

Single Assessment Framework for Early Help Team Around the Child & Family (TAC/F) meeting - guidelines

Principle

Research and practice demonstrate that improved outcomes for children, young people and families are obtained through effective relationships between family members and the practitioners working with them. TAC/F meetings can therefore be central to the delivery of effective, planned and co-ordinated services. They rely on an ethos of shared responsibility for working holistically to both safeguard, and promote well-being and positive outcomes for children, young people and their families. It is therefore important that all relevant practitioners and the family are invited to TAC/F meetings.

Aims

- For TAC/F to be used flexibly to gather information, assess and evaluate needs, develop an action plan and/or review an action plan.
- For TAC/F to involve those practitioners working directly with the child, young person and their parents or carers, as well as the family members themselves
- For children, young people, parents and carers to be directly involved in the process of identifying strengths and needs
- For the needs of each individual child in the family to be considered
- For the views of each child and young people to be sought at the assessment stage, and fed into TAC/F meeting

- For children, young people, parents and carers to contribute to any action plan in order to maintain strengths and to overcome needs
- For all practitioners working within families to work in a joined up and coherent way to plan and deliver services
- For the child, young person and family to have only one action plan in place at any one time, that addresses the needs of each child.
- For action plans to be holistic and address the whole range of need that exists.
- For action plans to be SMART (Specific / Measurable / Achievable / Realistic / Timebound)
- For TAC/F to lead to the sharing of actions and responsibilities across the entire team, including children, young people, their parents and carers.
- For resources to be focused and allocated where the most pressing needs exist.

Guidelines

- Practitioners should prioritise attendance at TAC/F meetings in the same way they currently do with Child Protection meetings, as the SAFeh process is crucial to prevention, early intervention and ultimately, the safeguarding of children and young people
- TAC/F meetings may include any practitioners involved with the family, any potential involvement (via a referral), the family themselves, including children and young people where appropriate, and any voluntary organisations or advocates for the child or family, to which the family consent
- The need the family SAFeh to consider each child in the family, recognising that family information needs only to be completed once and that individual assessments relating to each child can be recorded separately within a well labelled SAFeh.
- For parents and carers to attend, as their engagement in the process is crucial to its success, and where possible and appropriate, for TAC meetings to include young people and children themselves.
- Where children and young people do not wish to attend for their views to be considered by using the views and wishes forms in the toolkit or by other child friendly methods.

- These meetings may take place for a variety of reasons and are intended to be both supportive and challenging for both practitioners and families
- TAC/F meetings will be an efficient way to share information, assess the needs of children, young people and families, and to agree actions between practitioners and families to meet those needs
- They will be responsible for reviewing action plans and measuring successful outcomes
- They will be responsible for agreeing review dates and for deciding when the SAFeh will be closed.
- TAC/F meetings can co-ordinate other assessments and direct appropriate actions for all needs up until the point of statutory intervention, (e.g. social care, YOT, EHC plan) resulting in one overarching action plan
- TAC/F meetings are not necessary for every SAFeh or review; this is dependent on the complexity of the SAFeh, how many professionals are involved and how the action plan is functioning

What happens at a TAC Meeting?

At the TAC meeting the SAFeh author / initiator, Lead Professional or TAC chair should ensure that there is:

- A record taken of attendees and absentees.
- A full and evaluated assessment, and if necessary the TAC/F should add to it to ensure that it is comprehensive and up to date.
- A facilitated discussion of the main issues and from the SAFeh.
- A facilitated discussion about what needs to change and how this might happen.
- A facilitated discussion of the actions needed to enable and support the changes, noting decisions that lead to a recorded and co-ordinated action plan.
- A solution focused approach that is positive and practical, and prioritises actions to ensure that there are only a few manageable changes focused on at any one time.

- A clear understanding of what goals could be achieved as a result of the action plan.
- Child, young person and parent involvement at every stage, and that their views on the decisions are recorded.
- The name of one lead professional agreed with the family.
- A review date set and recorded (if necessary).
- One agreed action plan and/or review completed.
- Notes and action points from the TAC/F, should be distributed to all TAC members following the meeting, including the family, and also a copy submitted to the Access and Response Team.

Conclusion

A TAC/F can be an effective way to share information, evaluate situations, and agree priority needs and action plans. It also co-ordinates activities, to meet the needs of each child and young person, in the context of their family and community.