Team Around the Family (TAF) & Lead Professional Guidance

Version 1 (May 2010 KR)
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1.0 Team Around the Family (TAF)

As part of the Common Assessment Framework process, Team Around the Family forms a fundamental part of Integrated Working. Where more than 1 agency is required to support a family (Levels 2 and 3 on the Windscreen Model – see appendix 1), the formation of a Team Around the Family brings together practitioners from different service who work together to coordinate and deliver an integrated package of solution focused support to meet the needs identified during the common assessment process. It can remove the duplication of individual meetings within each organisation.

A TAF is:

• Child/young person and family friendly – this can mean protecting them from too many practitioners.
• Founded in helping relationships
• Individual to each family
• Engages specialisms of professionals best suited to working with the family
• Ever evolving and will include transitions
• Flexible and creative

No one knows a family better than those in it, therefore, it is important that the child or young person and the parents / carers, as appropriate, are also included as part of the TAF. This will empower and encourage them to take ownership of the support plan and be involved. It should recognise the individual needs of the child/young person and/or adult independently of each other but also appreciate that some of those needs may be interrelated and impact upon each other.

The person who undertakes the common assessment (and identifies the need for multi-agency support) is responsible for convening the first TAF meeting from which a lead professional (LP) is agreed. The LP acts as the main point of contact for the child or young person and their family, and co-ordinates delivery of integrated services.

Information sharing is vital to the TAF Process and is also a key part of the government’s goal to deliver better, more efficient public services that are coordinated around the needs of children, young people and families. Information sharing is essential to enable early intervention and preventative work, for safeguarding and promoting welfare, and for wider public protection. Information sharing is a vital element in improving outcomes for all (see Consent and Information Sharing Protocol for further information).

The TAF should be able to recognise when the young person has an ability to self determine the support required and/or there may be a need for advocacy i.e. Not losing sight of the young persons / child’s needs if the parent / carers are doing the majority of communication and liaison.
1.1 Responsibilities of Professionals involved in a TAF

Each practitioner in the TAF is responsible/accountable to their home agency for the services they deliver to children, young people and families.

In addition:

- Members of the TAF are jointly responsible for developing and delivering the delivery plan to meet the needs of the child or young person, and achieve the intended outcomes identified through the common assessment.
- Each member of the TAF is responsible for delivering the activities they agreed to carry out as part of the delivery plan.
- 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 taking minutes and chairing meetings, and take on other tasks as necessary.
- TAF members should support the lead professional by providing information, completing their part of the support plan, offering guidance and advice.
- TAF members should contribute actively and positively to solving problems or resolving difficulties.
- In order to ensure that these activities are well coordinated, and that there is clear communication with the child or young person and family, the TAF agrees (with input from the child or young person and family) a particular practitioner who will act as the lead professional.

1.2 TAF as a Multi Agency Pathway

[Diagram showing the multi agency pathway with steps including Meeting/Reviewing, Supporting, Planning, 4-6 weeks, Learning, with notes such as: Single door – families don't need to 'queue' for services. TAF to escalate case to CAF Panel for discussion if needed. About the family & what services have to offer – this may inform the CAF if held at an early stage.]
The TAF may have a transient membership; it may only have 2 or 3 professionals and the family. It should only include those involved at that time and not be too overwhelming for the family.

The TAF need to make a collective decision to escalate the case to the CAF Panel as appropriate (see appendix 2 – Middlesbrough CAF Process - Step-up). This may have the result of:
• Advice and guidance to the Lead Professional as the most appropriate way for the TAF to progress.
• Referral into intensive multi agency support services.
• Provide evidence for referral into Level 4 Specialist Services.

2.0 Lead Professional (LP)

Many people feel that the Lead Professional role is an add on element to their already busy jobs and workloads, however, many people are unconsciously undertaking the role of LP through the course of their day to day work.

When they do not complete a CAF on a particular case for whatever reason, they take on the role themselves i.e. contact key agencies and obtain their support to address any additional needs or issues. They check and follow this up and make sure that any support promised or agreed has been actioned. This is exactly the role of the Lead Professional.

A lead professional is accountable to their home agency for their delivery of the lead professional functions. They are not responsible or accountable for the actions of other practitioners or services.

Many practitioners in the children and young people’s workforce can be a lead professional at certain times for some of their cases. This includes practitioners within the core children and young people’s workforce (people who work or volunteer with children, young people and their families, or are responsible for their outcomes all the time); as well as those in the wider children and young people’s workforce (people who work or volunteer with children, young people and/or their families, part of the time, or are responsible for their outcomes as part of their jobs).

2.1 Lead Professional Functions

There are 3 main functions that a LP will offer:
• Act as a single point of contact for the family
• Coordinate the delivery of actions agreed by the practitioners involved
• Reduce the overlap and inconsistency in the services received
2.1.1 Act as a single point of contact for the family
The LP is unlikely to be the only person to have direct contact with a family. As part of the Support Plan there may be a few agencies involved with appointments, support and advice, however, the ‘single point of contact’ is with regards to the CAF process. If a family has a question about when the next TAF is taking place or the priority of support, the Lead Professional would be the person who responds to these enquiries to ensure consistency and continuity.

2.1.2 Coordinate the delivery of actions agreed by the practitioners involved
The Lead Professional will chair the TAF and this is the coordinating role they will take. Along with the child/young person/family and other professionals, the Lead Professional will agree the priority of support as to not overwhelm the family with too many agencies and professionals.

2.1.3 Reduce the overlap and inconsistency in the services received
By keeping an overview of the support being provided to the family, the Lead Professional should be able to guard against duplication and ensure that services that are received are seamless.

2.2 Core Tasks of the Lead Professional
In order to achieve the functions, there are a number of tasks the role Lead Professional will have to encompass:

- Building trusting relationships – with both the family members and other professionals involved in the support plan.
- Secure engagement and involvement – the LP will receive support form the CAF Support Team and CAF Panel when needed.
- Be a single point of contact – for the family members and other professionals.
- Be solution focussed and empowering – families and professionals are more likely to buy into support if they can see change and can be part of it.
- Review actions – the templates for recording the TAF Meetings ensure that actions are reviewed on a regular basis. The review identifies any unmet or additional needs for the child or young person’s smooth transition between universal, targeted and specialist services
- Answer questions – as the main point of contact for families, the LP should have an overview of all support being offered and the progress being made. The CAF Support Team will support the LP, if needed, in any questions relating to the CAF Process.
- Identify Need – by having an overview, the LP will be aware of any needs not being met and will be able to address those through the TAF. If those needs cannot be met through the TAF, the case can progress to the CAF
Panel. Any gaps in service should be reported to the CAF Support Team, which will be forwarded onto the Stay Safe Sub Group.

- Support Transitions & Undertake Managed Handovers – transitions of any nature can be problematic in anyone’s life, the LP, with the support of the TAF, should ensure that any changes are managed and supported in the best way possible for the family.
- Work in a child / family centred way – any work that is undertaken through the CAF Process is ultimately to ensure that children and young people achieve the Every Child Matters 5 Outcomes, however, this is often achieved by supporting the whole family. Any support offered should be for the benefit of the family, not for the convenience of the practitioner.

### 2.3 Lead Professional Skills

Most professionals working with families will have an abundance of skills that assist their work and help to form relationships. The following are skills that professionals should be aware of in the role of LP:

- Strong communication skills, diplomacy, sensitivity
- Establish a successful and trusting relationship with the child / family
- Empower the child / family to make decisions and challenge when appropriate
- Understand implications of the child’s assessment for example in relation to risks and protective factors
- Support and enable the child / family to achieve their potential
- Work effectively with practitioners from a range of services
- Convene TAF’s to initial discussions with relevant practitioners
- Knowledge of local and regional services for children and families
- Understand boundaries of own skills and knowledge

### 3.0 Line Management Support

The lead professional contributes to the delivery of integrated frontline services to children, young people and families. This is outlined in the statutory guidance supporting section 10 (inter-agency cooperation) and section 11 (safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children) of the Children Act 2004. All local authorities and relevant partners have to take account of this guidance.

Managers are encouraged to take into account the workload implications for practitioners involved in CAF and lead professional work. When embedded across children’s services, these developments should lead to efficiencies by reducing time spent on finding out who is working with a child or young person, reducing duplication and responding to children and young people’s needs early, before they escalate to a crisis point. However, each service will
need to recognise the staff time spent on these activities by individual practitioners.

As a manager you should be:
• Fully aware of the lead professional functions and the demands of working in this way able to monitor caseloads and mandated to change the balance if necessary
• Capable of directing others if needed
• Able to challenge the lead professional and other practitioners involved in a case
• Able to deal with complaints or performance issues and escalate if necessary
• Able to ensure appropriate supervisory models are in place
• Able to identify appropriate training if required and discuss with the CAF Coordinator

4.0 CAF Support Team

The CAF Support Team is made up of the CAF Coordinator and administrative support. They are responsible for organising the CAF Panel and any follow up administration such as minutes and support plans. They can also provide guidance to any practitioner(s) completing a Common Assessment or arranging a TAF.

Any requests for service briefing sessions or training should be directed to the CAF Coordinator.

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CAF Administrators
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Middlesbrough, TS3 8PE
01642 201974
diane_Curnow@middlesbrough.gov.uk
margaret_brown@middlesbrough.gov.uk
## MINUTES OF CAF MULTI AGENCY MEETING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Meeting:</th>
<th>Date Common Assessment completed:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Panel / Team Around the Family:</td>
<td>Initial / Review no.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAF Level: 2 3 4</td>
<td>Date of Previous meeting:</td>
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## Details of Child/Young Person

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Date of Birth:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>Parents Name:</td>
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<td>Parents Name:</td>
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<td>School:</td>
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## Details of Attendance at Multi Agency Meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child, Young People &amp; Family / Carers details (inc those invited and reasons for non attendance if appropriate)</th>
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## Professionals details

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of Practitioner</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Contact Tel. No.</th>
<th>E-Mail Address</th>
<th>Present Yes/No</th>
<th>Report Provided</th>
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Summary of Discussion / Progress made towards outcomes

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<tr>
<th>What need to improve?</th>
<th>What's going well (since the last meeting)</th>
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<tr>
<th>Child/Young Person’s Views</th>
<th>Parent/Carer’s Views</th>
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Summary
CAF Level agreed at | 2 | 3 | 4
---|---|---|---
Lead Professional (& agency) agreed as

Review Date | Reason for

If a Team Around the Family, did discussions trigger the need to escalate to a Panel?

Any issues that need to be shared with the CAF Support Team / Stay Safe Sub Group?

Copy Sent to:
Child / Young Person ☐ Parent / Family ☐ Involved Agencies ☐ CAF Support Team ☐

**Restricted Information (to be read in conjunction with minutes)**

**Details of Child/Young Person**

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<td>Parents Name:</td>
<td>School:</td>
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**Authorised persons to view Restricted Information**

**Unauthorised persons to view Restricted Information**

16
**CAF Support Plan (to be read in conjunction with minutes)**

### Details of Child/Young Person

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<tr>
<th>What needs to improve?</th>
<th>How will this be done?</th>
<th>Who will help with this?</th>
<th>When will this be done by?</th>
<th>Which ECM Outcome does this affect?</th>
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| What is going well? | Can this be improved?  
If yes – how?  
If no – why? | How will this continue? | Who will help with this? | Which ECM Outcome does this affect? |
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**Lead Professional:**

**Review Date:**

**Review Venue:**
6.0 Appendix 2

Middlesbrough Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
Flowchart (step-up)
If at any time it is felt that the child or young person is at risk of significant harm – follow Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children’s Board (MSCB) procedures IMMEDIATELY.
7.0 Appendix 3

Minutes of CAF Multi Agency Meeting Template

Restricted Information Template

CAF Support Plan
5.0 Appendix 1

Windscreen Model of Service Delivery

 LEVEL 1
Universal Services
Children with no additional needs

 LEVEL 2
Dual agency/practitioner response (Universal and/or targeted). Early assessment & intervention.
Additional needs identified

 LEVEL 3
Multi Agency support
Additional needs identified

 LEVEL 3 +
Intensive Multi Agency support
Additional needs not identified

 LEVEL 4
Specialist Services
Children defined as being in Need under Section 17 or having Complex Needs

Consultation with children, young people & families

Universal Services – Available to all children

No assessment needed.
Consultation with other agencies, Pre-assessment checklist or common assessment may be used and TAF should be held.
L3 - Common assessment should be completed and TAF should be held.
L3+ - Common assessment should be completed and discussed at CAF Panel.
Specialist assessments should be completed and may be supported by a holistic common assessment to aid information sharing. Stepped down cases will be discussed at Panel.