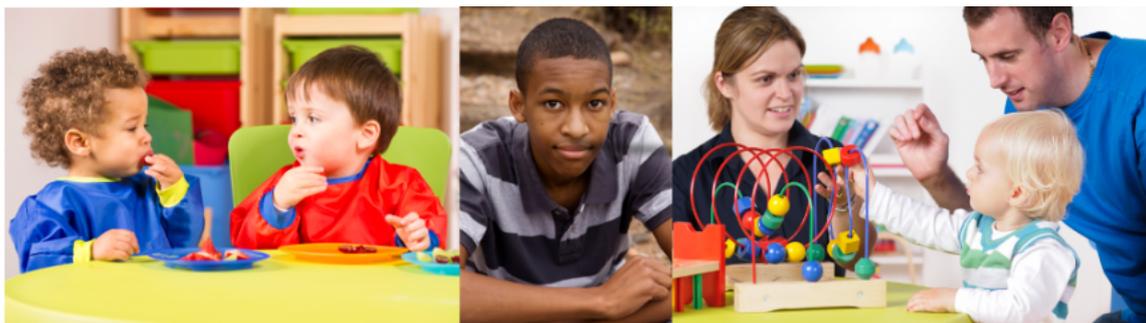




Single assessment for early help

A guide for professionals

What is it?



The single assessment for early help is designed to support families and professionals to work together to achieve the best possible future for children and young people.

We recognise that every family can benefit from some extra support from time to time and that it is most successful when everyone works together.

The single assessment for early help encourages everyone involved to develop an understanding of a family's strengths and challenges. It considers the support needed in all areas that affect a child's development – from health, education and social development through to housing and family relationships.

Further information for professionals is available in [the single assessment for early help toolkit](#).

Who can initiate a single assessment for early help?

Anyone who knows the family can initiate a single assessment for early help, for example: teachers, health visitors, family support workers, youth support workers, children centre support workers, school health nurses.

A child, young person, parent/carer or a practitioner can request an assessment.

How does it help?

A single assessment form guides professionals to ask the right questions to help assess the needs of a child or young person.

The form provides a clear way of recording what is happening in a child or young person's life.

As part of the process, families are asked to agree to share their personal information with professionals, in order to discover what could change to meet the needs of their children.

Wherever possible, all professionals, parents and children and young people should contribute

towards completing the single assessment form. However, it is a voluntary process and no-one should be forced to take part.

It is possible for a parent or young person to complete a single assessment form themselves to share with others, as long as this does not make the assessment too subjective.

On completion, the single assessment form needs to be submitted to Access and Response Team (ART) 01454 866000 , email: accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk

What is the role of the lead professional?

The role of lead professional must be taken on by one of the professionals working with the family, and where possible, one who the family has chosen.

All other professionals must share information appropriately and ensure that the lead professional is kept up to date.

The lead professional will convene the first 'team around the family' meeting, and set the next review meeting.

There should be just one lead professional for the whole family. However, it is of course everyone's responsibility to work with the whole family.

What happens?

The lead professional should consider whether a team around the family meeting may be useful to work out the best way forward and convene a meeting if it is.

It is important to ensure that an accessible meeting is planned for all the professionals working with the family, together with the parents/carers and where possible the child or young person too. The most important person and focus of the meeting should be the child (or children).

The meeting must take account of the views of the child/young person as well as the parents/carers. It may be useful to collect their views before the meeting.

The meeting should focus on solving problems and identifying how everyone can work together to make a difference.

An action plan should be agreed as to how all parties will work together to support a change that will benefit the children and parents/carers, as a family.

The action plan should include:

- what is important to the children and the family
- what everyone agrees they would like to see change
- how the support that is agreed will be put in place and by whom.

On completion, the action plan and notes of the meeting should be written up and shared with the other professionals and the family and submitted to Access and Response Team (ART) 01454 866000 , email: accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk

The plan should be reviewed together with the family on a regular basis to check that it is working and make changes where needed. This will mean looking at whether the plan:

- has made any difference
- has been helpful
- and if anything else needs to change.

The most important person and focus of a review meeting should be the child (or children).

On completion, the review of progress should be submitted to Access and Response Team (ART) 01454 866000 , email: accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk

When it is considered that the action plan has made a difference, it may be appropriate to consider phasing out some forms of support, and to gradually increase the independence of the family.

At an appropriate point that everyone agrees, the action plan and the single assessment for early help will be closed. It will be possible to re-open a single assessment for early help if needs increase again in the future.

The decision to close a single assessment for early help should be submitted to Access and Response Team (ART) on completion, email: accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk

What does information sharing consent mean?

A single assessment for early help is voluntary and families should be talked through the information sharing consent form and accompanying guidance to ensure they understand the issues and can then give informed consent.

- [Information sharing consent form](#)
- [Information sharing and consent to services – a guide for young people](#)
- [Information sharing and consent to services – a guide for parents and carers](#)

In brief, information shared will be kept confidential but may be used to access a range of support/services required to meet a child's needs. The only time confidentiality will not be maintained is where a person may be at risk of significant harm, or where it is required by law to share information for family support or child protection procedures.

A family single assessment for early help is highly recommended in most cases as it is considered that if one person has a problem, it generally will have an effect on other people in the family. If all the family is supported, it is more likely that things will improve.

Help and support

Advice, support and information is available for parents/carers and professionals from the Access and Response Team (ART) Tel: 01454 866000 Email: accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk

To access the single assessment for early help toolkit for professionals, please visit: sites.southglos.gov.uk/safeguarding/children/i-am-a-professional/single-assessment-framework-for-early-help

Advice, support and information for families with children and young people who have learning difficulties and or disabilities is available in the Local Offer: <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/localoffer>