

Team Around the Family guidance (TAF) for lead professionals

- The Early Help Assessment (EHA) process was developed for practitioners from a range of backgrounds to use, to gather and assess information in relation to a child's needs in respect of their development, parenting and the family environment.
- After gaining consent from the child/ family to share information gathered from discussions, where a multi agency response is required, the practitioner is to organise a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting to assess those needs and decide with the child/family a course of action to provide the services needed.
- A TAF is a multi disciplinary team of practitioners including parent(s)/carers/young person (if appropriate) established on a case by case basis to support a child/young person or family.

Section guidance:

1. What is a TAF meeting?
2. TAF Process
3. Key Principles
4. Role of Lead professional/Chair
5. How to Hold a TAF meeting
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1. What is a TAF meeting?

A TAF Meeting is:

A Multi agency meeting:-

- Tasked with designing a personalised package of support.
- Seeks to address the identified and unmet targeted needs.
- Agrees to and appoints an ongoing Lead Professional.
- Centred on the needs and voluntary engagement of the child/young person-it is done with the child/young person, not done unto.
- Convened by the person/practitioner who has initially identified unmet needs that will require support/interventions from more than one agency/service.(e.g. via an EHA or Initial Assessment).

The overarching aim is to produce a timely and well co-ordinated package of support/interventions that enable a child to achieve the five outcomes of ECM.

2. Team Around the Family (TAF) process

- The Team around the Family process begins at the point at which a child/young person had been assessed, using the common assessment framework, as requiring a multi-agency response.
- The TAF process is based upon need and early intervention and is therefore focussed on children and young people before they reach the threshold for Social Care or other specialist interventions.
- This process is also applicable for all children and young people whose needs are de-escalating (moving from the windscreen of need, i.e. no longer requiring specialist services but still/ now require targeted support to successfully have their needs met before being wholly catered for in a universal setting). Social Care will step down to the EHA.
- However, the process could also be used/should be considered for children/young people who:
 - Are in receipt of specialist interventions but have other unmet (targeted/middle of the windscreen) needs
 - Are no longer subject to a Child Protection Plan
 - After a single assessment is not going to receive a service from social care (local social work team) but still have unmet needs
 - Are no longer a Child in Need
 - Do not meet the thresholds for the Children with Disabilities Team

3. Key principles

- The child/young person's needs and rights must come first.
- The child/young person and family should be present at the "Team Around the Family" meeting if it is deemed appropriate for the child/young person.
- The parents/carers rights must be considered.
- Meetings follow the same format; pro-forma's are provided so plans are clear, understandable and provide consistency.
- The child/young person's welfare, well being and outcomes are everyone's responsibility.
- A TAF meeting needs to be helpful, timed to suit the family and only as long as it needs to be.
- Those professionals/practitioners who are already or likely to be a part of the "personalised package of support" should be present, those that aren't shouldn't be!

4. Role of lead professional/chair

The TAF meeting should be planned with a clear plan of what the issues are with the child/family.

- Lead professional/chair introduces the meeting and asks everyone to introduce themselves.
- Basic, clear and concise language is needed to ensure families feel included and part of the plan.
- Keep the meeting focussed and delegate another professional to complete the action plan ensuring all professionals and parents get a copy before they leave.
- Delegate tasks for professionals, for example if a referral needs to be made to another agency ask an appropriate person to do this and set timescales so everyone knows what needs to be done before the next meeting.
- Set a review date between 12 weeks.
- Give everyone an opportunity to talk.
- Be clear about what the actions are and who is doing what.
- Arrange the next meeting at this meeting so that everyone has it in their diaries and invites then won't need to be sent out. Ensure that anyone who gave apologies is informed of the next meeting.

5. How to hold a TAF meeting

- Gain consent from parents to share information.
- Invite relevant professionals and also ask the family who should attend if there are already professionals working with them.
- Choose a time/venue and date.
- Send either an email or letter out to the relevant professionals, if they can't attend either speak to them to ask what they could possibly offer in terms of support or ask them to provide a report (if relevant).

Please note: **Working Together**

If you feel that someone is not willing to support the family or there could be some issues that a professional may have, it is a good idea to discuss this before the meeting goes ahead to avoid any conflict when the meeting is running. If an issue emerges during the meeting and cannot be

resolved, action should be taken following the meeting for a resolution to be made. It is not good practice to continue these types of discussions in front of parents.

6. Review

A date within 12 weeks of the initial meeting should be set to review the plan to ensure services are meeting the needs of the child or young person and should be held in the same way as an initial TAF.

Please email the EHA mailbox at EHA@northumberland.gov.uk to inform the EHA team of new TAF meeting date.

At the review meeting, consideration should be given as to:

- Whether the services outlined in the initial TAF plan have met the child/young person's needs.
- Whether they need to continue.
- Whether new needs have been identified and additional services are now required.
- This will be recorded on the review form and copies sent to the same distribution as the "Detailed Action Plan".

7. Conflict Resolution

On occasions there may be situations that arise when agencies disagree as to the "threshold" of a particular child/young person. If the consensus cannot be agreed as to whether a child requires specialist and/or child protection interventions then the local social care Team Manager should be contacted, it may be appropriate for an independent Chair to attend the next meeting.

There may be occasions during a meeting when actions/decisions are made that a member of the group disagrees with. In this instance the following action should be taken:

- Discussion with the chair following the meeting where a resolution is agreed by both parties.
- It may be appropriate to seek advice from the local social care Team Manager or another external manager from Children's Services to resolve the disagreement.

Recording

- The purpose of the "outcomes action plan" is for agencies to have a consistent method of recording and reviewing interventions and outcomes for the children/young people and in addition it allows families to have a clear understanding of the agencies involved with their child/ren, their roles and responsibilities.

- Children, young people and or their families should have copies of all recordings. (Unless otherwise agreed with an individual, e.g. a young person who does not wish to have parents or named others involved.)
- All recordings (including the outcomes action plan) should be held by the Lead Professional and the EHA database.
- Each agency or practitioner who is part of the interventions should also receive a copy.
- When a review has taken place, copies of this should also be forwarded to those listed above.

Closing an EHA

When the review meeting is held and all actions have been completed and there is no further work needed with the family then the EHA can be closed. Please complete an EHA Closure form and email it to EHA@northumberland.gov.uk .

8. Lead Professional - Hints and tips

- Always ensure that the family and other workers involved have your contact details.
- Ensure you have the contact details of the other practitioners.
- Set a review date at your first TAF meeting and subsequent dates at next meetings.
- Plan your contacts with the child/family so that they know when you will be actively involved.
- Check back with colleagues at regular intervals to see how things are going.
- Remember you are part of a team, you are not expected to do everything.
- Be prepared to re-convene a meeting if things aren't going to plan. If another practitioner is not carrying out what was agreed, raise this with them and find out the reason. Hopefully this will focus them back on the plan, if this continues raise it with your manager.
- Any issues can be discussed with the Early Help Coordinator. Please contact Administration Team for Coordinator telephone numbers.

General enquiries

- Telephone enquiries: Administration Team **01670 536854** and **01670 536855**
- Email: EHA@northumberland.gov.uk (please note that this is a secure email address).