

## **Step Down Guidance**

Step Down enables professionals from Children's Social Care, Early Help Services and a range of other partners to support the child/family intervention and plan as they move between requiring statutory, safeguarding and specialist support, and targeted and universal services and interventions. Step Down is an extremely important function to ensure that children and families receive consistent, seamless support, at the right time and from the right professionals and partners across the borough.

The decision to 'Step Down' will be made by the Social Care Team Manager, in conjunction with the social worker. This may have been informed by a Child Action Meeting (CAM), or CP Review Conference. The desired outcome is that all interventions are proportionate to the family's needs and at the optimum level to have the maximum impact in terms of supporting the family to achieve sustained change and preventing families from stepping back into social care. The child and family should experience the process as seamless and without delay. In all cases of step down a lead professional should be identified and agreement reached that they will undertake this role as part of the step down support.

Any professional supporting the family can take the lead professional role. For example, school nurses, teachers, health visitors, family support workers, mental health support workers, Health professionals or special educational needs coordinators. The important thing is that they have a good relationship with the family.

If partners do not agree with the decision to step down, they should refer to the Escalation Procedure on Bolton's Safeguarding Children's Partnership website.

## **Early Help and Working Together**

Early Help may be needed at any point in a child or young person's life and the Early Help Access Point (EHAP) seeks to offer support quickly to reduce the impact of problems that may have already emerged. The Early Help Access Point Partnership Workers can provide you with advice and guidance about Early Help processes including, Early Help Assessments (EHA), Team around the Family (TAF) meetings and Targeted Early Help services. The EHA form is currently under review and partners are requested to continue to use the current EHA until further notice. Partners are also advised: -

- You should continue to use early help processes as outlined in the Framework for Action
- Early help assessments, updated versions and plans should be submitted to the usual email [BoltonISA@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:BoltonISA@bolton.gov.uk). It is essential that when submitting child action reviews, you ensure the EHA has been submitted. This ensures effective version control
- Requests to close Early Help Assessments should be submitted to the email address as above
- Enquiries to check if an early help assessment is currently open should also be submitted using the email above. You will be notified if there is an open EHA, and if there is, you will be provided with details for the lead professional
- Lists of open early help assessments are no longer being provided to individual agencies detailing their early help assessments. Services and agencies are required to make their own arrangements to track the early help assessments they undertake
- If you require advice or guidance relating to early help interventions or resources, please contact Early Help Access Point (EHAP) on 01204 331 5000 (option 1) and speak to one of the Partnership Workers Carly Smith or Kelly Hyman