

# Agenda Item 5

<b>School forum Proposals for the Development of Team Around the Child (TAC) in Lincolnshire</b>
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<b><u>Date</u></b>
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## 1. Introduction

This paper is written in the context of compliance with changes to the Children's Services Ofsted Inspection Framework, and the publication of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013. The proposals developed are as a result of consideration of these documents, the local performance data for TAC, and quality assurance activity, including an audit by Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children Board (L.S.C.B.)

## 2. Aim

The aim of this proposal is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Team Around the Child arrangements in Lincolnshire, and to ensure systems and structures are conducive to continuous improvement on a multi-agency basis. The proposal does not cover wider Early Help developments, including the revision of TAC paperwork, as this will be addressed by the multi-agency Early Help Steering Group.

These proposals will :

- Ensure all schools and academies have access to advice and guidance on the assessment and management of Early Help cases
- Provide case supervision for school staff to ensure that cases are appropriately risk assessed and managed
- Provide quality assurance to the TAC process to prevent drift in Early Help cases

## 3. Current Arrangements

### i. Staffing and Roles

#### Customer Service Centre (CSC)

CSC provides a 'front door' to services, and deals with a wide range of contacts from partner organisations and members of the public. It handles requests for information, through to safeguarding referrals. It currently has two qualified social workers who are responsible for the screening of cases. The job description for these workers is a generic Level 2 Social Worker Job Description.

**Current LCC Cost: £81,200**

#### TAC Co-Ordinators

There are seven TAC Co-Ordinators, based within the Targeted Teams in the seven districts of Lincolnshire. They are responsible for the logging of Single Assessment Forms (SAFs), and monitoring basic information regarding TACs such as Lead Professional name and agency, dates of meetings, and logging closure summaries. They are also given other duties by their managers which vary across localities. The posts are funded by Lincolnshire County Council.

**Current LCC Cost: £162,603**

#### Central TAC Manager and Practice Supervisor

These are new posts funded by Lincolnshire Council.

The role of the Team Manager is to review existing arrangements and to strengthen Early Help arrangements in line with Working Together 2013, and the recommendations of the LSCB TAC audit

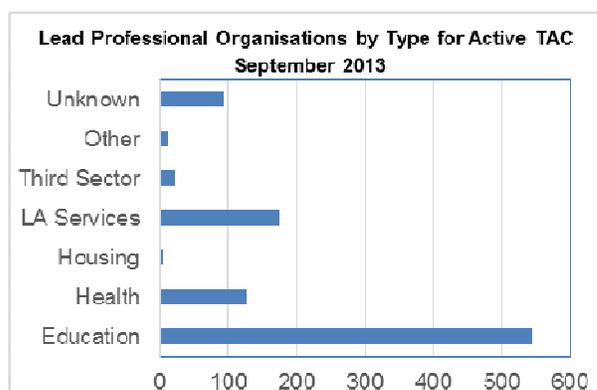
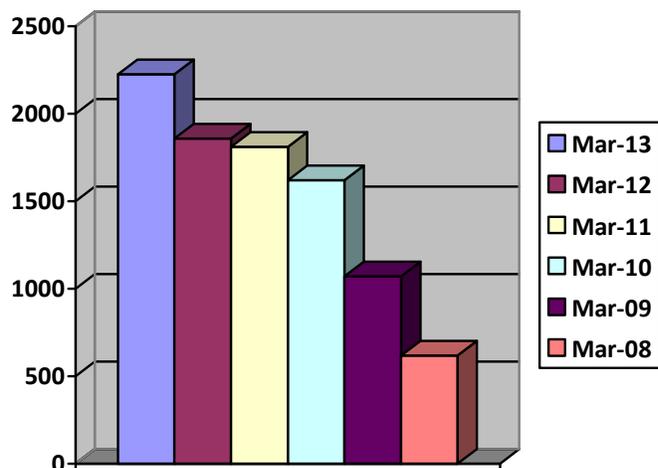
The role of the Practice Supervisor is to provide operational oversight to the process in order to assure DMT that Early Help arrangements are robust and provide effective support to children, young people and families.

**Current LCC Cost: £111,073**

#### Analysis

Despite funding pressures, Lincolnshire County Council has maintained its commitment to Early Help services in Lincolnshire, and to supporting multi-agency Team Around the Child. Moreover, this year, it has increased funding and staffing to support further developments.

ii. **Performance Data**  
**TAC initiated Year end:**



Transfers from Social Care to TAC ('Step Downs')

<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>
80	84	155	186	528

Transfers from TAC to Social Care ('Step Ups')

<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>
323	291	413	136	110

Analysis

The above performance information indicates that the number of initiated TAC cases has continuously increased since 2008 and this is in the context of rising referrals to Children's Social Care. At present the numbers of TACs initiated each month vary, but are on average just over 200 per month, 55% of these being from education. This proportion has remained consistent over time, and demonstrates commitment of schools and academies to TAC, however, locality information suggests wide variations from school to school, with some schools situated in areas of high need, not initiating any TACs.

As reflected by the data above, transfers from Social Care to TAC continue to increase significantly; this indicates that an increasing number of families with high level of need that are open to social care are

appropriately transferred down once stabilised, so they receive support according to the level of need. Transfers from TAC into Social Care are decreasing and this indicates increased confidence in managing TAC arrangements and sound understanding of thresholds among the agencies.

Overall the performance figures demonstrate continuous improvement and clear commitments from the agencies for TAC arrangements in Lincolnshire.

### iii. **Quality Assurance Information**

In July 2013, Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children Board received a report from a multi-agency audit of TAC cases. In August 2013, this was also presented to Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPS), who agreed to take forward recommendations via an Early Help Steering Group.

The recommendations from this report that are relevant to this proposal are as follows:

- ❖ Practitioners should have increased access to advice and challenge
- ❖ Locality-based training should continue
- ❖ Educational settings should provide case supervision and management oversight of cases where their staff are Lead Professionals
- ❖ Quality Assurance mechanisms for TAC should be established.

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership agreed to take forward the recommendations from this audit.

### iv. **Other Relevant Issues**

A further area for development in partnership with the Schools' Forum, is a different model for administration of meetings for TACs where schools are Lead Professional. At present, a one-off payment of £50 is made to schools on initiation of a TAC. Some schools have indicated that the previous system, where a central team arranges initial meetings was preferable.

If the proposals within this paper are accepted, current administrative funding for TAC arrangements will cease.

### v. **Issues to be Addressed**

From the above analysis of staffing, data, and information, it is evident the following issues should be addressed within this proposal:

- Lack of supervision and management oversight of TAC cases where the Lead Professional is from an Education setting (as identified by L.S.C.B. Audit)
- Provision of central administration for initial meetings of schools based TACs
- Increased performance management and quality assurance of TAC arrangements.

## 4. **Recommendations**

In order to address the issues above and secure good improvements to TAC in Lincolnshire it is recommended that several actions be taken:

1. Schools' Forum jointly funds the creation of Early Help Consultant posts.
2. LCC Cost: £67,601
3. School Forum Proposed cost: £113,082
4. These posts will :
  - Ensure all schools and academies have access to advice and guidance on the assessment and management of Early Help cases
  - Provide case supervision for school staff to ensure that cases are appropriately risk assessed and managed
  - Provide quality assurance to the TAC process to prevent drift in cases
  - Support the use of reflective and evidence-based best practice across Early Help

5. These posts would be able to offer schools based case supervision for up to 224 cases per month, and quality assurance of 50 cases per month. If numbers exceed these figures, more posts will need to be created.
6. Schools Forum agrees to cease the one-off administrative payment to schools, and supports the establishment of a central administrative function to organise Schools based TAC meetings, type and distribute minutes. The funding identified below would support up to 120 meetings per month. If figures exceed this amount, extra funding would be required.
7. School Forum Proposed cost: £104,400

**i. Roles**

TAC Co-Ordinators

- o Logging of Early Help Assessments
- o Logging of TAC Meeting dates, Lead Professionals details etc. as within their current role
- o Organisation of initial TAC meetings for Schools and Academies based Lead Professionals
- o Provision of guidance on TAC process issues

Early Help Consultants

- o Provision of advice, support, guidance and challenge on TAC cases
- o Support for, and monitoring of, ‘step down’ cases
- o Provision of training and reflective practice sessions for the multi-agency Early Help workforce
- o Provision of case supervision to Schools and Academies based Lead Professionals

**ii. Proposed Implementation Process and Timescales**

The key milestones, timescales and connections to wider Early Help developments are illustrated in the chart below.

<b>Week commencing</b>	<b>12/1/14</b>	<b>19/1/14</b>	<b>26/1/14</b>	<b>February 2014</b>	<b>March 2014</b>	<b>April 2014</b>
Schools Forum						
Job Description for EH Consultants prepared						
Job evaluation process						
Vacancy approval process						
Recruitment						
Implement staffing restructure						

It is suggested that consultation regarding the impact of the new arrangements be undertaken in October 2014.

**iii. Financial Implications**

The financial implications of the proposed model, for both L.C.C. Children’s Services, and Schools’ Forum are shown below:

<b>Full Year Costs 2014/15</b>	<b>LCC Costs</b>	<b>Schools Forum Costs</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Team Manager and Practice Supervisor	£111,073	0	£111,073
TAC Co-Ordinators	£162,603	0	£162,603
Early Help Consultants	£67,601	£94,799	£162,400
Non-staffing costs (estimated)	0	£18,283	£18,283
Schools Administration	0	£104,400	£104,400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£341,277</b>	<b>£217,482</b>	<b>£558,759</b>

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**iv. Performance and Quality Assurance**

It is proposed that the following be agreed as performance targets (baseline data January 2014):

- ✓ 25% increase in number of active TAC cases in year one.
- ✓ 40% increase in number of active TAC cases by end of year two.
- ✓ 50% increase in cases transferring from Social Care to TAC in year one.
- ✓ 50 TAC cases per month are subject to an agreed Quality Assurance process
- ✓ 75% of schools and academies reporting increased access to case support

It is also proposed to monitor:

- Number of Supervisions
- Number of consultations
- Number of step down TAC
- Number of step up TAC

**5. Conclusion**

Whilst Team Around the Child has been successful in Lincolnshire, there is considerable scope for development and improvement within current contexts. It is therefore recommended that Schools' Forum agree to fund and implement the new arrangements described above.

A Context Briefing paper regarding Early Help and Team Around the Child (TAC) in Lincolnshire is detailed in Appendix A to this report.

**Context Briefing Regarding Early Help and Team Around the Child (TAC) in Lincolnshire**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

This document outlines Lincolnshire's current arrangements for the provision of co-ordinated Early Help for children and families, and the national context relevant to these arrangements.

**'For children who need additional help, every day matters. Academic research is consistent in underlining the damage to children from delaying intervention. The actions taken by professionals to meet the needs of these children as early as possible can be critical to their future'**

(Working Together to Safeguard Children - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, Department for Education, 2013)

**What is Early Help?**

Early Help is the term used to describe arrangements and services that identify the need for help for children and families as soon as problems start to emerge, or when there is a strong likelihood that problems will emerge in the future.

Early Help is not just for very young children, as problems may also emerge at any point throughout childhood and adolescence. Lincolnshire's Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) has recently endorsed Lincolnshire's Early Help Strategy and Offer documents. These describe our commitment to, and arrangements for Early Help for children and families. The Early Help Offer in Lincolnshire includes universal and targeted services designed to reduce or prevent specific problems from escalating or becoming entrenched.

**What does the Early Help Offer mean for children and families?**

The Government Guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2013 identifies the critical features of effective Early Help are:

- a multi-disciplinary approach that brings a range of professional skills and expertise to bear through a "Team Around The Child" approach (TAC)
- a relationship with a trusted Lead Professional who can engage the child and their family, and coordinate the support needed from other agencies
- practice that empowers families and helps them to develop the capacity to resolve their own problems
- a holistic approach that addresses children's needs in the wider family context
- simple, streamlined referral and assessment processes.

Lincolnshire's Early Help Strategy and Offer takes into account reports and reviews by Frank Field, Dame Clare Tickell, Graham Allen and Marmot, with regards to the impact of growing up in poverty on child outcomes, use of evidence based approaches and programmes, and the important focus on

the early years given the increasing body of evidence around early attachment and baby brain development.

Our offer also takes into account key messages from Munro's review:

- preventative services will do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services
- co-ordination of services is important to maximise efficiency
- within preventative services, there needs to be good mechanisms for helping people identify those children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer harm from abuse and neglect and who need referral to children's social care

Central to our Early Help Offer is the early identification of children and families who would benefit from Early Help and a co-ordinated early assessment and response to prevent abuse and neglect of children and young people, and improve outcomes for children and families as a whole. In order to achieve this all agencies in Lincolnshire, via the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), have committed to arrangements for Team Around the Child (TAC).

## **2. What is TAC?**

The effectiveness of Early Help for children is underpinned by the responsibility of **all** professionals to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs for individual children and families, irrespective of the whether they are providing services to children or adults. The professionals working mainly in universal services are best placed to identify children or their families, who are at risk of poor outcomes. These will be in health services, such as health visitors, GPs and school nurses, or in Children's Centres, or in education provision at any age from early years onwards.

'Working Together' recommends that professionals should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence and / or
- is showing early signs of abuse and / or neglect and / or sexual exploitation

Universal services such as schools and academies are well placed to identify potentially vulnerable children.

To ensure that the best possible support is provided to children and families there needs to be an early assessment of need considering child's developmental needs, family and environmental factors and parenting capacity. This can be undertaken by any professional.

Locally this assessment is undertaken currently through usage of the Single Assessment (formerly CAF). For a full step by step guide for TAC please see [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/TAC](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/TAC)

Working Together 2013 describes this assessment as an Early Help Assessment. We will move to use this title and language instead of the Single Assessment Framework in the near future following a review of the existing paperwork and processes.

In some cases a professional will be able to identify a specific need, but will not be in a position to provide appropriate locally sourced support. In this instance a TAC Co-ordinator will work with the referrer to identify the appropriate help and support to access from a single agency.

Where the assessment identifies support needs that cannot be met by a single agency or service, there needs to be a co-ordinated response with local agencies working together to support the family. The **Team around the Child** (TAC) model is used locally to bring together a range of different practitioners from across the children and young people's workforce and sometimes from adult services to support an individual child or young person and their family. The members of the TAC develop and deliver a package of solution focused support to meet the needs identified through the Single Assessment (formerly CAF) with a lead professional identified to co-ordinate the support and act as the key point of contact for the family and professionals / services. Decisions about who should be the lead professional should be taken on a case by case basis and should be informed by the child and their family.

Working Together states that in order for an early assessment to be effective:

- the assessment should be undertaken with the agreement of the child and their parents/ carers. It should involve the child and family as well as all the professionals who are working with them
- if parents and/or the child do not consent to an early help assessment, then the lead professional should make a judgement as to whether, without help, the needs of the child will escalate. If so, a referral into local authority children's social care may be necessary

What is important is that professionals work together effectively to ensure that families experience smooth transition between services and that all services supporting the family remain focused on the needs of the child.

It is also critical that all professionals remain aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and protecting children.

Further information on safeguarding arrangements in Lincolnshire is available in the LSCB document, 'Meeting the Needs of Children in Lincolnshire,' which provides an overview of the continuum of needs and guidance on the key concepts and processes in working with children, young people and their families according to their needs.

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