

Team Around the Family (TAF) Guidance

Introduction

A Team Around the Family (TAF) is a meeting between a child, a young person, their family, and the group of practitioners who are working with them. The purpose of the Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) is to share information and produce a plan of coordinated support that enables a child or young person

and their family to achieve agreed outcomes within specified timescales.

The meeting provides an opportunity to consider how appropriate, effective, and timely support can be secured, enabling the family's needs to be met. The focus of the meeting is to build on the strengths identified while addressing the current worries and concerns.

Key principles

- ▶ The child/young person and family should be present at the Team Around the Family meeting (if it is deemed appropriate for the child/young person to attend).
- ▶ The child, young person and parent/carer should all be fully supported to engage.
- ▶ The family must consent to a Team Around the Family meeting and information being shared.
- ▶ The family's voice should be at the centre of discussions and decisions.
- ▶ Representatives for siblings should be invited (e.g. school)
- ▶ Meetings should follow the same format to provide consistency.
- ▶ Everyone should focus on the family's strengths to promote positive change.
- ▶ Only those practitioners who are currently working with the family or are likely to be part of the whole family plan should attend. Practitioners also need to be realistic about the support they can offer.

Whole Family Approach

A child/ young person is part of a whole family unit, and we must consider that when approaching a Team Around the Family meeting. In Merton, we adopt a 'Think Family' approach to supporting children and families. 'Think Family' recognises the importance of taking a whole family approach rather than thinking of an individual (child or adult) in isolation. Without this approach, we often miss the bigger picture around that individual's life and opportunities for support.

Team Around the Family takes a 'Think Family' approach by considering the whole family (Child / young person, siblings and parents /carers) to ensure the best outcomes for all family members.

It is also important to consider how the family's wider support network (extended family and friends) could support the family plan. For example, could a friend help with taking/picking up the children from school? Or could an auntie/uncle offer any respite support?

Lead Practitioner

The role of the Lead Practitioner is to ensure that there is a well-coordinated plan with agreed-upon actions. It is important that this practitioner has a good relationship with the family and is best placed to support them in taking the lead in implementing and coordinating the family plan.

For further guidance on creating a family plan: [Family Plan Guidance \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](https://mertonscp.org.uk)

The Lead Practitioner is not responsible for everything. The responsibility is shared among the family and the Team Around the Family network. The Lead Practitioner is, however,

Child and family views

Team Around the Family meetings can only be effective when they are conducted with children, young people and their families in a true sense of partnership. This involves hearing and incorporating the views of family members within the meeting and any plans for the child/young person. It also involves maintaining respectful, open and honest relationships with parents/carers, children and

Information Sharing

A robust consent process must be in place with practitioners gaining consent from parents/carers to share information on a 'need to know basis'. Agencies are responsible for storing Early Help documents (Early Help Assessments, Team Around the Family minutes, and Family Plans) as part of

Further Support

For further information, support and guidance on the Team Around the Family process, please contact the **Early Help Support Coordinators** by emailing FSD@merton.gov.uk

If a child, young person or family's needs cannot be met within existing accessible resources or their needs escalate, please make a referral to the Children and Families Hub: www.mertonscp.org.uk/children-and-families-hub

the main point of contact for the family and practitioners. For example, Mum did not attend her drug and alcohol appointment (as agreed as part of the family plan). In this case, the practitioner who has been made aware of this e.g. Health Visitor would let the Lead Practitioner know. This would then inform decision making e.g. the next TAF may be convened earlier than planned.

For further information on the role of the Lead Practitioner: [Role of Lead Practitioner \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](https://mertonscp.org.uk)

young people. Good information sharing and communication with all family members is essential to keep them aware of timescales and next steps.

If it is not appropriate for the child/young person to attend, their views can be captured beforehand through discussions or with the aid of evidence-based tools and resources.

the child's record on their case management systems.

Merton Local Authority may require agencies to share Early Help documents as part of a quality assurance process or to support payment by results from the Supporting Families Programme.

