



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**



Multi-agency Early Help Assessment Quality Assurance Framework

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Contents

Introduction	3
Impact for children, young people and families	3
Voice of the child and family	3
Setting standards	4
Monitoring our performance	4
Analysing and tracking data	5
Making changes to our standards and practice	5
Process Map	6

Introduction

The Multi-agency Early Help Assessment (MEHA) is a central part of enabling and ensuring effective multi-agency working in the Wokingham Borough and should be an integral part of practice across all agencies. Documents and tools have been developed to support a range of agencies to deliver this work, which will seek to ensure that practitioners are able to offer the best support options to families at the point of need.

Providing early intervention support means being pro-active in offering extra help to children, young people and families, by using approaches that promote and strengthen their resilience. By building on the strengths of individuals and communities to develop new ways of thinking about and responding to their difficulties, we can empower families to help themselves.

Impact for children, young people and families

Central to Wokingham's partnership approach to early intervention and prevention is our ability to support children and families at the point of need; and to be able to measure and demonstrate the impact of any intervention.

The Early Intervention and Prevention Partnership has a mandate via the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy¹, to introduce methods to ensure that the Multi-agency Early Help Assessment process is being conducted in a high-quality manner. This Quality Assurance Framework is governed by a multi-agency Early Intervention and Prevention Steering Group that reports to the Children and Young People's Partnership Board (CYPP). The framework's implementation will seek to monitor and improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

It is expected that all agencies will have appropriate measures in place to ensure that their staff are following the MEHA procedure.

Assessment tools, exemplars and training to support practitioners undertaking the MEHA will be provided by the Early Intervention and Prevention Steering Group, both through bespoke training and via the [Early Intervention](#) page on the Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) website.

Voice of the child and family

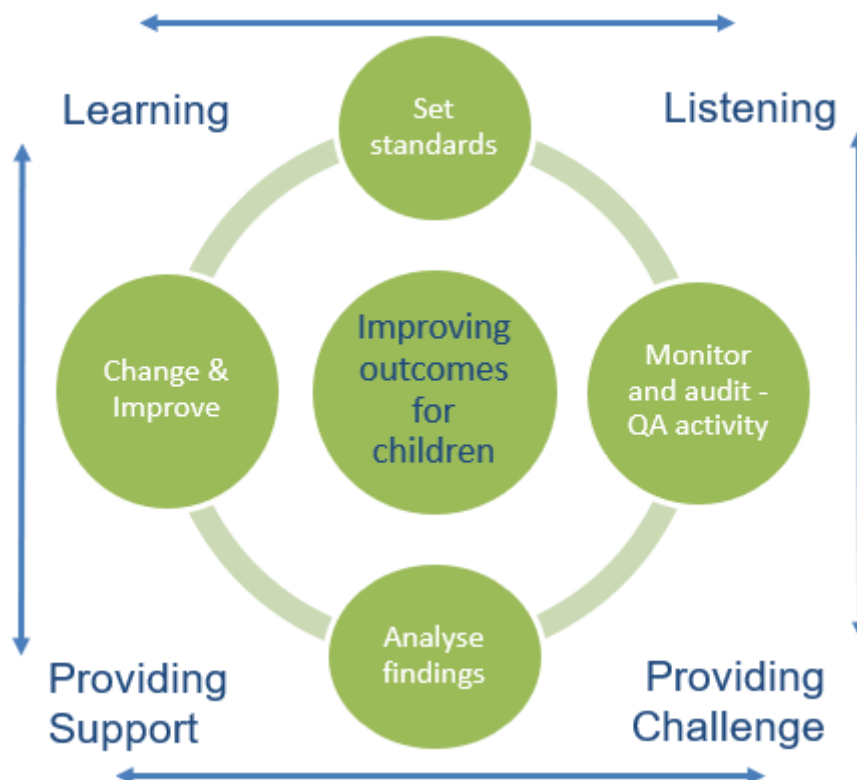
Capturing the journey of the child and family is vital to underpinning the objectives of the Quality Assurance Framework. This is crucial in helping us improve our response to children and families, including children with additional support needs.

A Child and Family Feedback Form has been developed to capture the views and experiences of the child, young person and family once the assessment process has been completed and the appropriate level of support has been identified. This support could range from a family-owned plan, a Team around the Family meeting, signposting to other support services or

¹ The Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy can be found in full [here](#)

referring into Children's Social Care. The child and family feedback will be owned by the respective partner agency, who will collate the information and provide feedback to the steering group.

Diagram 1: Wokingham's Multi-Agency Early Help Assessment Quality Assurance Model



Setting standards

An integral component of any system of quality assurance (QA) is to have a clear and accessible framework of standards or expectations. Not only do such standards promote consistency and a shared understanding of what good practice looks like, they also allow effectiveness to be measured in an objective and consistent way at regular intervals for Quality Assurance purposes.

A Multi-agency Early Help Assessment Practice Guidance has been carefully developed with these objectives in mind, by providing a comprehensive and detailed overview of what is expected of all early intervention and prevention partners in Wokingham. A copy of this document is available on the [Early Intervention](#) page on the WBC website.

Monitoring our performance

We intend to monitor our performance using various sources of information. These include:

- **Listening to children and families** - Via routine questionnaires and by taking the opportunity to talk to children and families about their experience of being supported

via a MEHA. The feedback is owned by the agencies completing the MEHA. The agency will provide feedback reports to the Early Intervention and Prevention Steering Group.

- **Listening to partners** – Using the practitioner feedback form, questionnaires will be completed by the practitioner after every MEHA. Reports will be shared with the steering group.
- **Audit work** - Quarterly audits to determine the quality of MEHA's will be completed by members of the partnership, to measure the impact of the assessment process and identify where improvements can be made.
- **Tracking trends and themes** – Useful data is collated from the family and practitioner feedback forms to help track trends, themes and improve services. Quarterly reports will be prepared by the Early Intervention and Prevention Steering Group.

Responsibility for the governance of this activity will be led by the **Early Intervention and Prevention Steering Group**. Comprised of members from across the Wokingham Early Intervention and Prevention Partnership, as well as family representation, this group will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the roll out of the MEHA across respective agency settings.

Analysing and tracking data

Analysis of the data will take place in a timely and robust fashion. Using information gathered through feedback and audits, we will bring together a single data set that will provide a picture of the children and families who have been supported via a MEHA. This data set will allow us to monitor the number of assessments completed by the partnership, identifying how many families have been supported and in what way. For example, whether they have been supported via their own family plan, whether they have been supported by a range of practitioners through a Team Around the Family meeting, or whether they have been signposted to any of the other relevant services.

The Early Intervention and Prevention Steering Group will also contribute to the narrative for future Ofsted inspections, by drawing on case audits, feedback from users and impact evaluation surveys.

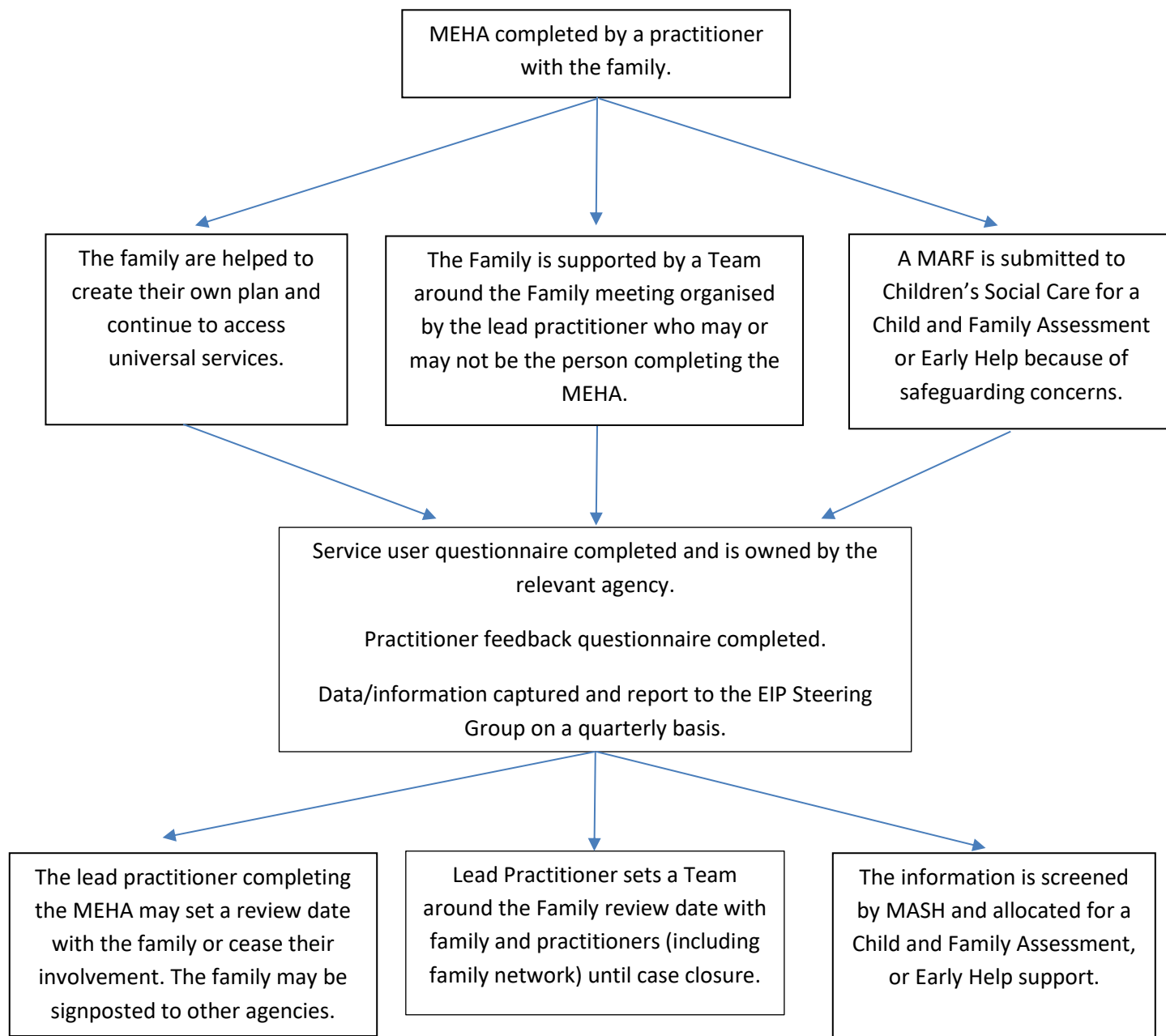
Making changes to our standards and practice

It is important to note that the QA cycle may not always progress in a linear fashion, in that it is likely to shift as new priorities and sources of information emerge. The information gathered during the audit process will let us know the quality of the assessments and the impact they are having on improving lives for children and families at the earliest stage.

Process Map

This process maps outlines the possible outcomes arising from the completion of a MEHA.

Wokingham Multi-Agency Early Help Assessment (MEHA) Process Map



Note: This process does not replace the safeguarding process. Where there are safeguarding concerns, a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Form (MARF) should be completed.