Early Support and Common Assessment Framework

Locality Support in Cornwall

This document aims to provide clarity between some of the locality level support which is available for children, young people, parents and carers. Please see accompanying flowchart¹ to help in decisions regarding appropriate referrals.

1. Early Support

1.1 Early Support is a holistic model encompassing the needs of children, young people and parents. It aims to ensure that a co-ordinated, cohesive approach is at the heart of service delivery. This approach is designed for disabled children and young people or those with an identified additional special educational need.

1.2 Early Support can be initiated using both the Initiation Form and the Introducing Ourselves form, which are available on the Family Information Service website: http://cornwall.childrensservicedirectory.org.uk/early-support.htm

1.3 Further supporting documents and information for professionals and families can be accessed on the Department for Education’s website: http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/sen/earlysupport

1.4 Early Support in Cornwall uses the Team around the Child (TAC) process to enable a multi-agency response in supporting families to identify unmet need, as well as considering suitable interventions. Through the Early Support paperwork (the Family Service Plan) which is completed during the TAC meeting, actions are noted to ensure professionals are clear on their agreed interventions. A lead professional is nominated at the TAC meeting to act as a key contact for families and professionals. The role of the Lead Professional is to ensure actions are adhered to, chair future TAC meetings and keep records of Family Service Plans. Family Service Plans are sent to the relevant locality Business Support Team (details below) who then arrange future TAC meetings on behalf of the Lead Professional.

1.5 Early Support does not undertake an assessment of the child or young person’s needs and identified need is based on discussions with families around areas of support.

1.6 Where the child or young person has a disability or an additional need and those needs are not being met, or at risk of not being met without co-ordination of support services then Early Support and subsequent TAC meetings may be appropriate

¹ Tool for Initiating Early Support
2. The Common Assessment Framework

2.1 The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a structured, standardized assessment designed to identify a child or young person’s additional needs at an early stage to enable initiation of an appropriate multi-agency intervention. The assessment is completed together with the child, young person and their family.

2.2 A Team around the Child (TAC) meeting is convened whenever a completed common assessment identifies multiple needs whereby a child or young person would benefit from the support of additional services, led by a multi-agency response. The focus should be on early intervention where possible.

2.3 Further information about the Common Assessment Framework, Team around the Child meetings and locality support can be accessed on the Family Information website:
http://cornwall.childrensservicedirectory.org.uk/integrated-working.htm

2.4 This link can also been used to complete an online CAF and make referrals for Family Support or Targeted Youth Support. These services can still be accessed where children are following the Early Support approach.

2.5 Where a child or young person’s needs are not being met, or at risk of not being met predominantly due to more external factors within the family or environment, then a CAF and subsequent TAC meetings may be more appropriate.

3. Early Support and Common Assessment Framework

3.1 Where there are multiple issues relating to both external factors and the child or young person’s disability or additional need, it would be advisable to have a discussion with the relevant Early Support Co-ordinator and / or Additional Support Manager to decide on the most appropriate action. In these instances, the discussions would focus on the most predominant, presenting issues at that time (i.e. the need for co-ordination of services to support disability needs, in which case, Early Support may be initiated or the need for an assessment and further additional support for which the CAF route may be more appropriate).

3.2 If Early Support is already in place and is expected to continue long term (i.e. where the child is of a young age and therefore developmental needs may change more rapidly), yet short term external issues are more predominant, it may be more appropriate to remain with Early Support. In this instance professionals would need to continue to link in with locality services, such as Targeted Youth Services or Family Support. This will help ensure consistency within processes for a family.

3.3 In some Early Support cases closure may not always be possible even where services are co-ordinated and the family are well supported. This may be because

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2 For example; housing issues, debt, drug and alcohol misuse, parenting capacity.
of the monitoring a statutory service provision, such as short breaks. In some cases closure may not be appropriate if it would mean the co-ordination and support would cease. Where circumstances change and external factors become more predominant and appear complex or long term then it may be more appropriate to refer to the CAF route to ensure continued support through the TAC process yet access to more relevant locality services.

3.4 This process can be reversed where CAF TAC meetings are in place yet a child or family’s circumstances change, it may be more appropriate to initiate Early Support.

3.5 Where these multiple issues present, it is common for siblings to be involved and therefore considerations need to be put in place around supporting the whole family. It may be appropriate for one child to be supported through the Early Support approach whilst another sibling is supported through the CAF process. Professionals and families would need to consider the most presenting issues for each child and take action from there. Professionals would also need to consider how joint TAC meetings are managed and if these are appropriate for the family. The paperwork for Early Support and CAF TAC meetings also vary and the appropriate paperwork would be required for each child.

4. Contacts

There are Early Support Co-ordinators and Additional Support Managers in each locality which are available to have individual conversations with families and professionals regarding the most appropriate route to take.

**Early Support Co-ordinators**
Localities 1, 2, 3 – Ravena Jelbert 01736 336660
Localities 4, 5 – Rebecca Pollington 01872 322970
Localities 6, 7, 8 – Maria Stopher 01208 353968

If you are concerned about a child or young person’s immediate safety and well-being you should contact the Single Referral Unit on 0300 123 1116 and speak to a duty social worker.