

Appendix B

Services offered to children and families when relationships are at breaking point

Early Intervention

A range of family support services is offered to children and families when relationships are at breaking point. The need for these services is identified through the Common Assessment Framework to provide a range and level of services appropriate to meet children and families needs. Family support may include:

- **Practical help** in the home, including support with daily routines and managing family life
- **Family mediation** and a range of support (including **couples counselling**) for families at risk of breakdown and those who are in the process of or have already separated
- **Emotional health and well-being** support for parents and young people
- Guidance on **child development**
- Practical support to enable parents to improve their **children's behaviour**
- **Signposting to universal positive activities** and services for children and young people
- Broker **access to education and employment opportunities** for children, young people and parents
- Interventions and advice to **engage fathers** in the development and education of their child(ren)
- **Advice, training and support** to universal family and parenting services in effective interventions around emotional health and well-being, behaviour management and relationship work in particular
- Initiate and **ensure appropriate involvement from targeted and specialist provision**, such as parenting programmes, Family Intervention Project, CAMHS, Drug and Alcohol Services, diversionary activities (Targeted Youth Services), adult services, health services, specialist counselling services
- To facilitate and contribute to multi-agency (CAF and Team Around the Family) **assessment and packages of support** for those with multiple needs

In addition to this Parent Support Advisers will engage and work with parents and carers to help increase parenting skills, to encourage positive involvement in their child's learning and to work with parents on attendance and behaviour issues.

Specialist help

The Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children's Service responds when children and families are under severe strain and where this affects the development or welfare of the child.

To access services, a referral needs to be made to the Referral and Assessment team for new cases, or for existing cases this would be picked up during routine visiting and/or reviewing of the child or young persons plan.

This plan is produced following either an initial assessment or a more in depth core assessment. The aim of the assessment is to identify the needs of the

child or young person, what the desired outcome is and what services will be put in place to produce these outcomes.

All children on the brink of entering the Care system, have an allocated Social Worker, whose first aim is to explore the possibility of them remaining at home, and the provision of coordinated and effective services, if not.

Social Workers and Family Support Workers can offer support, guidance and direct work with children, young people and their families to try to overcome difficulties in their relationships.

We have commissioned a range of services for when more in depth work is needed.

Action for Children provide the following;-

Rapid Response and Family Support service

A service which includes crisis intervention, Intensive intervention work and ongoing and enduring work.

They offer a limited same day response of up to two 2 hour sessions and then more planned work of 2 hour sessions designed to repair and improve family relationships. They also offer positive and diversionary activities for children and young people.

This service is offered to service users in their own homes.

Family Group Conferencing

The aim of this service is to reduce the need for children at risk of family breakdown to become looked after by enabling families to find their own solutions to their family difficulties and improve the likelihood of positive outcomes for their children.

They operate by

- identifying and meeting family members
- arranging a meeting venue
- date when all those family members can get together

Aim is to discuss the difficulties the family are facing and coming up with family solutions for these problems.

Both services have proven to be very effective and usually produce good outcomes.

Children and their families can also be referred for counselling with various organisations and those with complex mental health needs can be referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) who employ nurses, psychologists and psychiatrists who use a range of techniques to offer help.

Mediation

We also commission (through housing) a mediation service that specifically works with 16+ children who are likely to require accommodation, to attempt to reconcile them with their families and effect a return home

Children in Local Authority Care

We commission a range of specialists to work with Children in the Care system, including teachers and a specialist CAMHS service and Nurse, who will all work together to try to ensure Children remain in a stable and appropriate placement and are enabled to return home wherever practical. Each Child in the Care system has an allocated Social Worker to ensure they have an appropriate care package and plan which is independently reviewed by our P&R managers to ensure our Young People achieve the most positive outcomes.

Children in Foster Care

If the child is in Foster Care then support can be offered by the fostering support worker. Out of the last 5 in house placements facing difficulty, 4 have successfully continued.

STEPS can also offer a support package to the child or young person. This can be advice, support or diversionary activities on a sessional basis. This service has proved very effective.

Children who have been adopted

For children who have been adopted there is a specific half time worker who provides adoption support.

There is also a Psychologist but they are only employed for 2 days per week and they have other duties, so access to this service is limited.

Additional support can be bought in from a specialist agency, Family Futures, who have a very good track record of supporting children in placements but their services are very expensive and a support package can cost up to £50,000 for a year. If this prevents a young person coming into the care system in an expensive residential placement, this becomes cost effective.

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