



**Supporting Solutions Service
Operating Procedure**

Updated January 2022

Supporting Solutions Service

This procedure outlines how the Supporting Solutions Service supports young people aged 11 – 17 years on the 'edge of care' and their parent(s)/carer(s).

See also Family Group Conference, Child Exploitation and Missing

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1. Criteria for Service Support

The Supporting Solutions Service will support young people aged 7 – 17 years and their parent(s)/carer(s). The Supporting Solutions Service definition of 'edge of care' is as follows:

- The young person will need to enter care within days or weeks if current levels of support are insufficient to safeguard them, due to family relationships or family breakdown escalating and/or other issues are worsening.
- The young person may not be able to remain in their family home, if an alternative intervention or support package is not swiftly put in place including those provided with respite care.
- The young person has been accommodated in an emergency but where the aim for them is to be reunited with their family quickly with appropriate support.
- The young person's long term foster placement is at risk of breaking down and the plan is for the young person to remain in this placement.
- Long term looked after young people, open to Looked After Children team, with a plan to be rehabilitated back home to family.

All young people who are allocated to an edge of care worker will be entitled to a Family Group Conference.

The Supporting Solutions Service cannot offer interventions where:

- Intensive edge of care intervention will not impact on the current situation, for example, where domestic abuse is present but the abuser is still in the family home or where there are significant worries around parental substance misuse but parent is not willing to access support or services.

2. Referral Pathway for Intensive Support

Referrals to the Supporting Solutions Service can be made only via 2 pathways:

1. Directly from a social worker/social work consultant or team manager where the young person is considered as imminent risk of being 'edge of care' due to a breakdown in family relationships.
2. When there has been Emergency Duty Team involvement (this may also include the Supporting Solutions Service duty worker) and a young person has been accommodated overnight or there is significant risk of a family breakdown due to family relationships.

3. Referral Process

A member of the management team or the duty worker will take the referral information.

There are no referral forms for the referrer to complete, however, it is the responsibility of the person taking the referral to gather sufficient information to ensure effective gatekeeping of the service. Appropriate questions are essential at the point of referral in relation to the needs of the family, the types of intervention the referrer feels are needed and that without intensive intervention there would be a significant risk of family breakdown. Questions asked at the point of referral follow 'Signs of Safety' framework.

Referrals can be via consultation over the phone or Teams, however, if an urgent response is needed the referrer needs to speak directly with a member of the management team or the duty worker.

Contact details:

Lucy Armstrong – Team Manager responsible for 'Edge of Care' 03000 262344

Lucy.Armstrong@durham.gov.uk

Jade Whyman – Team Manager responsible for FGC and Child Exploitation 03000 264486

Jade.Whyman@durham.gov.uk

Duty worker can be contacted via the admin team on 03000 262278

Referrals for Edging towards care

Following consultation if agreed a young person is edging towards care, advice, recommendations and support will be offered to the practitioner. This will be recorded on child/young person's file

If a referral discussion is requested from a social worker where the young person is already open to them but has reached crisis point, there is an expectation that the social worker or duty social worker will have visited the family to assess the current situation and consider support needed before making a referral to Supporting Solutions Service.

If management team are unable to allocate a Supporting Solutions Service worker immediately or the allocated worker is not available for an immediate response, support will be offered through the Supporting Solutions Service duty worker. There is an expectation that where families are experiencing crisis / imminent risk of breakdown there will be an immediate response from Supporting Solutions Service.

4. Role of the Duty Worker

The Supporting Solutions Service duty workers are available Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm and Saturday and Sunday 9am – 5pm.

The role of the duty worker is to respond to immediate requests for support, this may include:

- Home visit to respond to crisis situation
- 1-1 with parent / carer to discuss their concerns and steps to move forward
- 1-1 with young person to discuss their concerns and steps to move forward
- Support social worker in completing Family Network Meeting / Family Offers to identify immediate family support
- Restorative conversations to support family relationships
- Respite support for young person
- Other appropriate identified actions to support the immediate needs of the family

Duty workers may also be required to act as a second worker in situations where there is an identified risk or to support young people who are already open to Supporting Solutions Service but the allocated worker has other commitments.

5. Phases of Support

Phase 1 – Crisis Intervention (up to 24 hours/immediate response)

This will be offered to a young person and their family who are experiencing a crisis and who, without immediate mediation and conflict resolution, are at risk of family breakdown.

This will be delivered in the family home where ever possible, alternatively at the service base or if required the young person will be removed from the family home to stay in the crash pad/emergency foster placement overnight. The service aims for a young person who is experiencing family breakdown to be able to stay one night only or over a weekend if accommodated by the Emergency Duty Team out of day time hours, followed by a rapid response offer to the family the next day.

This will be the responsibility of the duty worker (or the allocated worker if allocated at point of crisis). Family Network Meeting must be explored at the earliest opportunity.

The duty worker will also be responsible for handing over a brief outline of the support offered and agreed support for Phase 2, this will be recorded on the young person's electronic record for the Emergency Duty Team, the next duty worker and/or the allocated worker.

Phase 2 - Rapid Response (up to 7 days)

Intensive support will be offered to families who are experiencing family breakdown and may have been or are at risk of the young person being removed from their family home. This will include conflict resolution, restorative conversations and may result in a family network meeting to identify any support from within the extended family and wider support network.

This will be the responsibility of the allocated worker, however, if the worker has other appointments that cannot be changed the duty worker may also be asked to support in this phase.

Phase 3 - Engagement and Identification (4 weeks)

A period of intensive engagement will be offered using a number of interventions including motivational enhancement therapy, conflict resolution and restorative conversations alongside practical support.

Phase 4 - Interventions Programme (up to 12 weeks)

A program of evidenced based interventions will be delivered from a pick and mix menu available to meet the needs of the individual young person and their family/carers. This will also include "supported referrals and attendance" to any specialist and therapeutic services identified as part of the safety plan, this may include substance misuse, CAMHS, Youth Offending.

In this phase there will be monthly reviews between the allocated worker and their line manager.

De-escalation (up to 6 months)

A period of de-escalation will be offered to the young person and parent/carers to allow families the opportunity to demonstrate sustained change without intensive interventions. This will also, however, allow immediate support to be offered as and when needed.

6. Role of allocated Supporting Solutions Service worker

Phase 1 and 2

- Worker to contact family and Social Worker to arrange visit within 1 working day. If Social Worker not available for immediate response Supporting Solutions Service worker to complete initial visit(s) and visit with Social Worker within 3 working days (this maybe Supporting Solutions Service duty worker).
- Plans to be made with family for crisis intervention. This may include a Family Network Meeting which is to be completed with social worker.
- Transport Consent Forms to be completed.
- Read referrals for young person at the earliest opportunity.
- Read assessments and care plans for young person at the earliest opportunity.
- Speak to young person 1:1
- Speak with parents/carer 1:1
- Plan and agree immediate interventions with young person, parent/carer and Social Worker.
- Update work plan with interventions completed and outcomes during this phase.
- Ensure that visits are offered to family to meet their needs in line with the current phase of support.

Phase 3

- Identify and agree planned interventions with young person and parent/carer.
- Complete Outcome Stars with young person and parents/carer to inform planned interventions.
- Complete objectives section on work plan and identify appropriate tools and resources to use to meet objectives.
- Share work plan with young person and parent/carer and ask them to sign a copy to evidence they agree to engage with identified interventions.
- Ensure that visits are offered to family to meet their needs in line with the current phase of support.

Phase 4

- Carry out planned interventions.
- Ensure that visits are offered to family to meet their needs in line with the current phase of support.
- Cases will be reviewed at Team Around the Family meeting or in case discussions. Outcomes at point of review to be discussed and further actions identified. It is the responsibility of the Supporting Solutions Service worker to update work plan for review.

- Outcome star tool to be reviewed with young person and parent / carer every 6 weeks.

De-escalation and Closure

- At the end of phase 4, there will be a period of de-escalation. In relation to length and support required in de-escalation, this will be agreed between Supporting Solutions Service worker, young person, parent/carer and Social Worker. This is offered to allow families a monitored period of reduced intervention and also quick access to support if required.
- Outcome star tool to be completed at the final review to evidence outcomes.
- Closure summary to be completed at end of de-escalation, young person's views to be obtained at point of closure. Completed work plan to be shared with young person, parent/carer and Social Worker. Copy saved on electronic file. Work plan to identify contact numbers for Voluntary and Community Sector / relevant services identified during package of support.
- Once closed exit matrix to be completed within 1 week of closure.

7. Case Discussion and Review

Case discussions will be completed on a monthly basis between the allocated Supporting Solutions Service worker and line manager. Where there is also ERASE intervention it is good practice for the ERASE worker to also take part in these discussions.

It is the responsibility of the allocated Supporting Solutions Service worker to update the 'Actual Outcomes' section of the work plan prior to the discussion to allow case review to take place and further actions to be identified.

Case discussions will follow 'Signs of Safety' guidance and ensure that the voice and experiences of the young person are evidenced. Case discussions will be recorded on the young person's electronic case record.

8. Work Plan and Closure Summary

Every family that accesses intensive interventions will have an individual work plan that is tailored to meet their needs. This work plan will identify support to be offered to the young person and parent/carer at each phase of intervention and will also identify resources that are used as part of this process.

Work plans will be reviewed and updated regularly.

Each work plan will identify a plan for de-escalation of support from Supporting Solutions Service as well as appropriate services within the Voluntary and Community Sector that family can access in order to sustain changes made and help to prevent a re-entry into higher level services.

9. Children of Concern Meetings

Children of concern meetings take place on a Friday afternoon and Monday morning. The purpose of these meetings are to ascertain if additional support is required for young people

in Phase 1 and 2 and identify other young people where additional support may be required to prevent escalation.

Children of concern meetings will identify young people where it may be appropriate to offer sessional respite support.

Children of concern meetings also identify support required where the allocated worker is on leave.

10. Electronic Case Records and Analysis

All electronic case notes are to follow the Supporting Solutions Service standards of recording as well as Signs of Safety framework.

Effective use of analysis is to be used in case recordings to:

- Identify patterns and trends;
- Identify strengths and risks;
- Highlight observations and the impact these may have on the young person or parent/carer;
- Consider the impact of interventions on the young person.
- Identify next steps

11. Allocation of work

Supporting Solutions Service workers have a case load which allows intensive interventions to take place with young people and parents/carers.

Ideally workers should not have more than one young person in Phase 1 or 2, this is to ensure the worker can respond appropriately to crisis situations. Workers will generally have 4-5 young people on their case load, however, when cases reach the de-escalation phase this will likely be more.

Where possible Supporting Solutions Service workers will be allocated cases in 1 or 2 geographical areas of the county, this is to reduce travel time and increase the amount of face to face time workers have with young people and parents/carers.

12. Families Who Disengage/Crisis Led Only

When families start to disengage from support by the service, for example with cancelled or ineffective visits and no response to telephone calls/text messages or they only engaged when they were in crisis significant attempts will be made to re-engage the family in support. This will include:

- Unannounced home visits, at different times of the day;
- Note through the door with details of next planned visit and reminder of Supporting Solutions Service worker's contact details;
- Joint visit with Social Worker or other relevant professional, try to make contact through a professional the family are working with;
- Letter to family;
- Attend Team Around the Family meeting.

If after this there is still no evidence of any motivation to engage with offers of support, case discussion is to be held between Social Worker, Supporting Solutions Service worker and line manager where case closure or further appropriate actions will be agreed.

13. Escalation for Safeguarding Concerns/Dispute Resolution Process

When the service has significant concerns regarding safeguarding of a young person, the allocated Supporting Solutions Service worker will share these concerns with the child's social worker and agree a plan of how to address these.

If the service continues to have concerns and the situation remains unresolved discussions will be held between Supporting Solutions Service line manager and the Social Work Team Manager or Social Work Consultant to discuss an appropriate response.

14. Sessional Workers

Where families are experiencing a crisis or it has been agreed as part of the plan of support, young people can access weekend and evening respite support. This is offered through a bank of sessional workers. Requests for sessional workers are to be agreed through Supporting Solutions Service management.

15. Emergency Duty Team - Emergency Accommodation

Where all other options have been explored and it is not appropriate due to risks/situation for a young person to be cared for by a foster carer in an emergency placement then the crash pad at The Nest (crash pad) will be used.

16. Full Circle

Full Circle workers based with Supporting Solutions Service are able to offer a range of support to both Supporting Solutions Service workers as well as young people and parents/carers.

Supporting Solutions Service workers will access training sessions facilitated by the Full Circle worker and a monthly clinical group supervision. Individual clinical supervisions will also be available upon request. The Full Circle worker will offer weekly slots for case consultations, Supporting Solutions Service workers are able to access these for all young people.

Where there is a clear need for therapeutic interventions the Full Circle worker will offer 1-1 sessions with the young person. Parents and carers will also be able to access support through Full Circle training programmes.

18. Child Exploitation Team

The Child Exploitation team is a multidisciplinary team, with staff from the police and children's services. They work to engage and educate professionals and provide interventions to young people and their families. Supporting Solutions are able to draw upon the expertise of the Child Exploitation Team for advice and resources both within Children's Services and the Police.

Criteria for Child Exploitation Team

- The young person must be a victim or high risk of Child Exploitation which is determined by the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment tool.
- The young person must be open to a Families First Team, Children Looked After or care leavers.

Referral Process

A Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Tool must be completed by the lead professional who is working with the young person. This must be emailed to the Child Exploitation Vulnerability Tracker (CEVT) inbox - CEVT@durham.pnn.police.uk to be screened. A decision is made by a multi-agency team at the weekly CEVT meeting as to whether the young person is high, medium or low risk of Child Exploitation.

If the young person is high risk of Child Exploitation an ERASE Support Worker will be allocated.

If the young person is medium to low risk of Child Exploitation the ERASE Team will share resources and provide telephone consultations to ensure that the professionals working with the young person are able to put relevant interventions in place to reduce the risk of Child Exploitation for that young person.

If the young person is accessing Supporting Solutions intervention, the ERASE Worker can offer joint visits to the young person or the family to increase their awareness of Child Exploitation and methods of reducing the risks of Child Exploitation.

19. Family Group Conference / Family Network Meeting

Family Networks need to be explored for all young people, this is especially important for young people and families in crisis. Supporting Solutions Service workers can support social workers in completing Family Network Meetings in line with timescales to ensure that there is a safety plan in place for the young person. Family Network Meetings may need to be reviewed regularly for young people in crisis as a response to a potentially rapid changing situation.

All young people who are allocated to an edge of care worker are entitled to have a Family Group Conference to explore longer term plans and networks of support and resources within these networks to help ensure that the young person is safe and cared for within their family network. See also Family Group Conference Procedures.