportunity to add comments or pose questions

- Check that everyone has understood what has been discussed and the agreed outcomes and actions (especially the family)
- Ensure the action plan is agreed and understood (record any dissent)
- Ensure that everyone knows that they should communicate with the Lead Professional if the plan is not working
- Check that there are resources/services to support need
- **Review FSMs** – review action plan from previous FSM
- Consider if Early Help (EH) needs to continue
- If not, record reason and complete evaluation of EH process with family. The Early Help Process then closes.
- If EH needs to continue, consider priority outcomes and develop action plan as above
- Follow same process as for first FSM including identifying Key contact and arranging next review

### **What happens next?**

Type up Family Support Meeting Record and forward to all family members and practitioners who attended the meeting.

Professionals involved with the support plan should continue to communicate with each other

The Key contact should remind people of the date for the review meeting

If there are needs which remain unmet, the Key contact should report these to the area Early Help Officer using the Learning Log.



## EARLY HELP PROCESS

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### Top Tips for Key Contacts

- Always ensure that the family and the other workers involved in the family support action plan have your contact details.
- Set a review date at the first family support meeting.
- Plan your contacts with the child/young person and family so they know that you will be actively involved.
- Establish rapport with the child and family.
- Remember you are part of a team working with the family and you are not expected to do everything! Work collaboratively with other practitioners.
- Make sure you have contact details of the other practitioners who are providing support to the family.
- Be clear with the other practitioners who are contributing to the family support action plan about how you will maintain contact with them. If by phone, how often will you phone them?
- Be clear about the circumstances in which other practitioners will need to contact you, e.g. family not co-operating with an aspect of the plan that they are responsible for.
- If there are two Key contacts establish how you will liaise with each other.
- Check out with the child/young person and parents how the support package is working out. Don't wait for a review to find out.
- Be prepared to reconvene a review meeting if the plan isn't working.
- Don't be afraid to ask other practitioners who are providing support as part of the plan for their views.
- If another practitioner is not delivering their contribution to the plan as agreed, raise this with them and identify the reason. This will hopefully prompt them to focus back on the plan.
- If the issue continues, raise it through the Learning Log (speak to your EH Officer about this).

**SUPPORTING THE LEAD**  
**PROFESSIONAL (Key Contact)**

DO	DON'T
<p><b>Family Support Meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise and attend family support meetings.</li> <li>• Respect all parties i.e. listen to all involved.</li> <li>• Be creative and flexible but also realistic about what you can offer. Provide all relevant up to date information that you have.</li> <li>• Actively contribute to and speak up at meetings.</li> <li>• Be punctual or send apologies or reports if not attending.</li> <li>• Be honest about your capacity and ability.</li> <li>• Show commitment, do what you said you would do.</li> <li>• Be prepared and stick to the point/issues.</li> </ul> <p><b>Implementing actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep Key contact up-to-date as appropriate and respect LP role as coordinator and communicator.</li> <li>• Take responsibility for your own action point keeping to agreed deadlines.</li> <li>• Keep to specific tasks set out in the action plan.</li> <li>• Inform Key contact if the family change their minds over services or withdraw consent.</li> <li>• Inform and forward relevant assessments as soon as possible.</li> <li>• Trust one another and report only if action is not done/implemented as planned, or if situation changes.</li> <li>• Ensure good communication e.g. contact numbers, availability, changes/difficulties with the plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be elusive and difficult to reach.</li> <li>• • Use 'jargon'. Lose sight of what is important/relevant.</li> <li>• Set unrealistic targets/timescales or agree to anything your service cannot deliver. Have unrealistic expectations of what agencies can provide or promise other agencies' resources.</li> <li>• Sit on information (unless there are confidentiality issues).</li> <li>• Come unprepared to meetings. Make changes to the plan without consulting the Key contact 'Dump' on the Key contact.</li> <li>• Be judgemental if something does not get done.</li> </ul>

## **Guidance Notes for chairing Family Support Meetings**

It is very important that this meeting is solution-focused. Don't dwell on the problems of the past. Work together to help the family move forward and to feel more positive about the future.

N.B. There is no need to produce separate minutes or a verbatim record of a Family Support Meeting. You only need to complete the 'Family Support Meeting Record'.

### **Welcome**

Thank everyone for attending and explain the purpose of the meeting.

*Thank you all for coming. Today's meeting gives us an opportunity to plan the next steps to support \_\_\_\_\_ and his/her family. The purpose of the meeting is to pull different agencies and professionals together in order to co-ordinate our approach in providing what \_\_\_\_\_ needs to help him/her make progress.*

### **Introductions**

Go around the table and invite individuals to introduce themselves and to explain their role don't forget to introduce yourself.

*My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a (job title) \_\_\_\_\_.  
The reason I am here today is because \_\_\_\_\_.*

### **Apologies**

Identify those people that were invited to attend the meeting but have been unable to make it.

*(Names) send their apologies for their non-attendance at today's meeting.*

### **Overview of current provision**

Identify those agencies currently involved with the child/young person and briefly describe what service they presently provide.

*At the moment (agency) \_\_\_\_\_ is involved with \_\_\_\_\_ by providing him/her with \_\_\_\_\_.*

### **1. Initial Family Support Meeting**

Briefly review any developments since Early Help Single Assessment (EHSA) was written and record under 'Review Notes'.FSM Form.

### **Identify strengths/needs of child/family**

Using the information on the Early Help Single Assessment (EHSA) form, talk through the strengths and needs of the family as identified by them when the EHSA was completed.

*The conclusions that were identified at the end of the Early Help Single Assessment were that \_\_\_\_\_'s strengths are and his/her additional needs are \_\_\_\_\_.*

Talk through the aims that the child/family identified on the EHSA, explain to those present at the meeting what the child/family hope to get out of this and how they hope an integrated working programme will help support their child.

Ask the young person/family which of their needs they want to prioritise and focus upon at this meeting. Reach agreement with them and the practitioners present about which desired outcomes should be the focus of the action plan drawn up at this meeting.

*Having identified \_\_\_\_\_'s additional needs, the child/young person/family have stated that the things they want to change and the outcomes they want to achieve are \_\_\_\_\_*

## **RECORD THE AGREED DESIRED OUTCOMES IN THE LEFT HAND COLUMN OF THE ACTION PLAN ON FSM**

### **Discuss how the professionals present can address the desired outcomes:**

Go through the desired outcomes one by one and invite those present to suggest ways they can work together to address them.

Record the agreed action points (there may be more than one per desired outcome) in the 'Action' column of the plan.

Identify individuals to implement each specified action ('Who will do this?')

Nominate a date by which they hope to have achieved the action ('By when?')

*Starting with the first thing that the child/young person said they wanted to change, which was \_\_\_\_\_, what could we action that would achieve this outcome? Who will work towards achieving this? By when?* Repeat for all desired outcomes listed to produce an action point to meet them.

***What services will be involved, then, in meeting \_\_\_\_\_'s needs?***

### **Set a date for a review**

Agree a date to come together again to review progress made with the action plan, *We need to review the progress of this action plan at a future date to see if \_\_\_\_\_'s needs are being met or if we need to make other arrangements, perhaps involving other services, to help support \_\_\_\_\_, when do you feel would be a good time to review progress made? Let's agree a date, time and venue.*

### **Identify the Key Contacts**

Discuss with the group, and agree together, who is best placed to take the lead in implementing this action plan and coordinating the necessary provision.

*Based on \_\_\_\_\_'s additional needs and the points now listed in the Action Plan, who do we all agree would be best placed to coordinate the additional provision and to monitor \_\_\_\_\_'s progress?*

### **Opportunity for child/family to EHSA form and the actions identified.**

Invite the child/family to make any comments they feel necessary about the EH process and their views about the actions they have identified. *Would you (child/family) like to make any further comments on the assessment or the strengths and needs that were identified?*

## **2. Review Family Support Meeting**

Briefly review progress with reference to Action Plan agreed at previous FSM and record on FSM Form

### **Can the Early Help process be closed?**

Discuss with young person/family and practitioners whether the needs identified in the EHSA and at previous FSMs have now been addressed. Decide together whether or not there is still a need for an integrated multi-agency plan. If there is not or if the young person/family do not wish to continue with the process, the Early Help (EH) Process should be closed.

### **If EH process is closing, complete Closure Form**

### **If EH process needs to continue, proceed as follows:**

Ask the young person/family which of their needs they want to prioritise and focus upon at this meeting. This may include continuing to address needs highlighted in the previous Action Plan but may also include newly identified needs or needs recorded under 'Details of other identified needs to be addressed in the future' on page 12 in the record of the previous FSM.

Reach agreement with the young person/family and the practitioners present about which desired outcomes should be the focus of the action plan drawn up at this meeting.

*Having identified \_\_\_\_\_'s additional needs, the child/young person/family have stated that the things they want to change and the outcomes they want to achieve are \_\_\_\_\_*

### **RECORD THE AGREED DESIRED OUTCOMES IN THE LEFT HAND COLUMN OF THE ACTION PLAN FSM Form.**

### **Discuss how the professionals present can address the desired outcomes:**

Go through the desired outcomes one by one and invite those present to suggest ways they can work together to address them.

Record the agreed action points (there may be more than one per desired outcome) in the 'Action' column of the plan.

Identify individuals to implement each specified action ('Who will do this?')

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*Starting with the first thing that the child/young person said they wanted to change, which was \_\_\_\_\_, what could we action that would achieve this outcome? Who will work towards achieving this? By when?*

Repeat for all desired outcomes listed to produce an action point to meet them.

*What services will be involved, then, in meeting \_\_\_\_\_'s needs?*

#### **Set a date for a review**

Agree a date to come together again to review progress made with the action plan,

*We need to review the progress of this action plan at a future date to see if \_\_\_\_\_'s needs are being met or if we need to make other arrangements, perhaps involving other services, to help support \_\_\_\_\_, when do you feel would be a good time to review progress made? Let's agree a date, time and venue.*

#### **Identify the Lead Professional**

Discuss with the group, and agree together, who is best placed to take the lead in implementing this action plan and coordinating the necessary provision.

*Based on \_\_\_\_\_'s additional needs and the points now listed in the Action Plan, who do we all agree would be best placed to coordinate the additional provision and to monitor \_\_\_\_\_'s progress?*

#### **Opportunity for child/family to comment on the assessment form and the actions identified.**

Invite the child/family to make any comments they feel necessary about the EH process and their views about the actions they have identified.

*Would you (child/family) like to make any further comments on the assessment or the strengths and needs that were identified?*