

# **Team Around the Child / Team Around the Family**

**Guidance for staff working with children and  
young people 0-19**

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## **1. Scope of the guidance**

This guidance sets out the principles and a practice model for Team Around the Child and Team Around the Family meetings within Bath and North East Somerset and should be read in conjunction with the guiding principles for the lead professional. The guidance supports Team Around the Child/Family practices that already exist in the children's workforce and aims to give an overarching context.

The terminology "Team Around the Child/Family" has been developed in relation to the implementation of integrated processes and the term is intended for wider application than cases which have been assessed just through the common assessment. Other assessments are equally valid as a basis for a Team Around the Child/Family meeting. This guidance promotes principles, behaviours and practices which will be useful for all services and settings which hold meetings with the needs of the child or young person at the centre.

Lead professionals and teams around the child/family increasingly function in a full range of children's services and agencies from early years, early support to health, schools social care, targeted youth support and professionals working with persistent young offenders. These guidelines are not prescriptive but rather present what may be a useful framework whilst recognising the wide range of individuals needs and diversities staff work with on a daily basis, both in their client groups and professional cultures. The guidelines suggest a basis for good practice and recognise that the approach taken will differ depending on the individual children and families and that the principles may be more immediately useful and employable for the multi-agency interface.

## **2. Diversity and equality principles**

Practitioners involved in all integrated working will treat children and young people with equal fairness, respect and dignity, regardless of race, colour, disability, gender, sexuality, care of dependants, religious or political beliefs or criminal convictions, with consideration to their specific needs with regards to their age and development. Individual family functioning should be respected and services should aim to meet the individual needs of family groups.

Practitioners working with professionals and employees from the statutory or voluntary sector will afford them respect and dignity, providing forums to express their views and perspectives regarding the needs of the children and families.

## **3. Definition of a Team Around the Child/Family**

A Team Around the Child/Family is a network of practitioners who work together to agree a plan and delivery of support to meet a child or young person's assessed needs, and to some extent, needs of the family where these impact on the child or young person. They work directly with the family or young person. The Team Around the Child/Family is linked together by a lead professional who co-ordinates the delivery and review of the plan. The child, family and young

person's participation in their plan underpins this model and they should be central in all considerations, including deciding the level of involvement they feel appropriate.

#### **4. The role of the Lead Professional**

The lead professional co-ordinates the Team Around the Child/Family network and chairs relevant meetings. Each lead professional has a responsibility to manage and review the child's assessment and plan, support other professionals to identify actions they can undertake, monitor progress and communicate appropriately with all parties, including the family. The lead professional should record the desired outcomes for a child and communicate this to all parties involved with the child and family.

In addition, the lead professional will be working within their home agency or service and adhering to their services recording systems whilst sharing information in line with information sharing guidelines.

Whilst the term lead professional is used in relation to integrated processes, there is an acknowledgement that some statutory services have been carrying out the lead professional role and as part of their day-to-day case management. Equally, schools and other agencies have held multi-agency meetings; integration aims to use a common language and a shared understanding of processes and roles to promote multi-agency working for better outcomes for children, young people and families.

#### **5. Children, young people, parents and carers**

The voice of the family is central to the Team Around the Child/Family model. Different families will have different needs and views about the level of involvement they will want to have with the Team Around the Child/Family. Some will want to attend and have records of all meetings, know about every discussion and others may not. Families will have had differing levels of experience with professionals and their participation should be well-informed and welcomed rather than presented as an added difficulty in their navigation through services.

Once a lead professional has been identified and the Team Around the Child/Family process begins, children and families should be involved in the planning of how that group will function, the expectations around communication and ensuring the plan for the child or young person is one they have contributed to.

Consideration should also be given to including adult services in the Team Around the Family if they are working closely with the parents or carers. Their contribution could be very valuable in working towards co-ordinated outcomes for the child or young person.

Some professionals work with families using a Team Around the Child/Family approach and have statutory functions and requirements in which service users

will not necessarily have an element of choice. Some meetings may equally require children to leave at times when difficult issues are to be discussed. This can be explained at the outset and families can still be valued and listened to in the process.

Some teenagers who are involved in services will either chose to come without parents or have no contact with their parent or carer. They should be fully supported to work alongside their lead professional as an equal partner in their Team Around the Child. If a young person is aged between 13 (the age a young person can give consent without a parent in the common assessment process) and 16, best practice is that they do attend meetings with a parent/carer or a suitably placed adult, such as a mentor, youth worker or family friend. Do keep in mind and refer to the Fraser Guidelines when considering whether the young person is able to give their consent in an informed manner.

## **6. Background to the model for a Team Around the Child/Family**

The Team Around the Child model complements the introduction of integrated processes which have been established in Bath and North East Somerset – the common assessment, integrated assessment panels and the lead professional.

The approach has integration of services at its heart and is a planned and co-ordinated way of supporting a child, young person and family. It is based on the principle that all the professionals are working towards agreed goals and promotes an understanding of different roles and responsibilities and the need to review progress and the child, young person or families changing needs. This is not a new concept but it helps the children's workforce to re-focus on the need to work together to one plan in an integrated way towards best outcomes.

The Team Around the Family works within the same framework as the Team Around the Child, but ensures the wider family is included within the action plan, and should also include appropriate adult services in the meeting to ensure a joined up approach for the whole family, equalling better outcomes for the child, young person and family.

It is expected that any professional assessing that a child may have additional needs has a responsibility to explore with the family and with their agreement who else is working with the child and help to initiate the process of assessment of need/meet the need. Each professional has a responsibility to identify who else may need to be involved with the child or family, and seek support through their line management structures to develop an integrated approach to solutions for the child.

For most situations, a Team Around the Child/Family is a group of people who come together around the needs of a child/family. It will bring together parents and practitioners, regardless of agency boundaries, into a small individualised team for each child who has been identified as having additional needs. It should address what is having an impact on the family situation to promote best outcomes for the child. The lead professional should ensure that the family is advised of any Team Around the Child/Family activity. It should be promoted as a positive entitlement and all staff should explicitly involve the child and family at all stages.

The membership of a Team Around the Child/Family may change over time as the needs of the child and family change.

## **7. Key principles and values**

For the Team Around the Child/Family to operate effectively, it is helpful that staff refer to the principles which underpin the model.

- A Team Around the Child/Family will be based on the delivery of a single plan, based on an assessment and developed in consultation with the family.
- Team Around the Child/Family should be viewed as a positive entitlement for the family
- Resources should be identified which are accessible in a child or families own community wherever possible
- The child or young person is kept at the centre of the process and is enabled to contribute by good preparation and by being given a voice at the meeting
- Consideration is given to all aspects of well-being and development
- Staff operate in a manner sensitive to the individual needs and diversities in all cases and respect the different ways in which families function and the values they hold
- The assessment and planning process are encouraging and supportive, building on the families' strengths and resources
- All members of the team should be given a voice
- Differing professional opinions should be valued and acknowledged
- Challenge should be offered supportively where needs are apparent and plans are not in place to meet them or actions identified have not been carried out
- Language should be clear, simple and accessible to all avoiding jargon
- Staff from adult services may be represented.

## **8. Function of the Team Around the Child/Family**

The key functions of a Team Around the Child/Family are outlined below. Remember - these functions should be carried out in partnership with families and young people, using their expertise about how they function, what they can achieve and where they need help. They are guidelines to help support those attending Team Around the Child/Family meetings and endeavour to help the lead professional in their role as chair.

- Agreeing what needs to be put in place to meet the needs of the child/family based on an up-to-date assessment
- Outlining a plan, with interventions which have clear, achievable milestones
- Agreeing what actions individual members of the team will carry out and agree timescales
- Liaising, as appropriate with other services, including adult services, and thereby considering if they need to be part of the Team Around the Child/Family
- Agreeing and working towards the same outcomes

- Using existing service-based recording systems where appropriate to record decision and actions
- Taking responsibility as individuals for specific actions
- Reviewing the plan and support offered to the child/family with the child and family
- Identifying any challenges and taking steps with the child and family to address and overcome them.
- A key aspect of a Team Around the Child/Family is having all the information required. Therefore, a Team around Child/Family should be based on a shared assessment where there are a number of services and practitioners involved.

### **Suggested guidelines for a managing a Team Around the Child/Family meeting**

Not all lead professionals will have had the opportunity to chair a meeting with a range of colleagues from other agencies and professional backgrounds and with the child, young person and family present. Below are some helpful guidelines which have been put together by peer support groups which have operated in Bath and North East Somerset since 2008, primarily in early year's settings.

It is the lead professional's role to help to prepare the child, young person and parents/carers for the Team Around the Child/Family meeting. It is important the family participants have a say in planning decisions; time, venue, length of meeting. It is also really key to ensure the family know who is coming to the meeting and understand all the professionals' roles and what they may be able to offer.

- Begin with a welcome to all parties, particularly the family, child/young person and thank everyone for coming
- Advise everyone how long the meeting is anticipated to last and advise that everyone will have a chance to speak. Outline the structure of the meeting or have a brief agenda ready.
- Remind all parties of the purpose of the meeting and what it is hoped will be achieved.
- Start with a 'round' asking each person what has gone well since the last meeting (the chair may need to remind each member that we are only discussing strengths at this point and limitations can come later) You may wish to ask the group not to interrupt each other and advise that time for discussion will come later.
- Ask young person/ family how they are feeling about the situation. Do not interrupt.
- Have prepared in advance an agenda of issues that need to be addressed This can be an open discussion and agreed with the family in advance and needs to be their agenda
- Assign a note-taker to note down actions and decisions only. Try to draw the conversation back to actions and who will do what by when. (see attached record sheet)
- Try to keep the discussion solution focused and agree who will do what by when to achieve the change in circumstances.
- Finally, summarise actions taken and re-state what is going well.
- Ask for any outstanding issues that need to be addressed
- Thank everyone for their input and check that everyone understands

- Inform the team that notes will be circulated and set next date, time and venue.

## 9. Context

Initially, Bath and North East Somerset operated a panel system for allocation of resources. Integrated Assessment Panels are not currently functional but as an additional support, Interface Panels meet frequently to discuss cases where further guidance is needed, for example, when the Team Around the Child/Family are finding it difficult to meet the needs of the child, young person and family, despite having a strong action plan in place

A Team Around the Child/Family should be based on an assessment and a plan originating from that assessment – this may be a common assessment, an initial/core assessment, an Onset, an Asset, an SEN assessment, etc.

The assessment process, in which the child and family are integral, will ideally draw information together from a range of sources. In many cases, if the right professionals are gathered together, it will be possible to draw up a plan in the early phases of assembling the team.

At this stage, if needs have been identified, it may also be helpful to consider the availability of local services by consulting One Big Database, <http://www.1bigdatabase.org.uk/>, or the Family Information Service on 0800 073 1214.

However, an assessor or team may identify needs which need to be met but be unclear about how the outcomes can be achieved. In these circumstances, it may be helpful to seek a broader multi-agency problem-solving response. This can be supported by the Assessment and Information Officers, Anjula Kaushik and Kevin Clark, or the Integrated Service Manager, Caroline Dowson ([earlyhelp@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@bathnes.gov.uk), 01225 395021).

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Alex Hobbs (Integrated Working Administrator)

01225 395021

[Alex\\_hobbs@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:Alex_hobbs@bathnes.gov.uk)

Co-ordinated by the lead professional, the Team Around a Child/Family will continually review the achievement of the outcomes for a child against the plan.

## **10. Reviewing the plan**

It is important to look at whether the actions specified have met the outcomes in the plan, or whether changes or further action are required.

Each review of the plan should include:

- **What has improved in the child/family's circumstances**
- **What, if anything, has not gone so well?**
- **Have the outcomes in the plan been met?**
- **Does anything in the plan need to change?**
- **Are the right people still involved in the Team Around the Child/Family?**
- **Have the needs been met or are further reviews needed?**
- **Does the family know how to access continued support?**
- **Has an exit plan been considered/agreed?**

## **11. Resolving practitioner conflicts**

Staff are respectful of each other's values and disciplines at all times. Members of a Team Around the Child/Family should support the Lead Professional by providing information, and actively contribute to resolving any disputes. A Lead Professional will have been chosen by a family and working on their behalf. However, it is recognised that difficult issues may arise from time to time.

Resolution should first be attempted by the relevant practitioners with the lead professionals' oversight. If this is unsuccessful, the issue should be taken through the normal line management structures of each agency/service.

### Review Paperwork

In order to ensure the effectiveness of plans for children and young people, the Integrated Working Team need to hold a copy of action plans resulting from team around the child/team around the family activity.

We would therefore be grateful if you could return the attached plans to the Integrated Working Team after each team around the child/team around the family meeting.

If you have any questions or require further advice please contact :

<b>Lyn Tapping</b>	Assessment & Information Officer (NE Somerset Area)	01225 395448
<b>Kevin Clark</b>	Assessment & Information Officer (Bath Area)	01225 395308

<b>Child's Name</b>	
<b>Child's Date of Birth</b>	
<b>Parents Name/s</b>	
<b>Review Meeting Date</b>	
<b>Venue</b>	
<b>Attendees and Job Role</b>	
<b>Apologies/Absent</b>	
<b>Next Review Meeting Date</b>	

Please return to:

**Alex Hobbs**

Integrated Working Administrator  
 People and Communities Department  
 Bath and North East Somerset Council  
 Lewi House, Manvers Street  
 Bath, BA1 1JG

**Delivery Plan & Review** *(Actions from the assessment should be brought forward into the delivery plan and added to where a multi-agency team around the child response is required and/or used to review progress)*

**Personal Details**

Given name(s)  Family name  DOB or EDD   
 Address  Postcode  Male  Female  Unknown

**LP Details**

Name  Agency/Relationship  Email   
 Address  Contact Number

**Desired outcome** *(as agreed with child, young person, family)*

**Action**

**Who will do this?**

**By when?**

*FOR COMPLETION AT REVIEW STAGE*

**Progress & Comment**

**Date Closed**

**Contributing to ECM Aim<sup>1</sup>**

Desired outcome <i>(as agreed with child, young person, family)</i>	Action	Who will do this?	By when?	Progress & Comment	Date Closed	Contributing to ECM Aim <sup>1</sup>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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<sup>1</sup> These outcomes should be linked to the 'Every Child Matters' aims where appropriate. Please see the CAF Practitioners Guide Annex A for a full list of the ECM aims which sit below the five ECM outcomes.

## Review

Date:

### People present

*(Review delivery plan and update with any agreed further action)*

### Next Steps

Can the CAF be closed?      Yes       Reason for closure:   
   No       Agreed review date:

### Review Notes

Child or young person's comment on the review and actions identified

Parent or carer's comment on the assessment and actions identified

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