

Family and Adolescent Support Processes and Criteria

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# Introduction

The FAST team specialise in working with children aged 10 years and above and on the Edge of Care. Edge of Care is defined as children who are at risk of becoming looked after due to family breakdowns during crisis and difficulty. The team also support children who are living with in house foster carers to prevent a placement breakdown.

The FAST team work systemically completing direct work with families to affect sustainable change in the home and stabilise young people’s lives. The focus of work helps keep young people safe and improve family relationships so that young people can remain living with their families or carers where it is safe to do so.

The FAST team also supports children to be reunified home to their family if they have been looked after.

# The FAST Team offers

* Social work specialist child and family assessments with 8 week support packages alongside a FAST support worker
* Children will have their own 1:1 FAST support worker
* Direct work that is child centred and focused including creative activities to support working with children
* Family work
* Crisis intervention between the hours of 9-9 weekdays and 9-6 weekends
* Systemic practice and signs of safety approach (3 staff trained and 3 practice leads in signs of safety)
* Staff supervision both 1:1 and group supervision

# Criteria for FAST

Children and Young people who are at risk of coming into the care of the local authority:

* Meeting the threshold of Children’s Services involvement
* 10 years old – 17 years old

There are concerns regarding risk which could lead to them being placed into the care of the local authority including:

1. Young person is high risk of Child sexual Exploitation
2. Young person is high risk gang involvement/criminal exploitation
3. Young person is displaying offending behaviour
4. Young person is displaying sexual harmful behaviour
5. Young person is experiencing poor Mental Health and self-harming behaviours
6. Young person is misusing substances

* Break down in family relationships in the family home resulting in the parent/carer no longer wanting to care for the child.
* Child is experiencing no stability and is moving between family/friend placements.
* Parent/Carer is unable to manage the child’s behaviour and the family home has deteriorated as a result of this.
* The child is likely to come into the care of the local authority due to a lack of independent skills which means that they cannot live independently (Specifically in regards to 16-17 year olds – Southwark ruling 2009)
* Children in care who may be at risk of a placement move

# Request for Support Process

There must be discussion with the Team Manager regarding any referral to assess if this is appropriate.

Complete referral which should contain the following:

1. Correct family details and young person’s legal status
2. All relevant family members who young person may spend time with or seek additional support from
3. Education setting
4. Other agencies working with the family
5. Risk assessment for working with the family
6. History of circumstances of the family
7. Precipitating events that has led to the referral
8. Risks to the child
9. What the family want to change and achieve

The referral will be authorised by a manager from the FAST team and will be allocated to a worker. Following this the expectation is to arrange a planning meeting before the support begins. . In crisis situations a visit will be completed within 3 hours.

# Child and Family Assessments

If the child has been referred into “the front door” we have 3 specialist social workers who will complete a child and family assessment offering a maximum of 12 week intense support work alongside the FAST support worker. The expectation is that contact is made on the day of the referral to the family to start to offer the intensive support.

If after the assessment it has been deemed that there are continuing safeguarding concerns and ongoing support is required that then young person will be transferred to a safeguarding team, however the support worker working with that young person will continue to offer support if it is assessed as necessary.

If after the assessment there have been continual improvements for that young person and there are no longer safeguarding concerns or risks that the child may come into the care of the local authority then the family will step down to an early help plan coordinated by family support or a youth worker.

# Planning Meeting

**(completed by the support worker)**

To be in conjunction with the social worker and family, **support will not commence until this has been completed.**

The timescale of this is determined by the FAST team manager and the social worker and support worker will be emailed with the direction based on the priority.

# Review process

FAST worker is to attend all CIN/CP conferences and Core Group meetings to review their plans in line with the social worker and other agencies present.

FAST worker is to gather young person’s wishes and feelings during a one to one session prior to review or after.

# Closure Process

FAST worker to complete a plan of closure during multi-agency meetings with family and all other professionals present. The child’s views are ascertained prior to this meeting during a one to one session.

# Weekend Visits

FAST complete weekend visits to children who the Local Authority are significantly worried about. The criteria for weekend visits are as follows:

1. The children are open to Children’s Social Care aged between 0-18 years old
2. The social worker is visiting at least 3 times per week due to heightened safeguarding concerns about a child.
3. The risk is continual during the weekend or heightened at the weekend
4. The request for support is made before Friday afternoon 4pm and a telephone call is held with the team manager or duty worker prior to the referral being accepted.
5. The social worker is able to provide a clear contingency plan for the children if we are worried when visiting.
6. In a matter of urgency where a referral cannot be made before 4pm workers must liaise with the FAST management team

Once the weekend visit has been completed unless a further request is made before the next Friday no more visits will take place. It is the allocated social workers’ responsibility to inform FAST if further visits are needed and the relevant request form will need to be completed before Friday Lunchtime.

# Service Opening Times

FAST open Monday to Friday between 9am – 9pm and are able to respond to any crisis reported to the duty phone by professionals or workers on **01782 234970.** FAST have a duty worker available throughout the day; therefore, if the allocated worker is not available then a duty worker is able to support a family if necessary.

FAST also work at the weekend 9.30am – 6pm and again are able to respond to any crisis. FAST are based working with the Emergency Duty Team at the weekend and are able to communicate effectively with the EDT coordinators if they are worried about any child or family.