



North East Lincolnshire

Team Around the Family (TAF)

Guidance and Support Handbook



Our Children, Our Future

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North East Lincolnshire

Our Children, Our Future

Introduction

The Team around the Family project are passionate about improving outcomes for our children, young people, and their families at the earliest opportunity.

Working together in a restorative way, we believe that we can achieve positive change within our community and improve outcomes by supporting you in your role.

This handbook serves as a go to guide for all professionals working with children and families in North East Lincolnshire and aims to enhance practice by providing opportunities to develop confidence and strengthen the Team around the family.



Our Children, Our Future

How can the TAF Project Team help you?

- ✓ They will help to raise awareness and knowledge across agencies, Professionals, Communities, Children, young people and Families regarding Team Around the Family and wider Early Help.
- ✓ They can support professionals in completing Early Help Assessments and plans to support families at the earliest opportunity
- ✓ They can provide resources to capture Voice of the Child
- ✓ They will provide professionals with support on the TAF process



Roles and Responsibilities

If you have a good relationship with the child and family, you will probably be the best placed person to be appointed the lead professional, however, we will support you with this, so do not worry.

Your role will be supported to:

- ✓ Be the first point of contact
- ✓ Coordinate and hold Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings
- ✓ Ensure that the Voice of the Child (VOC) is sought beforehand and throughout the process effectively.
- ✓ Signpost lower-level need to external organisations
- ✓ Be confident in your judgements and seeking additional support.
- ✓ Complete Early Help Assessments and send to **TAF@nelincs.gov.uk**
- ✓ Review Team Around the Family meetings and measure outcomes.

What is a TAF?

All Children need a strong support network of people that care about them to feel safe, secure, and valued. At times families may need additional support from professionals, which will create a **'Team Around the Family'** or **'TAF'**. A TAF meeting can take place when there are two or more professionals/ services involved, for example, Education and health or a voluntary organisation within the community.

When holding a TAF, it is important that we firstly explain to the family what a TAF is and what role they will play in the overall process. Establishing a good understanding around the process will promote good working relationships based on trust and transparency.

The Team around the Family will work together in an open and honest way so that they can identify the needs of a child, young person and their family and provide best solutions/ interventions to target areas of concern. Adopting a restorative approach to practice enables professionals to share ideas openly and honestly which establishes an inclusive working climate which places the child, young person, and family's needs at the core of the process.

Working inclusively ensures that everyone's voices are heard, this is the first step of the TAF process. It is essential that an open and honest discussion is held with everyone all together or separately.

The discussion will include highlighting areas of strengths in addition to identifying areas of concern/worries.

Once needs are identified, the next step is to set realistic goals and targets that everyone can work towards. This will ensure that the Team are working together to improve the outcomes for children and their family in a timely manner. It also allows the identification of the best placed person and service to address a particular need, drawing on skill sets, and service offers.

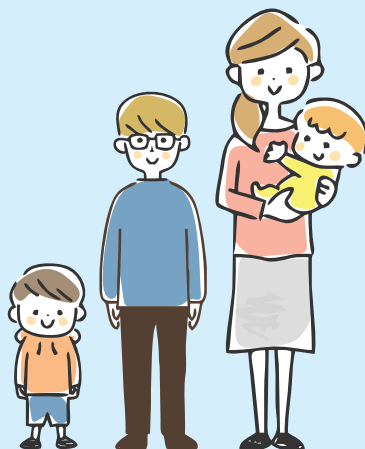
The TAF then has all the ingredients that will serve to empower the family to create a plan. This will highlight who is doing what and why and enable the professional to track progress. It is important here that review dates are set, this will allow celebration of successes and identify any factors that are preventing the family from moving forward, which is key if a plan needs modifying and for the TAF to be proactive rather than reactive.



TAF Process Checklist

Introductions	Introduce the child and family to everyone present and what their role is. Introductions should be simple and avoid the use of jargon.
Purpose of the Meeting	Using clear language explain what the meeting aims are.
House keeping	Discuss the importance of confidentiality and information sharing. Ensure that everyone is aware that the meeting relies on the participation of everyone. Encourage respect and sensitivity.
Identify the strengths and current needs of the child and their family	Working restoratively, where everyone's views are heard and acknowledged, highlight the strengths and current needs of the family, this will enable a supportive wrap around approach when identifying actions. You may use information sourced within the Early Help Assessment to support with this part and add any further contributions, to enable a deeper understanding of current issues.
What are we all worried about?	It is important that the family are firstly asked what things they are worried about. This provides an opportunity for the family to share/ reflect upon their lived experience and address any power imbalances. Although, it is imperative that the family have opportunity to discuss their worries, it is also essential that any worries from all attendees is shared.

What needs to Happen/ Actions?	This part should focus upon the goals that have been agreed and set by the TAF Team to improve the Child/ Young Person and their family's outcomes and should feed into the plan.
The Lead Professional	The child/ young person and their family will be given an opportunity to decide who they would like their lead professional to be. It is important that we respect choice and empower our families to be actively involved in the process
Voice of the Child	This should be captured throughout the process.
Set a Review Date	Review dates should be set within 8 weeks of the first TAF meeting.



Early Help Assessment

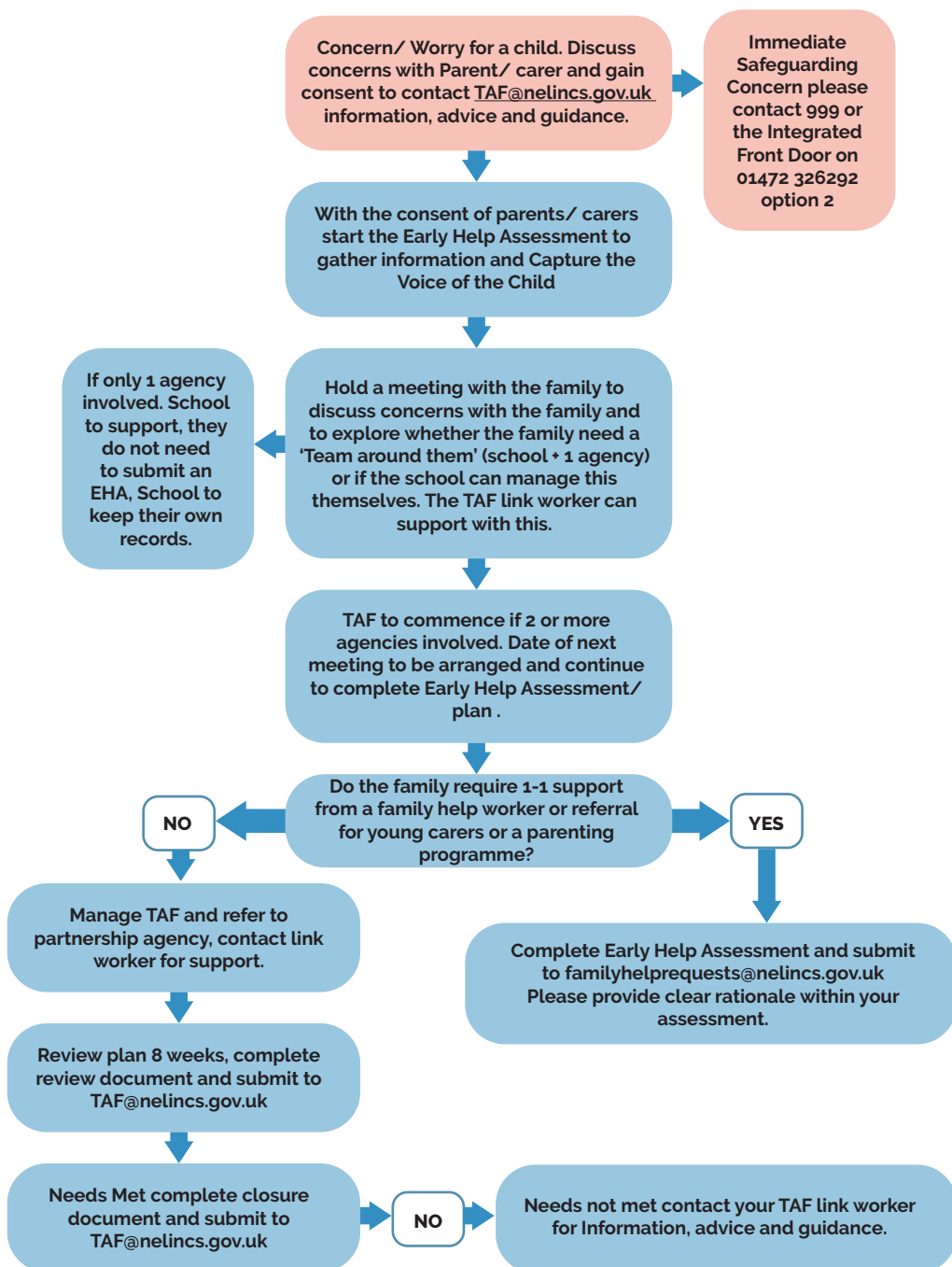
If it is identified that an Early Help Assessment is needed due to more complex needs, an assessment should be completed as soon as possible by a professional. This can be in relation to health, developmental concerns, welfare or if the family raise a concern with you.

Before you start to complete the Early Help Assessment it is important that you firstly gain consent from the family. This will then enable you to also liaise with other professionals that may be supporting the family already in addition to, the family's support network. These steps allow us to start building a picture of circumstance and the lived experience of the family that we are supporting.

When completing the EHA make sure that you get as much information as possible, a good Early Help Assessment captures a holistic view of the child's life and will aid in the signposting of support at the earliest opportunity.



Early Help TAF Process



Quality Assessment Checklist

Detailed information recorded



Child's support network identified and involved



Continuous interaction with Child/Young person to capture Voice of Child



Analysis of information gained



Effective partnership working to enable wrap around support for the family



Review of the Plan

Lead Professional

- The review will be carried out by the lead professional that completed the assessment
- During the review the child, young person and their family will decide who they want their lead professional to be

Concerns

- If you are concerned about being the lead professional, please don't worry, they have chosen you for a reason
- If you would like to discuss your concerns please contact **TAF@nelincs.gov.uk**

Opportunities

- The review of the plan will ensure that the needs of the child, young person and their family are being met, in addition to, highlighting any additional concerns surrounding the family
- This will create opportunities for further interventions to be considered

Celebrate

- It is really important that during the review we celebrate the successes of the family. Adopting a strengths based approach will empower the family and create stronger partnerships within the TAF team.
- Focus on the positives should be family led. Conversations should capture the voice of the child.

Support

- If further support is needed with the review, please do not hesitate to contact **TAF@nelincs.gov.uk**



Closures and Planning Ahead

A Child, Young person and their family can be supported by their TAF for a long or short period of time. From the goals set throughout the process you will be able to have a clear focus on what a closure looks like and when it would be an appropriate time to cease intervention. Discussions should have taken place leading up to the closure, this will ensure that everyone is aware of the next steps and allow for any contingency plans to be put in place prior the withdrawal of additional support. We acknowledge that families need support from wider family and friends throughout their life, so it is essential that when we are closing a TAF that we make sure the support network is still intact to ensure that the Child or Young person feels happy, loved, is safe and secure.

The closure summary should document and celebrate the successes so far, in addition to capturing the views of the child, family and professionals. This allows the family to reflect upon their journey and be content with their achievements. Once the family agree that the closure can take place, all paperwork should be sent to **TAF@nelincs.gov.uk**.



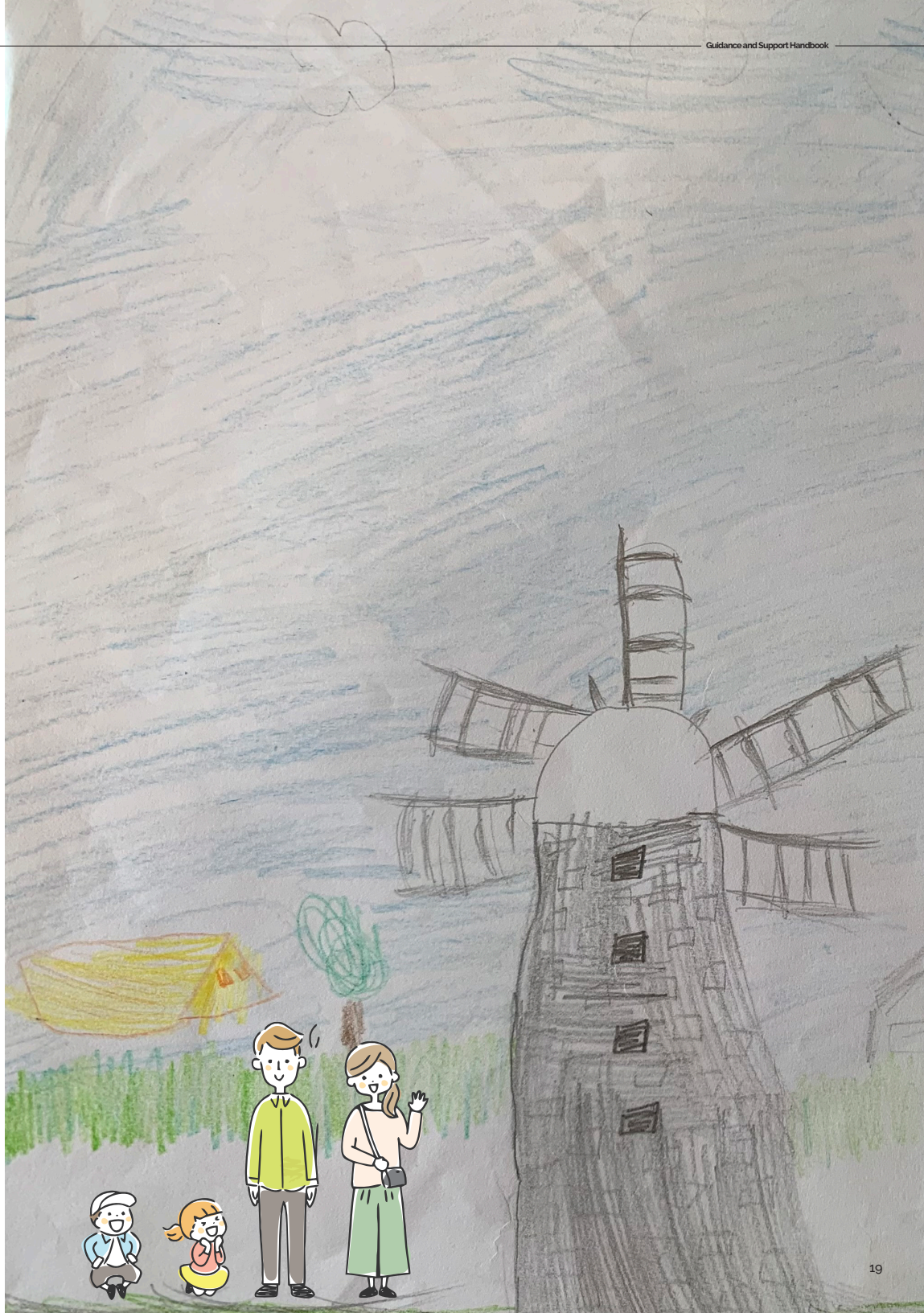
Capturing the Voice of the Child

It is important that when we are working with children, Young People and Families that we are mindful of the language we use. Quite often families can feel a power imbalance when working with professionals and this can result in a lack of trust. It is, therefore, essential that we are open and honest with our families and be innovative to promote strong relationships.

The voice of the child is paramount and should be placed at the heart of everything we do, a notion closely supported within Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It is essential that we take not only what we hear into consideration but also what we observe, such as a change in behaviour, interactions with family and friends and a change in presentation.

There are tools that can support professionals to capture voice of the child and support with those initial conversations, however, it is important that we are creative as sometimes the best questions cannot be found on a set worksheet and require us to think outside the box.

If you require additional support, please contact your TAF link worker @ **TAF@nelincs.gov.uk**





If you require additional Information, advice and guidance please contact your TAF link worker or email TAF@nelincs.gov.uk

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If you need this document as plain text please contact North East Lincolnshire Council Communications and Marketing Team

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