

Integrated Early Support



Team around *the family* (TAF)

West Cheshire partners and Team Around the Family Assessments - we're all in!

Team around the family assessments enable us to capture what is working well within a family and also what it is that they need more help with. It's important that we do this at the earliest opportunity to avoid our families escalating to more intrusive, costly interventions. Practitioners across all agencies have a responsibility to provide early help services. The TAF assessment provides standard approach to assessment for all partners within our West Cheshire family.

*Helen Brackenbury, Temporary Head of Integrated Early Support,
Cheshire West and Chester Council*

Why Team Around the Family (TAF)?

It focuses on early help and interventions, primarily at levels 2 and 3 of the continuum of need. It delivers a more effective early support service to children and their families. TAF identifies additional needs and vulnerabilities, and the actions required to meet those needs.

The guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' talks about the importance of assessing need and providing early help:

'Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.'

Effective early help relies upon local agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help
- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.'

Who completes the TAF assessment?

TAF is everybody's business. All professionals working with children and their families in all partner organisations in West Cheshire are responsible for completing TAFs.

When to complete a TAF

When a professional identifies that a family requires the services of more than one agencies or a number of interventions from an organisation to support anyone within the family to address un met needs.

Three likely TAF outcomes:

- No worries/concerns
- Support can be met by a single agency
- Support requires a multi-agency response. In this case a TAF meeting is arranged, including the child, young person and parents

What is a TAF meeting?

This is an effective method of multi-agency working and is a good opportunity for all the practitioners, along with parents, children and young persons to discuss strengths, needs, issues, options for resolutions, plans for support and services and progress with these.

Early Support Access Team (ESAT)

The Early Support Access Team is a multi-agency team who act as the first point of contact for practitioners who are concerned about a child/family with multiple and/or complex needs, including adults who are a victim/perpetrator of domestic abuse.

A professional may contact the ESAT team following completion of a TAF assessment. Requests for further information, advice and guidance can be made regarding families who may need further or more intensive support.

Additionally, when reviewing the TAF process, the multi agencies involved with the family may decide the TAF isn't progressing effectively. At this point the lead person can contact the ESAT team on 0300 1237047.

Who can help with TAF?

Three TAF advisors are on hand to help with your TAF queries. Covering the Chester and Rural, Winsford and Northwich and Ellesmere Port localities, the advisors offer a hands on approach for partners. They provide bespoke support to help you embed the TAF process in your organisation and improve the quality of assessments and action plans across West Cheshire. TAF advisors work closely with our TAF champions offering advice and guidance when you need it.

Where do I find more TAF information?

Visit the Team Around the Family pages on the council website www.cheshirewestandchester.co.uk for TAF procedures and guidance for professionals, including contact details for your local TAF advisor or TAF champion. Information includes:

- [TAF assessment and consent forms](#)
- [Training information](#)
- Details of [TAF champions and TAF cluster meetings](#) which are forums for professionals to share good practice, discuss practice issues and raise concerns.

Please ensure you download documents as you need them to ensure you are using the most up to date version.

The links below also provide useful information to support the TAF process:

- [The multi-agency assessment toolkit](#) – to support you identifying young people and vulnerable adults at risk
- [The Local Safeguarding Children Board website](#)

'Team Around the Family – everybody's business'