

Early Help Workshop



Welcome & Housekeeping

- Confidential safe space to have open and honest discussions.
- Engage in exercises and discussions.
- Questions – ask as going along.
- Fire alarm and emergency procedure.



Aims of the training

Gain a greater understanding of:

- The Early Help Process - Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle
- The role of the lead professional and the team around the family (TAF).
- The support available to lead professionals and team around the family (TAF) members.
- Why Early Help is important and the difference it makes.

Check in

Tell us about a memory when someone helped you or you helped somebody.



Neglect

Neglect is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) as:

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The Early Help Strategy for Blackpool 2021–2023

The right help, the right time,
the right place, the right people



What is Early Help?

‘Early Help in Blackpool is our approach to working with children and families with a range, or a combination of, social, health or educational needs as soon as problems arise. Families should be supported to understand their children’s and their own needs or problems and be provided with advice, guidance, support and services to help them before higher levels of support or services are needed’

Blackpool Early Help Strategy 2021 - 2023

Early Help Strategy

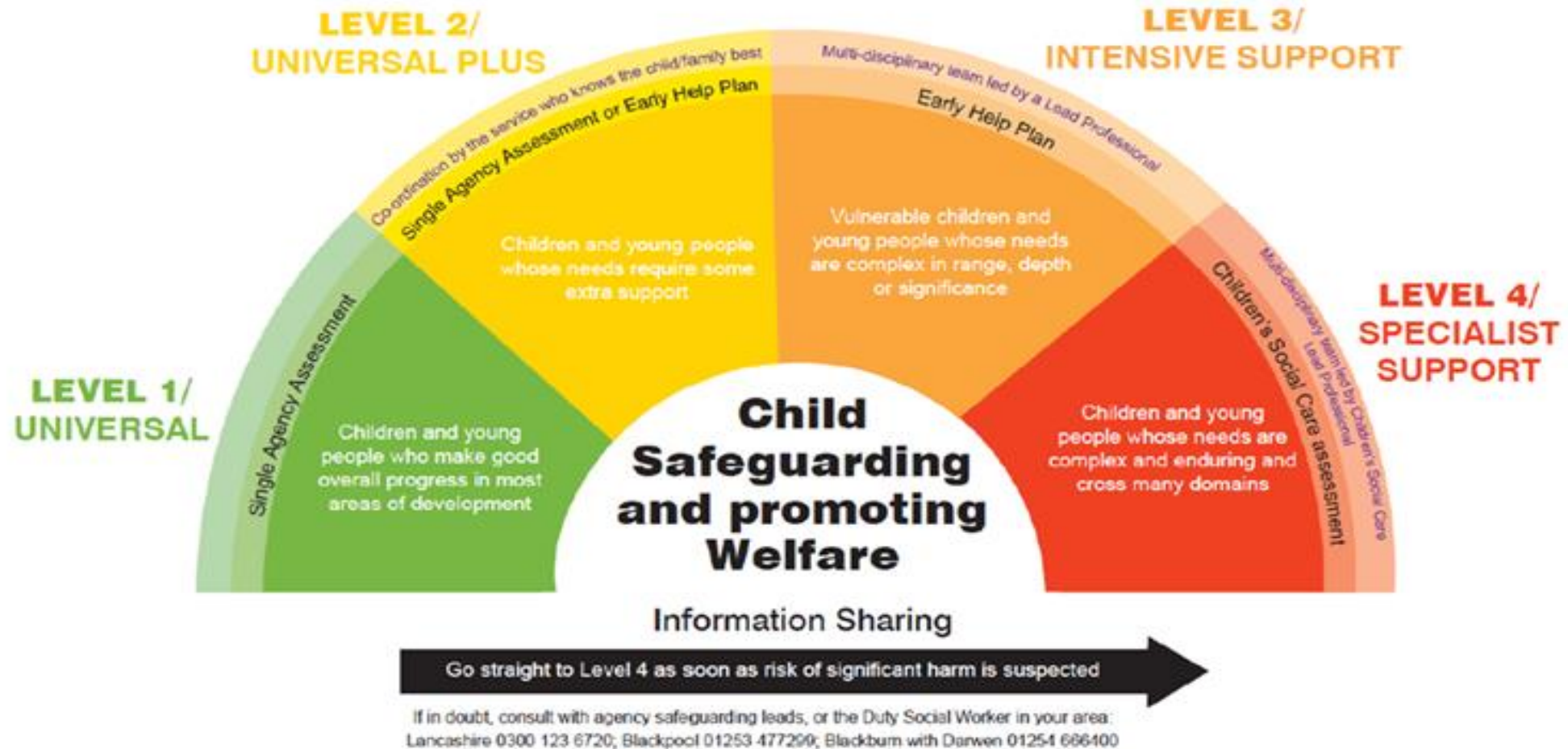
The right help - Undertaking a robust assessment with the family and those services that know them, using these to understand children and family's strengths and needs, then planning effectively to support them.

The right time - Offering help as soon as needs or problems begin before any higher levels or specialist services are needed or when a child or family ask for it.

The right place - Supporting families in their community, home or where they feel most comfortable.

The right people - Early help works best when those people who know the family well or speak to them regularly lead on the work, working with a range of people to support meeting the needs of children and their families (multi agency approach).

Continuum of Need - Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire



Working in line with Blackpool Families Rock values



Head: knowledge culture and thinking

Don't be nosy (ask yourself if you really need to know this)
Use plain language
Share knowledge
Take care in how you talk and write about us
Share what you know about us
Be non-judgemental
Walk in my shoes



Heart: Feeling

We are all human
We can all make mistakes
Trusting relationships are important
Respect each other
Be kind
Let's be brave together
Never give up on me
See me (I am unique)
See the good things
Share the power



Hand: the doing of what we think and feel

See our strengths
Find out what works for us
Show you've listened by your actions
Be clear about expectations
Get to know me
Know who is important to me
Support us to develop our own plans and solutions
Have meaningful meetings
Celebrate positive changes
Make time for me
Be honest

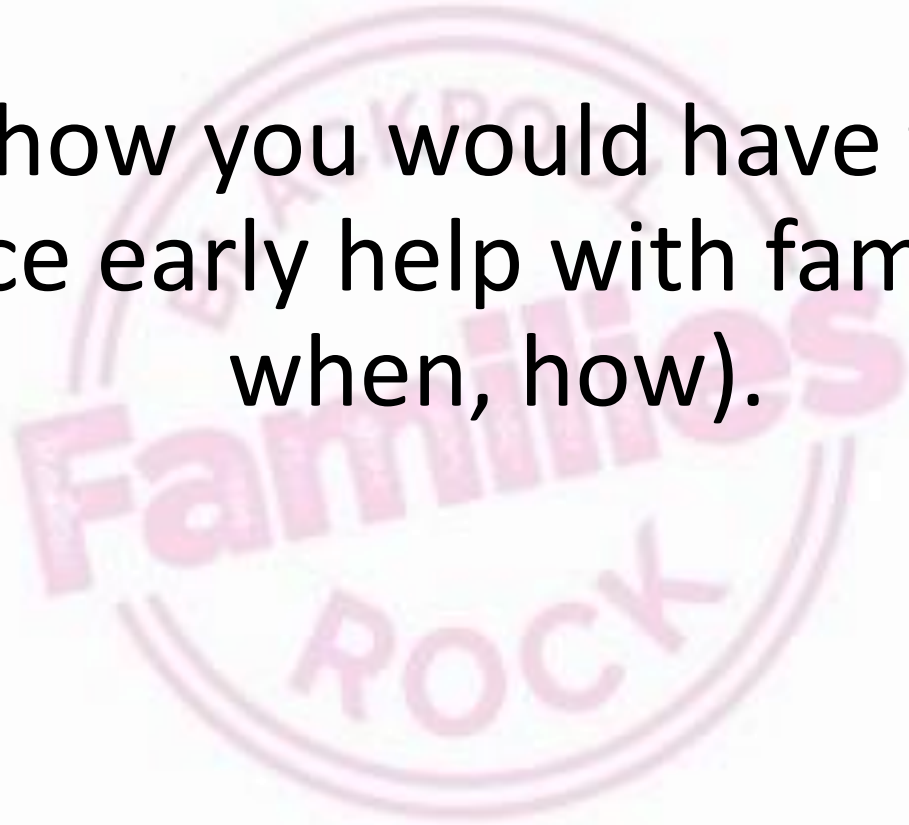
The early help assessment and process

- The early help assessment (EHA) is a tool to gather information
- Any professional can complete an EHA & should do this at the earliest opportunity
- Use the early help process - assess, plan, do and review
- TAF – multiagency working

No child should ever go without help when they are experiencing hardship that is created for them.

Activity

Think about how you would have the discussion to introduce early help with families (setting, when, how).



How would you introduce early help support to a family?

- Person who identifies the need should speak with the family
- Be mindful of the language used
- Explain the benefits of gathering information about the family
- Have open and honest conversations about worries
- Include absent parents

Agreement to participate

It is essential when discussing early help support with a family that we gain agreement to participate in the journey.

Working Together (2018) states that for an assessment to be effective...

"It should be undertaken with the agreement of the child and their parents or carers, involving the child and family as well as all the practitioners who are working with them. It should take account of the child's wishes and feelings wherever possible: their age; family circumstances; the wider community context in which they are living."

Activity

We need to be creative when engaging families, they may not always be as open to support as we hope.

If you came up against some resistance to engage, what might you do to break down barriers and build relationships?

ASSESS

Ensuring that we fully understand a families' strengths and their challenges and the impact of both on their children. By listening to their views and opinions, with those of the people who know them well, we will be able to better understand each family, their need and the impact of those needs on their daily life.

REVIEW

Bringing the family together regularly with the team of people working with them to celebrate progress, challenge each other where progress hasn't been made and identifying next steps is critical to the success of the work. Children and young people's voices should drive the work throughout the process.

Effective early help work has four steps

PLAN

Using the information gathered through the assessment process we will work with the family to create their plan. This will set out the needs of each family member, what needs to happen to meet these including identifying services and resources that are needed and who will do what. Care should be taken not to overload the family by trying to do too much at once. Actions should be prioritised with the family and realistic timescales set.

DO

Find effective ways to work with parents and children in a problem-solving way that increases parents' confidence in meeting their children's needs. Ensuring that actions in the family's plan happen, supporting children and parents to access the services, programmes and help that they have identified that they need.

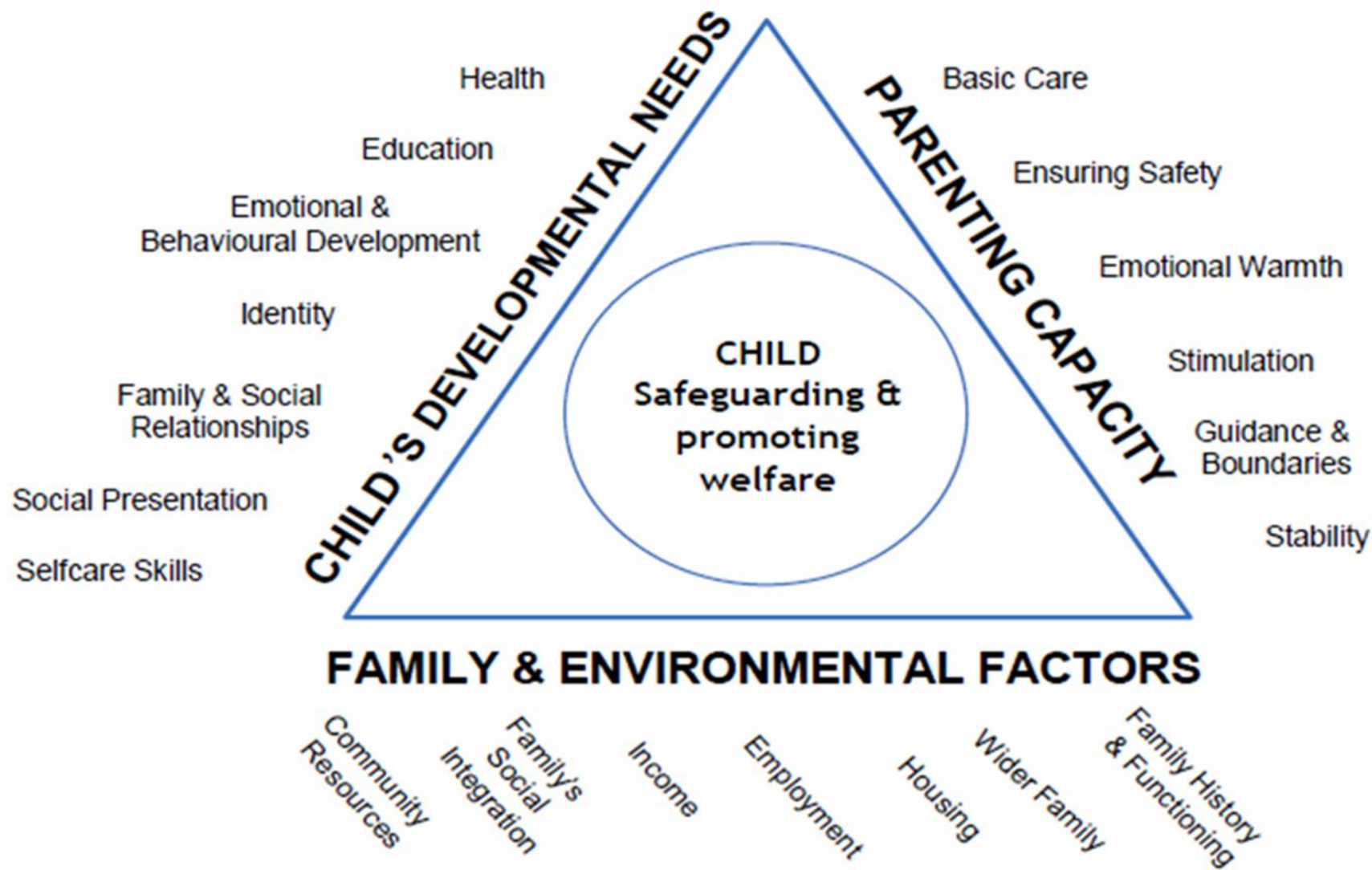
What does assess mean?

Crisp and colleagues state that assessment *'involves gathering and analysing information about people with the aim of understanding their situation and determining recommendations for any further professional intervention'* (2003).

ASSESS

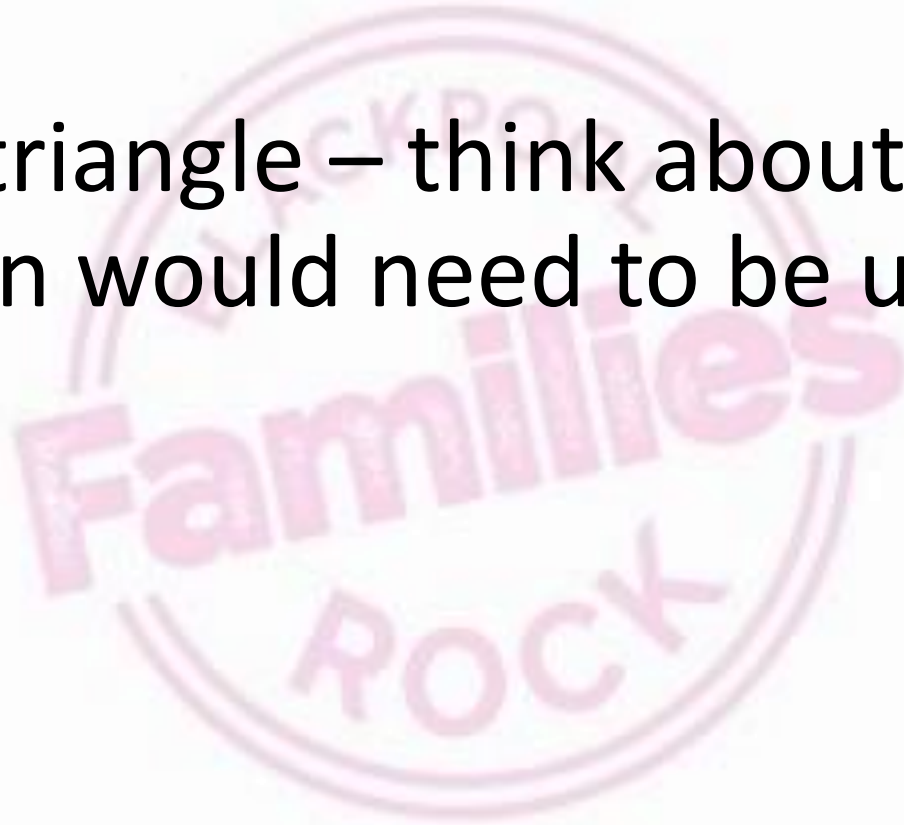
- Lead Professional coordinates the information gathering
- Unbiased assessment - Multi-agency
- Identify support needs for plan
- Action quick wins
- Completed in 35 working days
- Share a copy with the family
- Think ahead & book TAF meeting in.

Assessment Framework



Activity

- Using the triangle – think about what information would need to be under the headings.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=om3INB>
[WfoxY](#)



Strengths and protective factors

It is important to recognise strengths and protective factors in assessments as these can be built upon – we must understand how these strengths can reduce the presenting worries.

Engagement with dads/male carers

- "The myth of invisible men"
- Dads and male carers are often excluded from assessments
- We need to better understand the role of dads/male carers within the family.
- More confidence in engaging with dads/male carers

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x14_2chx3IE



Child's voice

The child's own view of their life and experiences are an essential part of an assessment. Their views should be reflected throughout the assessment and any work completed with the family. It is important we develop a picture of a child's daily lived experience which will help us understand their needs.

<https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/babyexpressextras2>



<https://youtu.be/dYnLzSUQc6U>



Capturing the child's voice

Some guidelines for talking with a child:

- Ensure all children/young people are spoken to alone
- Explain in an age-appropriate language
- Explore children's fear and worries
- Use communication tools
- Let them ask questions
- Check they understand
- Ask if there is anything they feel you can help them with
- Include direct quotes of what the child has said

Analysis

Analysis takes the assessment beyond surface considerations.

Analysis helps you to make sense of the information gathered to consider what needs to happen next.

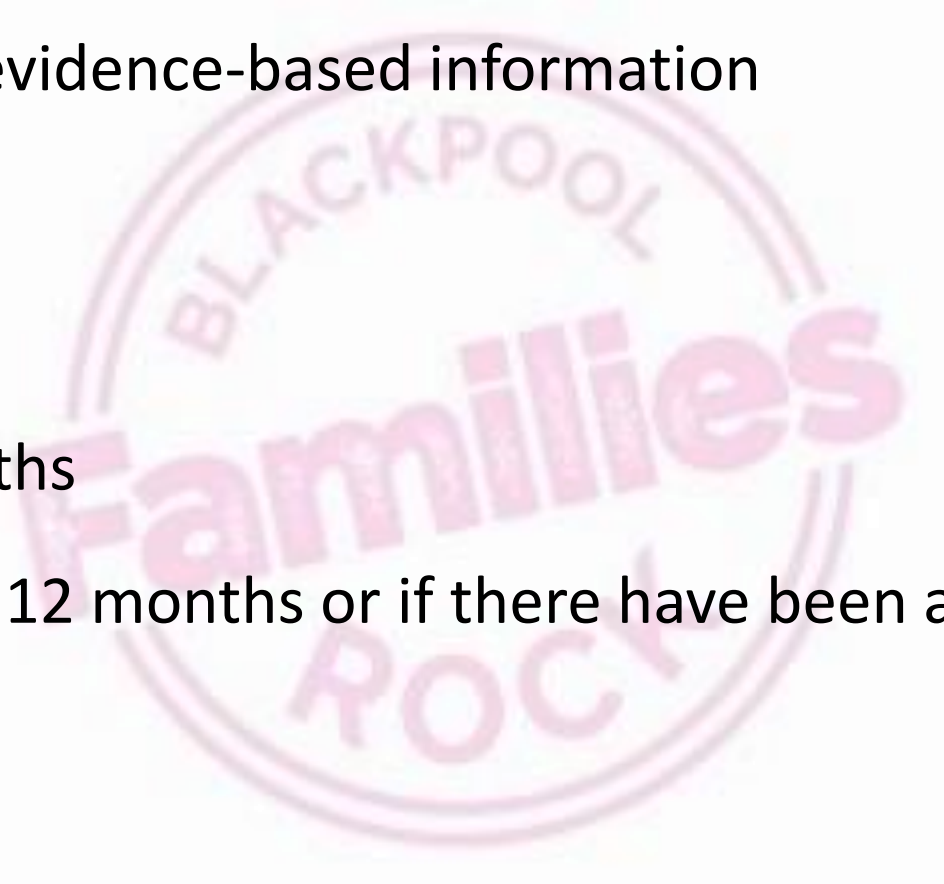
.... **'So what?'**

Considerations for forming an analysis

- What is working well?
- What are we most worried about and why?
- Be explicit about the unmet needs of both parents and the child.
- What are the things that make it harder for the parent to look after their child?
- What is the impact of the above on the child - what do they say, what do you see?
- Do parents recognise and share the concerns; are they willing and able to make a change and put the child's needs first, if not, why not?
- Is there a shared understanding of what is good enough?

What makes a good assessment?

- Clear, accurate and evidence-based information
- Unbiased
- Child's voice
- Acknowledge strengths
- Re-assessment after 12 months or if there have been any significant changes



PLAN - Initial TAF meeting

- No more than 10 days after the assessment has been completed
- Prioritise the areas of need
- Harm reduction work – safety planning
- SMART plan & share responsibilities
- Give the family a copy of their family plan
- Agree date for next meeting (4-6 weeks)

It is not a family meeting without the family.

Activity

Formulate a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Accurate, Realistic, Timely) plan using the case study.

DO

- Continue to work with the family
- Do what you say you're going to do.
- Action imminent needs that arise
- Share significant events with TAF members

REVIEW

- TAF meeting every 6 weeks to review progress
- Include feedback from child
- Celebrate success and challenge
- Identify additional support needs
- Continue this process until needs are met
- Consider escalation

It is not a family meeting without the family.

Closure/Stepdown

- At the final TAF meeting when the action plan has met the family's needs (or level of need has reduced) and there is evidence of positive impact on the child the Early Help Assessment can be closed/stepped down.
- An exit strategy including signposting to universal services and identified strategies for the family to sustain progress should be in place.

Activity

- Role of LP and TAF members



The Lead Professional's role

LP should :

- Co-ordinate the assessment, i.e., gather information from others and make sense of it (analyse information).
- Draft the initial plan with the family.
- Co-ordinate reviews.
- Attend and engage in reviews regularly - written update if not*
- Ensure that the child's voice is heard in meetings*
- Take responsibility for actions in the family plan*
- Support parents to take part in the process*

LP should not:

- Be left with all the work to do.
- Be the sole decision maker.

The TAF member's role

TAF members should:

Contribute to assessments and include the 'so what' (analysis and impact).

Attend and engage in reviews regularly - written update if not*

Share the responsibility of recording minutes of meetings

Ensure that the child's voice is heard in meetings*

Support parents to take part in the process*

Take responsibility for actions in the family plan*

Ensure the early help process continues if the LP is not available.

TAF members should NOT:

See the LP as the sole decision maker

Leave the escalation of concerns about a child to the LP

Services

Local services & partner agencies to support: [FYiDirectory](#)

Service directory (Available to Education): [PSHE - Blackpool Services Directory](#)

Training (Available to Education): [PSHE - Learning Development for Practitioners](#)

Parenting Courses: (sarah.greene@blackpool.gov.uk)

Being a Parent, Caring for Babies and Toddlers & Safeguarding for Parents.

Managing challenging behaviour course (via Carer's Centre)

Call Alison Brown on 01253 393748 for more information.

Advice Line – 01253 478959

The line gives professionals working in services that come in to contact with children and families direct access to a Social Worker for advice and guidance without sharing identifiable information.

Resources

Neglect strategy [BSCB Neglect Strategy](#)

Early Help literature and assessment [Early Help Documents](#)

[Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire \(proceduresonline.com\)](#)

Request for Support referral (This replaces the previous MARF form)

[Request for Support Referral - Blackpool Council](#)

Post course evaluations

We are always looking to improve and develop our workshop and welcome honest feedback.



We are here to support if you need us



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