



Team Around the Family (TAF) HANDBOOK FOR PROFESSIONALS



**Harrow Borough
Based Partnership**
Supporting better care and healthier lives



**Harrow
Safeguarding
Children Partnership**
Safeguarding is everyone's business



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1. INTRODUCTION

A strong Early Help System is made up of different types of practitioners and services who operate as one. Harrow's Early Help vision includes establishing a Team Around the Family (TAF) for identified families who have several needs and would benefit from professionals working together to develop a family plan.

The purpose of a Team Around the Family is to share information and create a Family Plan that is focused on supporting the needs of the child/young person and their family. A Family Plan is solution focused and the child/young person and their family remain central to decisions made about them or their care through the TAF.

A Team Around the Family meeting is an opportunity for families to work with professionals supporting them to gain confidence and skills to develop their family/support networks to ensure support is effective and sustainable.

The concept of a "team around the family" refers to a collaborative approach to providing support and services to individuals and families in need. The goal of the team around the family is to provide holistic and comprehensive support tailored to the unique needs of the family.

This approach recognises that presenting issues often require input and expertise from multiple professionals. Each member of the team brings their own perspectives, skills, and resources to the table, allowing for a more effective and coordinated response to the family's needs.





2. KEY PRINCIPLES

- Throughout the TAF, we must ensure every child or young person's voice is heard. Where appropriate they will attend the meeting
- The family should be present at the TAF and where possible, the TAF should be held face to face
- The child/young person's needs are paramount and support will be provided to their carers
- TAF meetings follow the same format; pro-formas are provided so that plans are clear, understandable and consistent
- The TAF needs to be timed to suit the family, helpful and last only as long as it needs to
- Paperwork will be held by each agency in accordance with their data processing policy

3. LEAD PRACTITIONER

The role of the Lead Practitioner is to ensure that there is a well-coordinated plan with agreed actions and to act as a point of contact for the family. A Lead Practitioner will be chosen at the first TAF meeting with the family's preference being taken into account.

Being a Lead Practitioner is not a new role, it is to be carried out as part of the delivery of effective integrated support.

A Lead Practitioner will:

- enable and empower all parties to follow up on agreed actions
- act as a single point of contact for the child/young person and family
- help make sure that agencies work together and share information to achieve the best outcomes for the child/young person and their family
- ensure that progress is reviewed regularly.
- have a clear line of accountability to their home agency
- share minutes of meetings with the family and other professionals

A Lead Practitioner will not:

- need to chair every meeting
- need to take minutes at every meeting (this can be shared by the professional network)
- be responsible or accountable for the actions of other practitioners

4. THE TEAM AROUND THE FAMILY MEETING

Initiating a TAF

Any professional working with a family can initiate a TAF. This is done through the 'Harrow TAF Consent Form'. The initiating professional and the family work together to complete the consent form. This includes gathering the child/young person's and family's views as well as inviting professionals to the initial meeting. A helpful email invitation template can be found in the Appendix B

Initial meeting

At the initial meeting, all present will introduce themselves including the child/young person and their family members.

The initiating professional alongside the child/young person and family will summarise the reason/s that have brought the team around the family together.

The Family Plan will then be formulated based on the reasons that have brought the TAF together and the outcomes that the child/young person and their family are aiming for - see APPENDIX C

The Lead Professional will be identified and the date for the next meeting will be set.

Ongoing meetings

At subsequent TAF meetings, the meeting record will be followed (APPENDIX C). The discussion will focus on what has worked well and what needs to change. Child/young person's views are incorporated into every meeting.

The Family Plan will be reviewed and scaling questions completed. Each professional and the family will complete the scaling questions.

On a scale of 1-10 where 10 is not worried at all and 0 is very worried where would you scale and why?

At the end of each TAF meeting, members should consider if the TAF should continue, step-up (via MASH referral), step-down to single agency or close.

Closing the TAF

If members of the Team Around the Family decide that the Family Plan should close, the Lead Practitioner will complete the feedback form.



VISUAL AGENDA



Welcome, introductions and apologies



Agree ground rules



Outline the structure of the meeting



Discussion regarding the consent form or previous TAF meeting minutes



Family Plan - who will do what and when (including family members)



Complete scaling questions



Confirm Lead Practitioner



Set review date, time and place OR agree next steps (*step-up, step-down, close*)



Circulate the plan to all at the meeting

WORKING WITH THE CHILD AND THEIR FAMILY



Gathering the thoughts and feelings of children and young people

It is essential that the voice of the child is captured during the meeting, even if the child is under 5 or non-verbal/uses an alternative means of communication. There are a number of tools to help you to capture the voice of the child and there are examples in Appendix D.

Involving children/young people in meetings

It can be a positive experience to involve children/young people but it can also be a tricky one to manage, depending on their needs. Professionals shouldn't assume that children/young people can't attend but should think carefully about how they might react and the difficulties/issues that are being shared in the meeting.

If it would not be in the child/young person's best interests to attend then their views will be shared. This can be through videos, photos, drawings or any other way professionals feel would be appropriate.

Gathering the thoughts and feelings of the family

The professional who convenes the Team Around the Family will gather the views of the child/young person and their family members. This will be recorded on the TAF consent form and shared with the team. Through the TAF process all those involved, including the family will complete a scaling process for each point of the Family Plan. The team will explore the reason why they have scaled at the chosen level.

Team Around the Family meetings can only be effective when they are conducted with the children and their families in the true sense of partnership. This involves maintaining respectful, open and honest relationships with parents, carers and children.



Further support and advice is available for professionals.

Please contact earlysupport@harrow.gov.uk to access advice and support.



TAF booklet complied by Louise Bloomfield



Team Around the Family Agreement

Working in partnership with children/young people and families

The Team Around the Family (TAF) is here to help you and your family. It brings together the people who are already supporting you, alongside others who can help, to work with you and plan to make improvements for your child(ren) and family.

A family's privacy is important, and we take this seriously.

Note: For further information about our organisations privacy statement please visit our website or request a hard copy.

(Link to be added by organisation - optional)

Family: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is how I like to be contacted, addressed by, and spoken to.• These are the priorities we would like to focus on for the next 4 – 6 weeks.	<i>(Practitioner records how family members want to be addressed and the priorities the practitioner will work with the family)</i>
Family and Practitioner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is this going to happen (who will do what and when)?• Who else will we need to be included at this stage?	<i>(Practitioner records these details)</i>
Other Professionals: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will need to contact the agencies that are involved with your family. This is so we can make sure that we have a good understanding of your family's needs.	
Family and Practitioner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How often will we meet?• What happens if one of us has to postpone?• How will we resolve any difficulties in our work together?• We will review progress on priorities during our Review/TAF meetings.	<i>(Practitioner to record these arrangements)</i>

Note for professionals: Please follow your Organisations data storage policy when storing this document.

Our family background and information

Children/Young People/Unborn

Name	DoB / EDD	Gender	Disability / Learning Need	Address	Telephone	GP	Health visitor	School/ Nursery	Immigration status	Email	Native Language	Ethnicity	Religion

Family/Household Members

Name	DoB	Gender	Religion	Ethnicity	Parental Responsibility?	Telephone	Address	Email	Native Language	Relationship to above child/ren

Other significant people not living in the household who will be part of the team

Name	DoB	Gender	Religion	Ethnicity	Parental Responsibility?	Telephone	Address	Email	Native Language	Relationship to above child/ren

Strengths and needs

What is going well in your family?	
What would you like to change for you and your family?	
What is important to you and your family?	
Do any family members have specific communication needs (including language)?	

Signatures

Primary carer 1		Signature	
Primary carer 2		Signature	
Young person/child		Signature (if appropriate)	
Young person/child		Signature (if appropriate)	
Young person/child		Signature (if appropriate)	

APPENDIX B

Subject line: Initial Team Around the Family Meeting for (insert family/children initials)

Email body:

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to invite you to an initial Team Around the Family meeting for XXX. The family/CYP has identified you/your service as a support provider and your input would be valuable as the team support the family's identified needs. **Insert information about presenting need if relevant or needed.** A team around the family is a group of professionals and volunteers who work alongside the family to improve outcomes.

As you will be aware, strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working is vital to identifying and responding to the needs of children and families ([Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)).

The suggested date and time of the initial TAF meeting is:

XXX

If you are unable to attend please provide information for the team as below:

What is your current involvement/support for the family/CYP?	•
What will your involvement/support for the family/CYP look like in the future?	•
Areas of identified strength for CYP/family?	•
Areas of identified need for CYP/family?	•

Email sign off.

APPENDIX C

Team around the family meeting record

Family/Parent(s)		Children:		Others:	
Date:		Time:		Venue:	

Please fill in the names of the people attending the meeting

Name	Role / agency	Email	Phone

Any agencies not present today?

Name	Role / agency	Email	Phone

Agency involvement and significant events update (over the past 6 to 12 weeks)

Date	Agency	Involvement / significant events

Discussion about progress since the strengths and needs form or previous TAF meeting:

What has worked well and been achieved?

What needs to change to help things improve for the child/ren? (Bullet point)

What are the child/ren's views?

Family plan

What needs to change? Set specific activities that are easy to measure, achievable, realistic and timely, which can support positive change.

What are the key things your family and children need support with?	How will things be better for your child/ren when this changes and how will we know?	What needs to happen to change this? ACTIONS	Who needs to be involved? WHO	By when? WHEN	Scaling On a scale of 1-10 where 10 is not worried at all and 0 is very worried where would you scale and why?*

NB. The above should include parent/carers, child and professionals' views

*Scaling Questions to be reviewed by all TAF members, including Family Members at each TAF review

Next steps

The team around the family can continue to support the family for as long as needed.

For others signposting to a single agency might be enough or a team around the family (TAF) might be required to ensure all agencies liaise and support your family in a planned way.

- Your support needs will be reviewed within the TAF every 6-12 weeks
- When outcomes are achieved a closure and evaluation form will be completed

Date for next TAF	
Discussions between professionals and the family should determine who is best placed to be the lead professional. They do not have to chair all meetings or complete all paperwork, but they should ensure that these actions take place and be a point of contact for the family.	

Continuing, step up, step down to single agency or closing (if closing please complete the evaluation below)?

Continuing <input type="checkbox"/>	Step up <input type="checkbox"/>	Step down to single agency <input type="checkbox"/>	Closing <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state):
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Closure/Final TAF

What have been the main changes for your family?

Are there any things which still need to change?

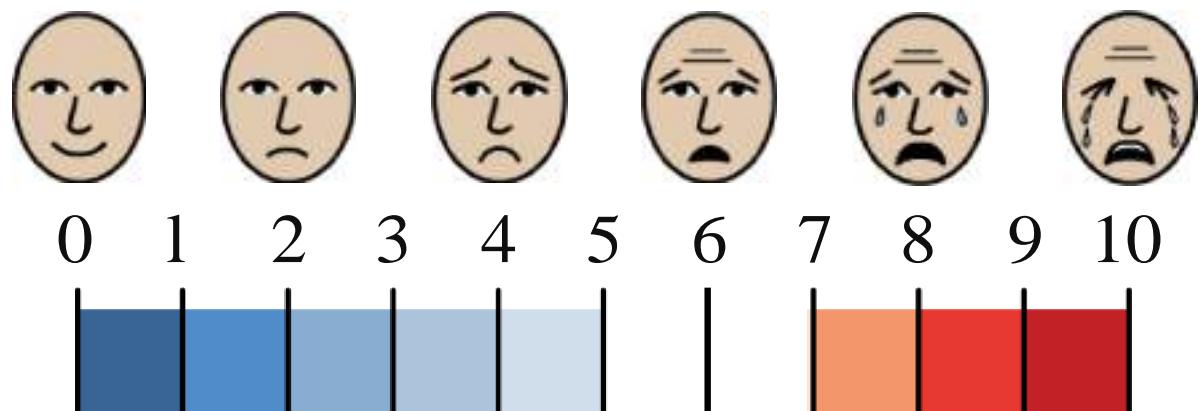
If so what is the plan?

Are there any achievements that need celebrating?

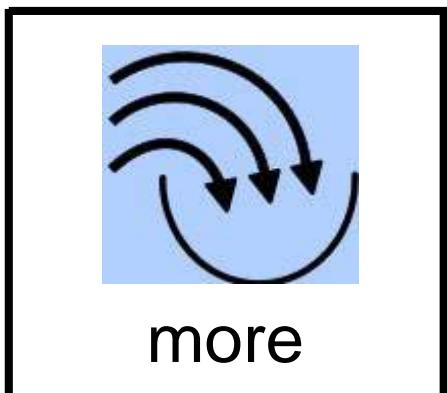
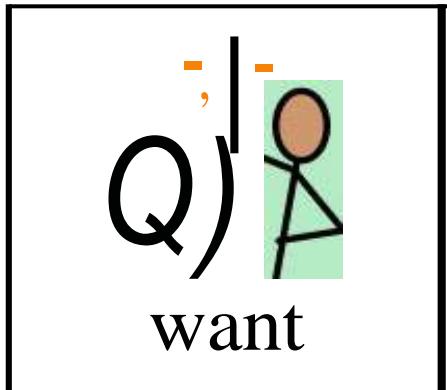
If so, how will they be recognised?

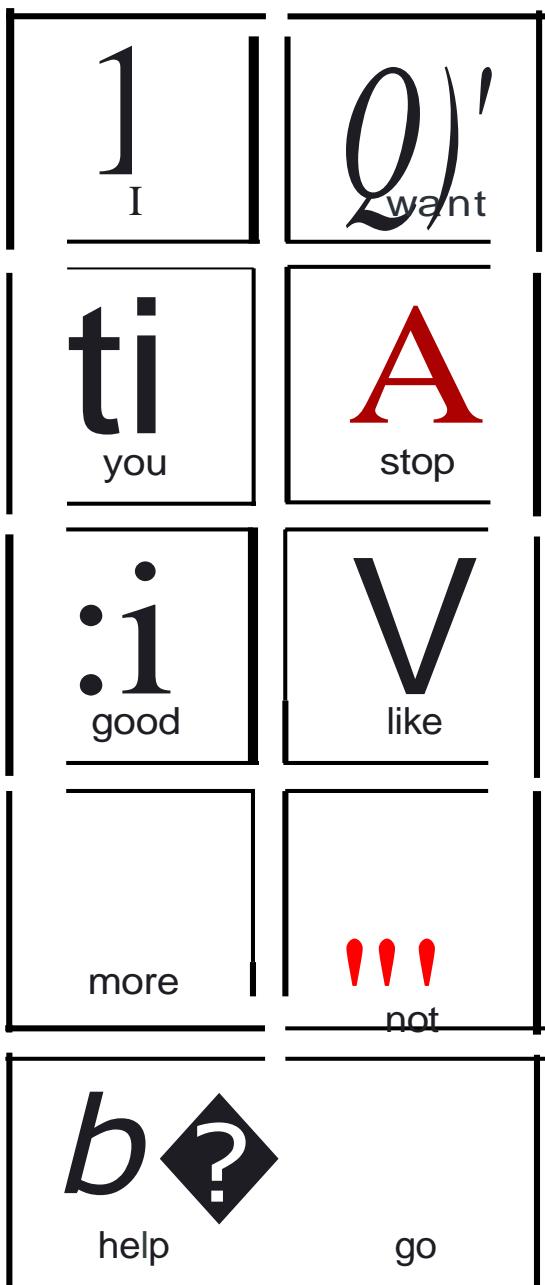
On closure Lead Professional to complete this data collection form: <https://forms.office.com/e/RGUMi2jRMt>





Don't know

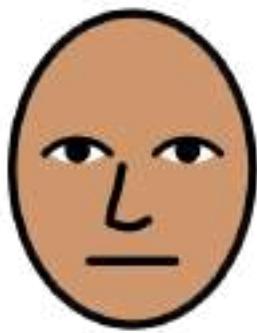




Supporting flashcards for gathering views for TAF



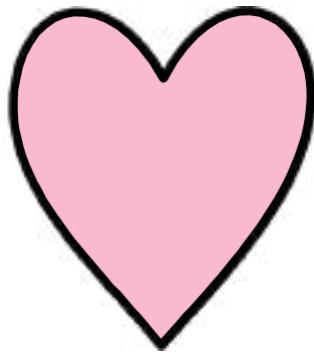
Good



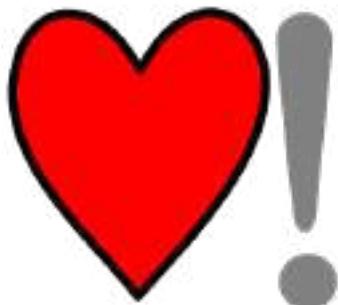
OK



Bad



Like



Love



Don't like

Tell me about...



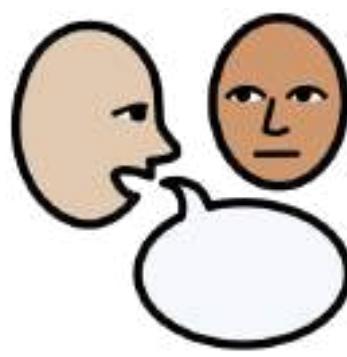
Home life



Feeling safe



Your home space



Talking



Relationships



School

Tell me about...



Friends



Hobbies



Community



Health



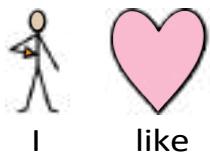
Safe adults



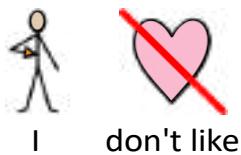
Family



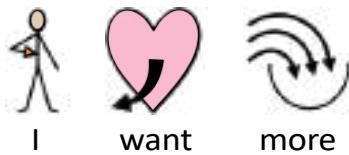
In my family



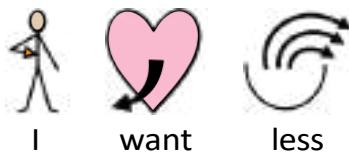
I like



I don't like



I want more



I want less



Things that make me happy



Things that do not make me happy

Prompts for professionals

When gathering initial information from families consider:

Children's:	Family's:	Relationships:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health• Behaviour• Education• Emotions• Independence• Communication• Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wider support network – friends, family, local community• Finances and employment• Housing• Health – physical• Wellbeing and mental health• Access to community support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Between adults and children• Between adults• Day to day care• Boundaries, routines and stability• Feelings of safety• Relationship between siblings

- What is working well for the child/YP?
- What is working well for the parent/carer?
- What is working well for the family?
- What is not working well for the child/YP?
- What is not working well for the parent/carer?
- What is not working well for the family?
- What could be better?
- What is currently in place?
- What outcomes would benefit the family?
- How is your health? How is your physical health? How is your mental health?

When gathering the child/young person's views and opinions

- Home life
- Do they feel safe? Where do they feel safe?
- Can you talk to/communicate with your family?
- What are your relationships like with those with whom you live?
- What is school/college like?
- Tell me about school/college.
- Tell me about your hobbies.
- Tell me about your community.
- Tell me about yourself.
- How is your health (mental and physical)?
- Who do you talk to about your feelings?
- Who are your trusted adults?

When formulating the family plan

- If we waved a magic wand, what would life be like?
- What would success feel like/look like?
- What outcome would be ideal?
- What would the benefits be if you achieved this goal?
- What would it feel like if you achieved this goal?
- What would you like to improve?
- What needs to happen to improve this?

When reviewing the family plan

- What do you think needs to happen next?
- Who else might be able to help?
- What help/support do you need?
- Which outcome do you feel ready to act on?
- How have you tackled a similar situation before?