



The role of the Team Around the Family ^(TAF) & Lead Practitioner

TAF is a model of multi-agency service provision



Knowsley Council



What is the Team Around the Family (TAF) model?

TAF is a model of multi-agency service provision. The TAF brings together a range of different practitioners from across the spectrum of services that are available to support children and their families. The members of the TAF develop and deliver a package of solution-focused support to meet the needs identified through the Early Help Assessment and the SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timely) family plan.

The TAF model does not imply a multidisciplinary team that is located together or who work together all the time. It is a group of practitioners working together as needed to help a particular child. A TAF is based on the ethos that a flexible workforce is essential if services are able to meet the diverse needs of each and every child. TAF places the emphasis firmly on the needs and strengths of the child and their family, rather than on organisations or service providers.

TAF membership, accountability and responsibility

Each practitioner in the TAF is responsible and accountable to their own agency/establishment for the services they deliver to children and families.

In addition:

- Members of the TAF are jointly responsible for contributing to the assessment, developing and delivering the plan to achieve the outcomes identified through the Early Help Assessment
- Each member of the TAF is responsible for delivering the activities agreed within the delivery plan in a timely manner
- Each member of the TAF is responsible for keeping the other members of the team informed about progress in their area of responsibility; providing reports promptly when requested and attending meetings
- All TAF members should contribute to recording minutes/action points and chairing meetings, and take on other tasks as necessary
- TAF members should support the lead practitioner by providing information and offering guidance and advice
- TAF members should contribute actively and positively to solving problems
- TAF relies upon colleagues participating fully in the process, attending meetings regularly and delivering on the actions they agree to. In instances where it is evident that colleagues and agencies are not fulfilling their role, and this is hindering the plan agreed with the family, then agencies should follow the KSCB Escalation Process to raise these concerns if required



What is the role of the lead practitioner

The Team Around the Family process also depends on the role of a **Lead Practitioner** who contributes to the delivery of integrated frontline services to children and families by:

- Identifying needs presented by children and their families and being proactive in gaining their consent to receiving early help support from a range of services which can contribute to TAF
- Engaging the child and their family by building a trusting relationship based upon respect and restorative practice (offering both support and challenge as required)
- Being the single point of contact for the child and family, and a 'sounding board' to ask questions and discuss concerns. In most cases, other practitioners will also make direct contact with the child or family, and it will be important for them to keep the lead practitioner informed
- Being the single point of contact practitioners who are delivering services to the child to ensure the child continues to access this support (e.g. health services, education services, and Children's Centres)

What is the Lead Practitioner's role within the TAF?

- The Lead Practitioner is responsible for calling and coordinating the TAF meeting. This will include booking a venue that is convenient to the family and inviting the relevant practitioners
- Co-ordinating the effective delivery of the Family Plan and ensure progress is reviewed regularly
- Lead Practitioners will usually chair the meeting. It is a good idea for minutes or notes of actions to be taken so that there is a record of what is discussed. This responsibility is often shared out between practitioners on a rotational basis so that the Lead Practitioner can concentrate on chairing the meeting and making sure the family are engaged and listened to
- Following the TAF, the Lead Practitioner is responsible for distributing the minutes/notes of the meeting and updating the record on the Early Help Module

What knowledge/skills should a lead practitioner have and how are they supported?

The lead practitioner:

- Does not need any particular qualifications
- Does not have to be an 'expert' in everything
- Is not automatically the person who completed the Early Help Assessment
- Is not responsible or accountable for the actions of the other practitioners or services within the TAF. When you are the lead practitioner, you are accountable to your own agency/establishment for delivering the lead practitioner functions and service provision as agreed in the delivery plan
- Will be able to access support from Knowsley's dedicated Early Help Co-ordinators
- Have good organisational, leadership and communications skills

Choosing a lead practitioner

In order to ensure that these activities are well co-ordinated, and that there is clear communication with the child, the TAF agrees (with input from the child and family) a particular practitioner who will act as the lead practitioner.

Any member of the children's or adults workforce can undertake the lead practitioner role (e.g. from school, college, health or childcare sectors).

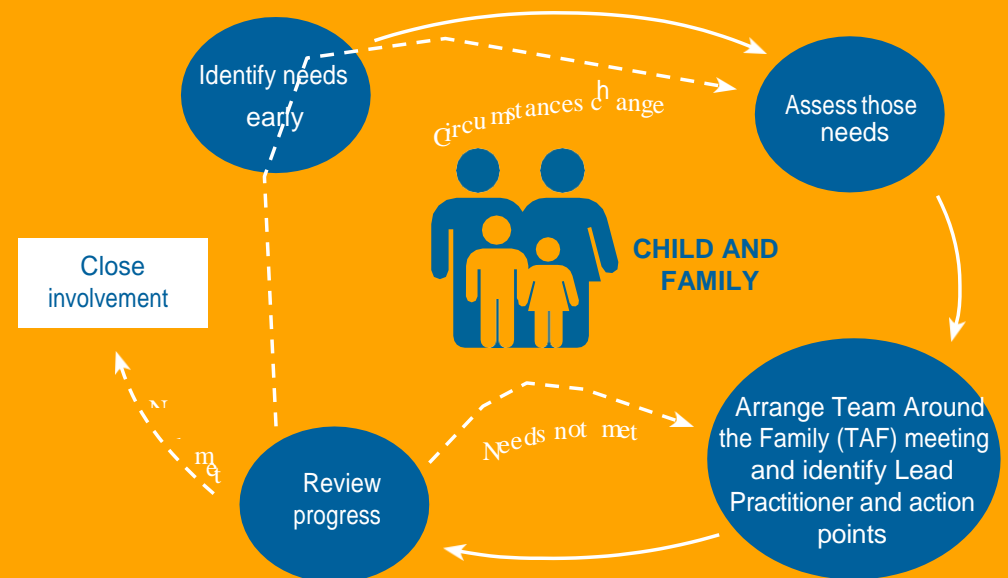
Factors that could help to inform a decision about who will undertake the lead practitioner role include:

- The wishes of the child or their family
- The predominant needs of the child or family
- The level of trust built up with the child or family
- The person with primary responsibility for addressing the needs of the child or family
- A previous or potential ongoing relationship with the child or family
- The skills, ability and capacity to provide leadership and co-ordination in relation to other practitioners involved with the child or family
- Good overall awareness of local services and referral pathways
- An ability and knowledge to draw in and influence universal and specialist services
- An understanding of the surrounding support systems which are available to manage and sustain implementation of the plan

Using a flexible system like this means that the lead practitioner will be the practitioner best placed to respond to the child's needs at a particular time and means that this responsibility can be transferred to new lead practitioners as required.



Early Help Assessment process



Contacts

Early Help Co-ordinators will be available to support agencies and colleagues in developing and delivering the Lead Practitioner role and Team Around the Family processes. The team can be contacted on the following numbers:

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Early Help Enquiries

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