

REGULATORY AND OTHER COMMITTEE REPORT

NAME OF COMMITTEE:	Lincolnshire Schools Forum
DATE OF MEETING:	8 October 2014
SUBJECT:	Team Around the Child (TAC) in Lincolnshire
REPORT BY:	Paula Whitehead, Manager, Team Around the Child, Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services
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IS REPORT CONFIDENTIAL?	No

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Team Around the Child (TAC) in Lincolnshire, in particular the use of Schools Forum funding; and to obtain approval for continuation of the funding arrangements.

DISCUSSION

Background and Context

National Context

This report is written in the context of the Government Guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2013. This Guidance is very clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; and that a child-centred, multi-agency approach to Early Help is most effective in improving children's lives.

"Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years"

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)

Team Around the Child (TAC) is Lincolnshire's agreed and well-established process for Early Help.

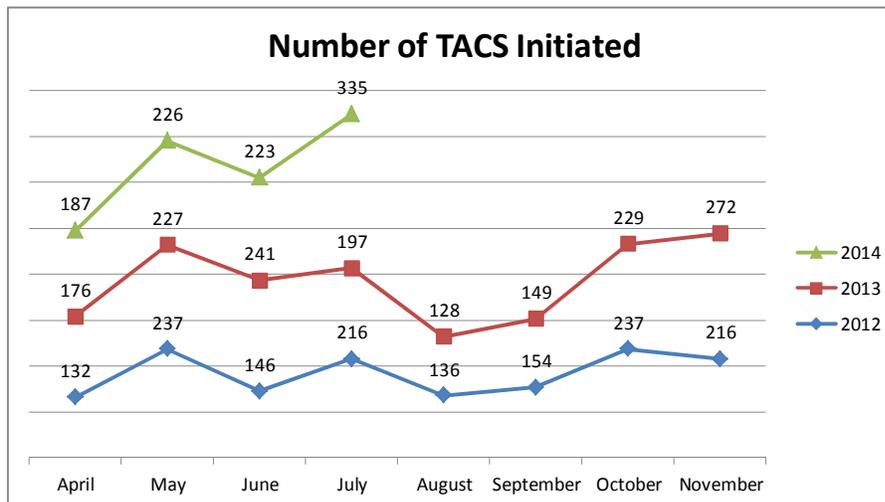
Lincolnshire Context

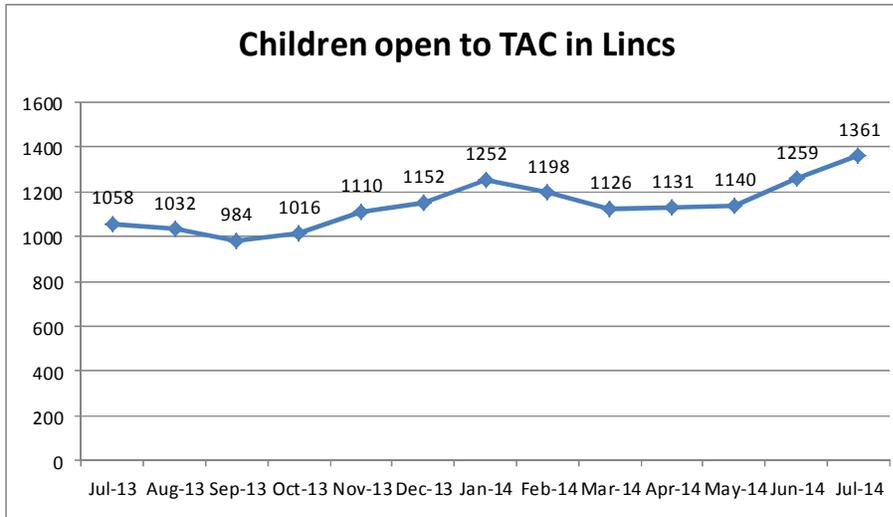
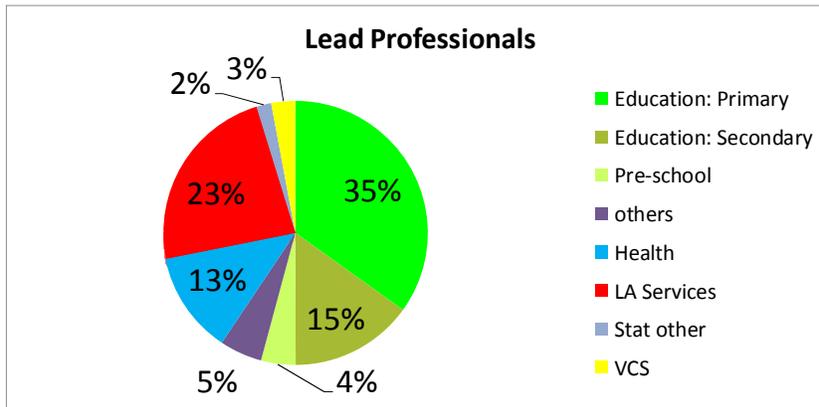
The guidance 'Meeting the Needs of Children in Lincolnshire' (Appendix C) provides an overview of safeguarding in Lincolnshire, including the provision of Early Help. It provides information on assessment of a child/young person's needs and planning, as well as clear 'pathways' for professionals to follow when they have concerns for a child. If a professional has a concern for a child or young person that does not meet the threshold for Social Care intervention, they must complete an Early Help Assessment with the child and family, and if this indicates the need to involve another agency, a TAC should be commenced. TACs bring together a 'team' including the family to create a plan to meet the needs of the child or young person, deliver services or take action, and then review whether this has made a difference. More information is available on the TAC website (www.lincolnshirechildren/tac)

Education Context

In January 2014, Schools Forum received a report highlighting the recommendations from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (L.S.C.B.) Audit of Team Around the Child (T.A.C.) cases. Within this report were recommendations to take forward developments to meet the education specific recommendations resulting from this audit. Schools' Forum accepted the recommendations and along with Lincolnshire County Council, committed to pilot funding for the developments. Schools' Forum have subsequently received an update on progress, and the new arrangements have been effective since April 2014.

TAC Performance Report





This data demonstrates the continued increase in both initiations, and open TACs in Lincolnshire; and that education providers remain the largest agency leading TACs.

Report on Early Help Consultant Activity April 2014 to end July 2014

	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Total</u>
Quality Assurance Visits completed	0	35	40	19	94
Case Supervisions completed (Schools/Academies only)	0	23	33	20	76
Provision of Advice and Support to Professionals (Schools and Academies)	12	68	119	201	400
Provision of Advice and Support to Professionals (Other Agencies)	17	38	118	182	355

The numbers above relate to individual case activity. In addition to this the Consultants have continued to provide briefing sessions on a single and multi-agency basis. They have attended Health Team and Schools Cluster meetings upon request.

- **57%** of case activity has been provided to Schools and Academies.
- Over 750 people attended Early Help Briefings in the period March to July 2014.
- Over 650 people attended Early Help Conference in July from a wide range of agencies
- 15 Quality Assurance reports have been undertaken where schools have been the Lead Professional. Of these: 1 was judged as outstanding, 3 as good, 5 as requiring improvement, and 6 as inadequate. Numbers of QA Reports will be higher in this school term.

Key areas of advice and support provided:

- ❖ Support with completion of Early Help Assessments
- ❖ Mapping of cases to improve quality and focus of TACs
- ❖ Supporting step down process
- ❖ Guidance on child-focussed TAC plans
- ❖ Guidance on thresholds and associated advice

CSC Contact Follow Up

The following tables describe follow up to CSC Contacts where callers have been advised to complete Early Help Assessments and/or progress to TAC. This is an extra activity that Early Help Consultants have taken on, and we are aware that many schools need support with completion of Early Help Assessments.

<u>Number of Contacts chased</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Number of these from Schools/Academies</u>
Boston/South Holland	33	25	28	86	26
East Lindsey	30	17	15	62	22
Lincoln/West Lindsey	33	42	52	127	68
North and South Kesteven	28	42	49	119	52
Total	124	126	144	394	168 = 42.7%

Take up of the offer of Administrative support has been very low. Only 27 requests have been received and dealt with, and these were all requesting invites be posted out for initial TACs.

Requested Feedback from Schools and Academies on the Support Provided

The following summary presents a snapshot of opinions following the first 4 months of the service being established. 55 responses to a request for feedback were received; 72 % were positive, and 22% had not used the service yet. The 3 negative responses are being dealt with individually with the schools concerned and were generally around misunderstandings about process and expectations.

'As I spent a term without a SENCo and being fairly new to the role of Head of Pastoral Care, I often turned to the Early Help Consultants for their expert advice and guidance. They were very supportive and pointed me in the right direction with cases that were sensitive and needed immediate action. They also gave me advice on how to word various correspondence. This has had a direct impact on the children involved and teams have been put in place because of their support.' **(Assistant Head Teacher)**

'We held a very informative training session with an Early Help consultant and one other primary schools. We now find the process far easier for getting the right support in place for children.' **(Headteacher)**

'I have found the support extremely useful and helpful. The Early Years Help conference at the show ground was particularly helpful and enable me to start to understand how to put the theory into practice. The follow up has also been tremendous. Whilst I am no expert I feel a little more confident in the whole process and think I am beginning to understand the role of the Academy.' **(Director of Learning)**

'EHC came out to visit and was a wealth of useful information and knowledge which was invaluable.' **(Safeguarding Lead)**

'The EHC have been very helpful to me in my role as safeguarding lead at the LTLC . They have offered valuable advice and support with TAC that have been particularly complex and they have in cases attended TACs. This has offered reassurance and at time new ideas which I have been able to take forward and use in my daily practice.' **(Teaching and Learning Centre)**

'The process (QA Process) was very useful and informative – a chance to bounce ideas and take on board children's services perspective. It has changed practice in as much as we now use Signs of Safety scaling in our monthly child protection meetings. We now feel much more empowered to carry out de-escalation from CIN to TAC knowing what procedures/ paperwork should have been put in place before the hand over from the social worker. We have become more pro-active in recording the children's voice in our paperwork.' **(Primary School)**

Additional unsolicited feedback has been received over the past 6 months, all of which has been positive. Below is a sample:

"I just wanted to say thank you very much for the troubleshooting session you kindly came and delivered for us on Wednesday. As you know the Designated Child Protection teachers for our Primary and Secondary sites were there and they in particular found it very helpful."

"The new EHA and Signs of Safety process is now much clearer, in particular the additional support that you can provide the Academy within your role. It is also useful to know the terminology that is expected when completing the new EHAs."

"The case supervision for schools is a fantastic idea"

"Thanks for your help and advice regarding the Early Help Assessment/TAC. As I said to you on the phone- it really helped having the information, we discussed over the phone, repeated back on an email. A written record of agreed actions does certainly help. You were also very clear with your advice and returned my calls when I had further questions. This all helped greatly."

"I found the case supervision helpful with the suggestion of doing an EHA for the student. Also it made me feel that I was in fact doing what I should be! "

"Just wanted to thank you again for all of your help yesterday, it really was invaluable."

It is suggested more formal evaluation be undertaken at the end of the first year.

Financial Update

The original funding breakdown for the developments is shown below. The project timescales have been met; therefore the funding will be used by year end according to this profile.

<u>Full Year Costs 2014/15</u>	<u>LCC Costs</u>	<u>Schools Forum Costs</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Team Manager and Practice Supervisor	£111,073	0	£111,073
TAC Administrators	£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
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£341,277</u>	<u>£217,482</u>	<u>£558,759</u>

However, actual usage of the service, and the feedback detailed above, suggest a different funding profile would be more appropriate moving forward; and this is illustrated below.

<u>Full Year Costs 2015/16</u>	<u>LCC Costs</u>	<u>Schools Forum Costs</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Team Manager/Practice Supervisor	£59,467*	0	<u>£59,467</u>
TAC Administrators	£125,484	0	<u>£125,484</u>
Early Help Consultants	£97,373	£154,285	<u>£251,658**</u>
Non-staffing costs	0	£18,670	<u>£18,670</u>
Schools Administration	0	£46,692	<u>£46,692</u>
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£282,324</u>	<u>£219,647</u>	<u>£501,971</u>

*Team Manager post was temporary during development phase

** This amount constitutes an increase to 8 full time staff

Summary

- Continued rise in the number of children receiving support from TAC in Lincolnshire, and this is in the context of relatively low numbers of children on Child Protection Plans, and fairly static numbers of Children in Need.
- Schools and academies remain the largest sector providing Lead Professionals for TAC.
- Early Help Consultants working to capacity
- Demand for support and advice from education professional continues to increase, resulting in a challenge to respond to requests for support within 48 hours.
- Team have assumed the additional responsibilities of supporting and monitoring receipt of Early Help Assessment,
- School professionals are wanting support and guidance while undertaking EHA's which was in not in the current remit of the team; this has been provided but with impact on capacity
- Early Help Consultants spend the majority of their time (57%) is spent supporting schools and academies, and we predict that this proportion will increase as take up of supervision continues to rise.
- Take up of the administrative offer has been very low
- Quality Audits have identified a range in the quality of TACs
- The solicited and unsolicited feedback from a wide range of staff and Head teachers is the team is highly valued and that this is making a real difference to children and families.

Conclusion

The new team has only been in place for 6 months but the feedback and data evidence that the team is providing the support that schools and academies require from Early Help Consultants. The data is also evidencing that additional capacity is required in terms of Early Help Consultants but the need for schools administrators is low.

Therefore, the recommendation is that the schools forum funding is realigned to double the number of consultants to two per locality and that the funding is provided on a permanent basis but there continues to be regular feedback to Schools' Forum on the impact and needs of this team

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ Schools Forum accepts the update contained in this report.
- ❖ Schools Forum agree to continue to contribute to the funding of this team on a permanent basis
- ❖ Schools Forum agrees to the revised allocation of funding to better meet need, as detailed above.

APPENDICES (If applicable) - these are listed below and attached at the back of the report.

None.