

Key principles

To ensure children have access to universal services

Most children achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes through the care of their families, plus the support of a range of universally provided services, for example; schools, primary health care and leisure facilities.

To adopt the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

The CAF aims to reduce multiple assessments, reduce duplication, share information safely and with consent. It is an assessment framework that uses one common process for professionals, using common language and preventing the overuse of jargon.

To target services for vulnerable children

From time to time, some children will become 'vulnerable'. They may have difficulty making a transition from primary to secondary school, their development may be delayed, they may break the law, or they may have emotional difficulties. Others are always vulnerable because of their own development, family circumstances or environmental factors.

Early identification of 'vulnerable' children is critical in making sure targeted services can offer support early and promote achievement of all five Every Child Matters outcomes.

To provide effective early intervention

Early effective intervention should be:

- Child-centred and non-stigmatising
- Involving and empowering the family
- Provided within their community, by known people who are seen regularly and/or closely linked with the community, with a good understanding of what support and facilities are available
- Provided within reasonable timescales

To encourage and promote user participation

Children, young people and their families are central to the success of early intervention and should be actively encouraged to be a part of the Local Delivery process.

We recognise the importance of user participation; to this end we are devising methods of evaluation that ensure the views of children, young people and their parents/carers are gathered and assessed and inform the development of services.

To facilitate Team around the Child (TAC)

Depending on the nature of the child's vulnerability, it may be possible for one person from one agency to support the child.

However, just as the child's needs cover more than one need area, different people with different skills may be necessary to support the child or young person. If necessary they would form a **Team around the Child (TAC)**.

Professionals are likely to find themselves working with a range of different colleagues to support different children. The Team around the Child will be

required to complete a simple plan in order to be clear about what the tasks are, who is doing them and when.

To support access to specialist services for children with Complex and Acute needs

Within our communities a small number of children have complex or acute needs because of, for example, disability, abuse, rejection by their families, serious difficulties in schools, or severe mental health disorders – their own or their parents.

It is important that while numbers are small, these children are identified early, so that appropriate specialist services, including immediate protection if necessary, can be provided.

Children with acute needs may require protection through court orders, or regular hospitalisation. They may receive custodial sentences for offences, or may be acutely ill with depression.

Key Objectives:

- Identify children and young people (from 0 up to and including 19 years), who may have extra needs requiring additional support.
- Improve information sharing among agencies and practitioners working with children and young people
- Use the Common Assessment processes ensuring continuity for families, young people and children
- Contribute to the development of locally responsive services and effective joined up working through the **Team around the Child** approach
- Signpost to appropriate services, at the right level, in the right way and at the right time
- Continue to support the child and family until good enough outcomes have been achieved – including when the child moves into another area and until new agencies have received adequate information on the incoming family, child or young person
- Build on existing good practice. Practitioners in Buckinghamshire already work well together and the aim is to provide structures to support this process. It is important to monitor and assess outcomes as this will help inform future commissioning and development of services