



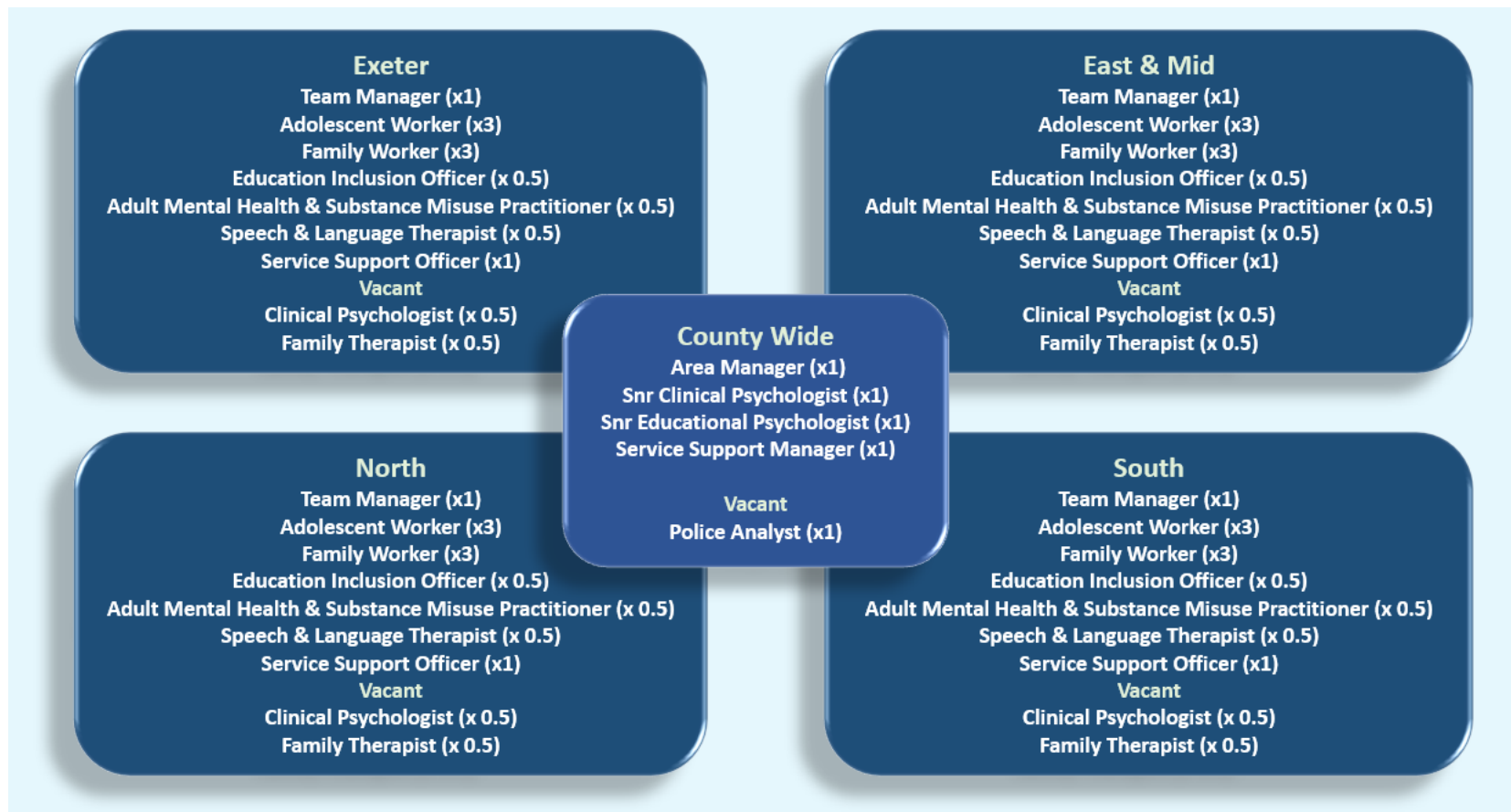
Bridges Service Information and Guidance

The new Bridges service in Devon provides a rapid response to young people aged 11 to 18 years old (17 at point of request) and their family in order to safely avoid the need for a young person to come into Devon's care.

The service delivers intervention that is intensive, and community based as an alternative to care. The service is designed to be a short-term intensive intervention of 3-6 months duration.

The service will work closely with the Early Help and wider system to support families during transitional stages both into and out of the service. Interventions include relationship focussed direct work with young people and their parents/carers in relation to a range of issues including substance use, mental health, domestic abuse, difficulties in education, employment and training, offending behaviour, utilising a range of evidenced based practice tools.

As can be seen in the diagram below there are four Bridges Service multi-disciplinary teams in each of the four localities across Devon:



The Bridges service contributes to the social work assessment and responds to the developmental and environmental needs for the young person and their family.

The service strengthens multi-agency intervention via the multi-disciplinary team approach leading to improved outcomes for young people and their families. The Bridges Service offer skilled interventions to address:

- Experience of trauma and disrupted attachment as a result of parental difficulties
- Additional communication/sensory processing needs (either ASD or arising from trauma)
- Risks and vulnerabilities, particularly in adolescence.
- Abuse and neglect
- Self-harm
- Disrupted education
- Risk taking behaviors (missing, CSE, criminal exploitation)
- Criminality
- Complex needs

ACCESSING THE BRIDGES SERVICE

Devon's Bridges Service is embedded within Children's Social Care; it is a complimentary service that sits alongside Children's Social Work Teams. Bridges practitioners will work in partnership with the child or young person and their allocated social worker in supporting children and young people to remaining living at home (or return home) safely.

Requests for Bridges intervention are made by the social worker by sending an email to the dedicated mailbox - childsc.bridgesrequests-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

The request email needs to include the Eclipse PER number along with a brief outline of the issues, needs of the family and how a Bridges intervention may be able to support the social work plan.

Each request is logged by business support, and the relevant Bridges Team Manager then completes a **screening and allocation tool** to decide whether the young person meets our **eligibility criteria** for support and whether 'rapid' or 'planned' response is required. It is likely that an initial conversation between the TM and social worker takes place at this point to ensure a clear understanding of the request and to support the decision making process.

If the request is accepted the TM will then allocate and deploy a Bridges practitioner to contact the young person and their family.

Where a **rapid response** is identified the allocated worker will make contact with the family within 24 hours and aim to meet and agree a **support plan** with the young person.

Where a **planned response** is identified the allocated worker will make contact with the family within 5 working days and aim to meet and agree a **support plan** with the young person and their parent / carer.

All support agreements are to be completed with young people and their family within 10 days of allocation to the Bridges practitioners.

The Bridges Service is not a social work case holding service therefore the allocated social worker within the Initial Response Team (or Children and Families Team or P&T Team for Child in Care) will remain allocated to the child or young person throughout the Bridges intervention.

For children and young people currently in care; where it has been identified within a social work assessment/child's care plan by the child/young person's social work team, (and has been ratified by the IRO within the child in care review process), that a child is to return home with the support and intervention of the Bridges, the social work Team Manager will discuss this with the Bridges Team Manager who will complete a Bridges **Screening and allocation tool** in order to commence the Bridges intervention.

Where requests for Bridges intervention do not meet criteria and are not accepted, the social worker will be informed by the Bridges Team Manager with an explanation of the decision.

MULTI DISCIPLINARY SERVICE

WHAT TO EXPECT

Following an accepted request from the Bridges Team Manager or Service Manager, the Team Manager of the relevant locality will allocate this case to a member of the team immediately upon completion of the **screening tool**, who will then make contact and have the initial conversations with the young person, their parent / carer and their allocated social worker within the timescales according to a rapid or planned response.

An initial case discussion (and potentially joint visit) is required between the Social Worker and the Bridges worker as a starting point to introduce the family to the service in order to ensure collaborative working and a shared understanding of the purpose and motivation of the intervention; work will not commence by the Bridges service until a case discussion has taken place between the allocated social worker and the Bridges practitioners.

Bridges workers will endeavour to attend and offer a verbal or appropriate written update at the family meetings, such as Family Group Conferencing (FGC) or Child in Need, Child Protection, Child in Care Meetings (as well as Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings).

Once a case has been started the Bridges worker will complete some relationship building sessions before completing the **Support Agreement**.

Every six weeks thereafter Bridges will complete a **Review** Support Agreement with the family, including feedback under **CYP IAPT Principles**, and make this available to the Social Worker.

As part of the plan, it may be identified that clinical or therapeutic support from a Bridges specialist practitioner, such as a Family Therapist, Clinical or Educational Psychologist is required. When this type of support is required the allocated worker will, following consent from the young person, contact the relevant professional and agree a schedule of specialist support.

The allocated worker will ensure that all relevant specialist assessments and correspondence completed by multi-disciplinary professionals are attached to the young persons records within Eclipse. Further process guidance for completing records within Eclipse can be found [here](#).

At the end of each intervention an **End Involvement Report** will be completed and shared to evidence the outcomes and impact that the support and intervention work undertaken has had on the young person and their family / parent / carer.

