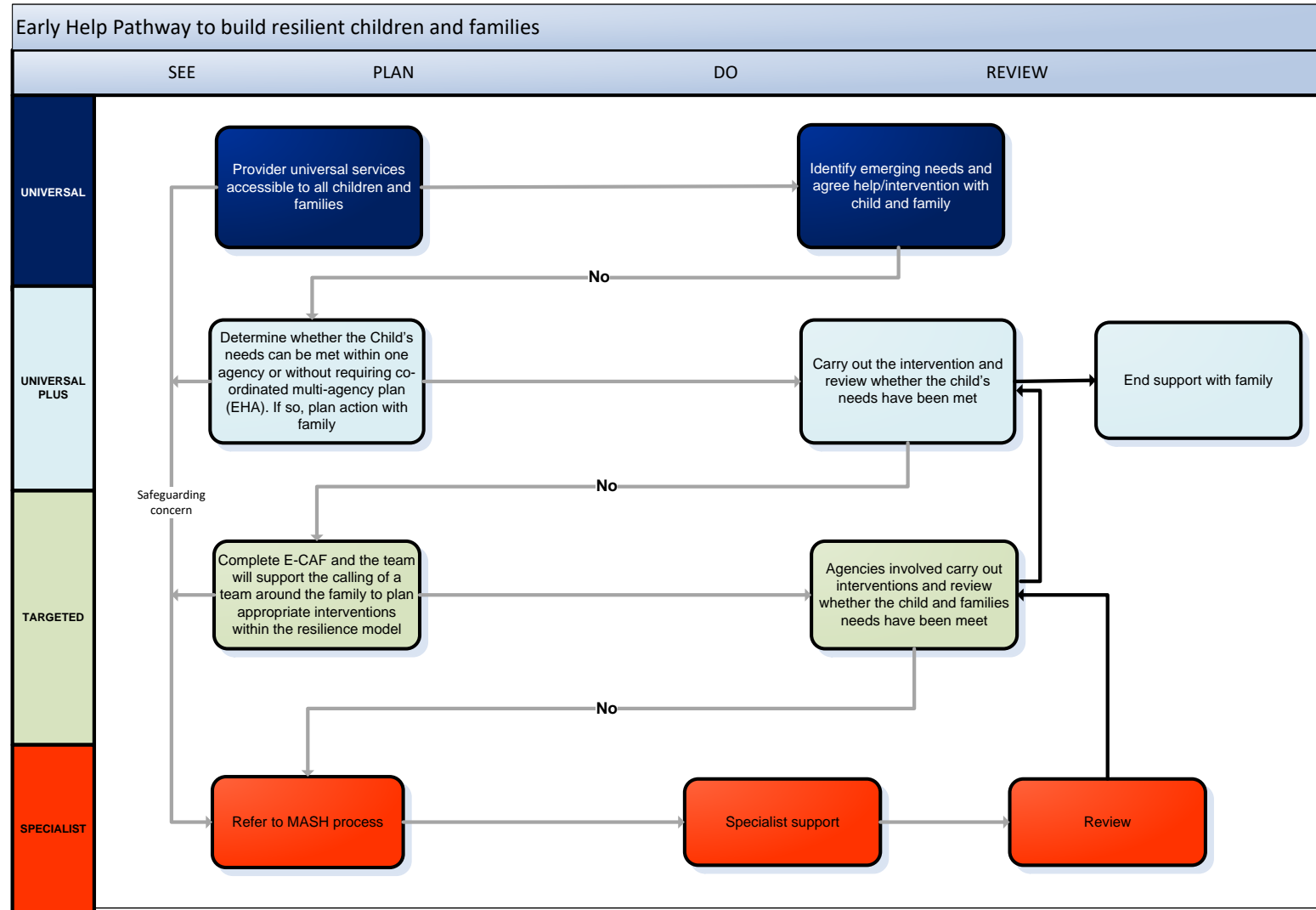


Barnet's Multi-Agency Early Help Panel Protocol

1. Overarching pathway



2. Description of the Hub model

The local authority, children's centres, health agencies, education, police, substance misuse, Housing, Voluntary Sector and a range of service providers work together to improve the way we meet the needs of children, young people and families who need early help services.

We have implemented a locality framework for delivery that ensures children, young people and their families receive a seamless early help offer that meets their needs when and where they need it.

The framework does not change how you - as professionals - access services for children, young people and families or change the types of services that are available to them. It does, however, encourage multi-agency consideration about the allocation of resources to reduce duplication of provision and facilitate joined up assessments, plans and interventions for families which effectively utilises the knowledge, skills and resources available within the partnership. It will minimise the need for families to repeatedly be stepped up to children social care or stepped down from children social care as their needs change, as well as the requirement for them to repeat their 'story', engage in multiple assessments or attend multiple appointments. A multi-agency panel of key providers in the locality meets regularly to allocate resources to new allocations of Early Help assessments and review existing interventions when this is not achieving improved outcomes for children.

3. Aims of the Multi-agency panel

- Identifying need and intervening early to prevent problems escalating is at the heart of the Multi-Agency Early Help Panel (MAEHP)
- Multi-agency working to create a better understanding of the whole family's needs, leading to the right service first time
- Build resilience and develop capability and capacity to prevent and enable families to resolve their problems
- Whilst we will have a whole family approach, work with the wider family should always be viewed in relation to 'how will this improve resilience and outcomes for the child'

- Each agency is responsible for providing appropriate representation as part of the MAEHP, so that all the known needs of the child and family are shared
- The outcome of the MAEHP would be shared with all parties involved ensuring the voice of the child is heard

4. Early Help Panel Protocol

Panel members need to acknowledge and explore not only the lived experience of the child, but also consider the cultural make-up of the family and the child's experience of any discrimination they may have faced and how this can be addressed. Panel Members also need to be aware of their own cultural biases in this exploration and be willing to challenge issues of disproportionality. In Family Services we have recognised the need to ensure our work on addressing racism and inequalities is two-fold, it is about listening to, supporting and creating change and opportunity for our workforce and it is also about ensuring the children we support are able to effectively engage in education and have equal opportunities to thrive.

As Executive Director of Children's Services, Chris Munday is leading disproportionality work for residents, and in particular for children to ensure that their voices are represented, their experiences understood, and their opportunities are equal. From our Listen Up Research and Laurelle Brown Consultancy we still have more to do and need to create an environment of equality; for our workforce and the children, young people and families we work with from racially minoritized backgrounds.

It is important as members we treat our partners with respect and only challenge in a professional way but also that all Panel members are obliged to call out racism without adverse impact, in line with Barnet Family Service's Anti-Racism Action Plan, which stresses that we have a zero-tolerance of racism and discrimination in the Service'.

Further information about Barnet's Family Services' Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion policies and key documents can be found at: <https://barnetcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/BWFamilyServices/SitePages/Anti-Racism,-Equalities,-Diversity-and-Inclusion.aspx>

5. Membership

Representatives at the panel
0-19 Service/Team Manager (Chair)
0-19 Early Help Coordinator
Panel Coordinator
SEND Teams
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
0-25 Service Team
Community Safety
Police
Housing
Voluntary Community Services (as required)
Health - School Nursing
Parenting Intervention Hub
Probation
Adult Mental Health
School (child dependant)
Barnet CAMHS
BICS (Barnet Integrated Services)
Substance Misuse Service (CGL)
Barnet Adult Social Care
Domestic Violence Service (Solace/RISE)
Education Welfare

- **Roles and responsibilities**

Members should have seniority within their service or organisation to allocate cases within their service or team. Each member of the panel should prepare for the meeting by:

- Checking the list of children to be discussed against their agency's database
- Being prepared to share information and contribute their area of expertise in a meaningful multi-agency discussion
- Knowing the capacity of their agency to take the lead and commence Early Help Assessment with families recommended through the panel
- Providing timely updates as requested by the team manager or chair
- Each member must remember to remain professional, respectful and polite of other services/members of panel when presenting and sharing information

- **Frequency**

Meetings are held weekly and will take place at the same time held virtually using Microsoft Teams.

The Panel will hold one annual face to face review meeting where partners have an opportunity to meet up physically to share thoughts and ideas on the process highlighting the positives and improvements.

- **Chairing**

Meetings will be chaired by the hub Service Manager or Team Manager for each locality. The role of the Chair is as follows:

- Screening of appropriate cases prior to the meeting
- All cases identified by Wednesday midday will be circulated for Wednesday afternoon to panel members who will have 4 working days to collate information and present the following Tuesday at panel.
- Identify the lead service or organisation for each case where a decision is needed
- Prepare case information for the panel coordinator to send out to panel members
- Allocate and track the case to determine whether it could be closed to the MAEHP, it needs to return to the panel (stuck cases) or it requires escalation.

- **Agenda**

- Welcome and introductions
- Discuss new Early Help referrals
- Review open cases that may require additional interventions
- Review open cases with children social care where the risks have reduced but oversight of Early Help would benefit the child
- Identification of lead agency who will take on responsibility for completing an Early Help Assessment and to provide a time frame for the first TAF meeting
- Discussion of “stuck “cases with an agreed plan of how to move forward
- AOB (including partnership updates)
- The meeting will hold a 15-minute break in discussion at 11am

The MAEHP will enable swift identification of the most appropriate intervention for the family in need of support, and will recommend one or a combination of the following:

- Initiate an Early Help Assessment to be carried out in one of the hubs or in the community
- Initiate a Universal Plus intervention
- Initiate step up to MASH
- Further follow up/signposting to be completed by the Early Help Coordinator

- **Preparation**

The Business Support is responsible, in each locality, for ensuring appropriate preparation for the meetings. Their responsibilities include:

- Preparing the agenda for the meeting by producing a list of all the cases to be discussed (maximum of 5 cases per locality weekly)
- Sending a secure email to panel members with the list of children and young people in advance to allow them time to prepare and bring any information or intelligence ahead of the meeting
- Ensuring there is appropriate access to the Early Help database - EHM

- Ensuring that a case note is created to record the panel recommendation on EHM and any new information is entered in the case note
- The Business Support will update and maintain a spreadsheet of all the children and families who are discussed. MAEHP outcomes will be fed back to members as necessary.

- **Information sharing**

Whilst always applying the tests of proportionality and necessity to the decision to share information, the protection of children or other vulnerable persons would clearly fulfil a public interest test when passing the information to a partner agency whose work would facilitate this aim. All information shared with a partner agency must be relevant to the case in point.

Information held by other agencies that will be shared in the Early Help Hub may have been gathered where a duty of confidence is owed. Duty of confidence is not an absolute bar to disclosure, as information can be shared where consent has been provided or where there is a strong enough public interest to do so.

- **Agreement of Families to work with Early Help**

When a family's case comes to panel the following statement applies:

When we ask you for information, we will comply with the law, including the GDPR. The only reason we will pass on information without your (the family's) consent is if there is a legal requirement or duty to do this, for example, if there is a risk of significant harm to a child or young person or risk of serious harm to an adult. In most cases we will discuss this with you first. You may withdraw your consent for the Early Help Assessment at any time. If you do withdraw consent, your details will be retained for a limited time due to legal and operational requirements. Where a family has a wide range of needs the Early Help Assessment may be used to access particular services funded by the Barnet's Family First programme. [For further information on the collection, storage and protection of privacy visit <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/privacy>

- Agreement from the families to information sharing will be gained in the MASH prior to information being shared with the panel
- If consent is not given, the case cannot be discussed at the Multi Agency Early Help Panel

- **Early Help Assessment**

The Early Help Assessment (formerly CAF) is an early help inter-agency assessment. It offers a basis for early identification of children's additional needs, the sharing of this information between organisations and the coordination of service provision. Early help assessments should identify what help the child and family require preventing needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.

- **TAF**

The Team Around the Family (TAF) is a group of practitioners that are identified within the Early Help Assessment process that provides continuing coordinated support for the child and the family. It enables integrated working between multiple-agencies using a clear plan and review process with the family to improve outcomes for children.

Good Practice and the TAF

- Parents are equal members of the TAF team
- Each member of the TAF agrees to work as a closely collaborative and individualised team
- A Lead Professional facilitates each individual team
- The support provided to the child and family is integrated as far as possible
- There is a pro-active effort to ensure that each TAF is founded in good working relationships based on respect, empathy and personal integrity

- **Support**

If there are issues in establishing the right services/team around the family during the EHA process, the case will return to the MAEHP for discussion. Case to be raised prior to the meeting with the hub co-ordinator and presented by the lead practitioner to the panel, any 'stuck' cases or those that may require escalation should be notified to the coordinator (same time scales so

Wednesday lunch time for circulation to panel and discussion after 4 working days) Any safeguarding issues should be referred immediately to the MASH and not wait for a panel discussion.

- Please see below the referral process in to the Multi-Agency Early Help panel:

