

Team Around the Child (TAC)

Team Around the Child is a model of service provision in which a range of different practitioners come together to help and support an individual child or young person.

The model does not imply a multi-disciplinary team that is located together or who work together all the time; rather, it suggests a group of professionals working together only when needed to help one particular child. In this sense, the team can be described as a 'virtual' team; in practice, practitioners will find themselves working with a range of different colleagues at different times to support different children.

The model is based on the ethos that such flexibility is essential if children's services are to be able to meet the diverse needs of each and every child. Team Around the Child places the emphasis firmly on the needs of the child, rather than on organisations or service providers.

It is envisaged that most teams will follow on from a Common Assessment being completed. Where the needs are at a higher threshold than that which CAF is intended to address, this approach should still be used.

Other integrated working, such as jointly run parenting groups, will also come within the remit of the WIT's work in Farnley but it is the TAC that will remain the main priority.

For the purpose of building TACs which can meet the variety of presenting needs it will be necessary to look at gaps in services and attempt to address them.

What does this mean in practice?

Understanding the needs of local children, young people and families.

Working in partnership, with the child and family as an important part of the "Team"

Understanding who meets/works with these children, young people and families.

Understanding the resources available.

Exploring possibilities for improving services locally.

Developing service provision that puts children and families at the centre.

Principles and Practice that Define the Team-Around-the-Child (TAC)

Approach and Relationship to Good Practice *Working Paper – Peter Limbrick, June 2005*

A Team Around the Child or TAC is defined as an individualised and evolving team of the few practitioners who see the child and family to provide practical support in education, therapy and treatment.

The model requires those practitioners who offer, or who are going to offer, a child and family regular practical support to collaborate closely with each other regardless of which service or agency they work in. An essential feature of this is that the number of people in each TAC is kept down to 3, 4 or 5.

Each Team is then facilitated by one of those professionals as the one who then functions as the multi-agency key worker or lead professional for that family.

The plurality of needs of these children and families, and the influence these needs have on each other disqualify any single practitioner, no matter how well trained, experienced and motivated, from acting alone to support.

Parents are *fully* informed, involved and empowered

- the family accesses all relevant services
- essential information is shared appropriately
- all separate interventions are co-ordinated as far as possible
- the family is supported in each new situation that arises
- key professionals work in close collaboration with each other

If effective support requires key practitioners to develop helping relationships with families, the TAC approach requires that practitioners also develop effective relationships with each other. Joint planning in the TAC approach will require some practitioners to spend more time meeting with each other and with parents. On the other hand, any collective decisions an individual TAC makes to prioritise or integrate the child's separate development and learning programmes can create flexibility in how much time each practitioner spends working with the child. They can then agree to conflate some separate processes.

1. Each child's key practitioners work as a collaborative and individualised team
2. Parents are equal members of the team
3. A keyworker (or lead professional) facilitates each individual team
4. The child's development and learning programmes are as integrated as possible
5. There is a pro-active effort to ensure that each TAC is founded on effective relationships