

Child & Parent Placement and Assessment Service

Statement of Purpose

Updated 18th August 2020



Fostering Devon

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Child & Parent Placement and Assessment Service

The Child & Parent Placement and Assessment Service is a Devon County Council Children's Service provision that is independent of the Children & Families Teams. We provide evidence-based parenting assessments. Assessments are undertaken either within child and parent arrangements in a fostering household or in the community.

The aims of the service are;

- To keep children and parents together during assessment and provide the opportunity for parents to experience caring for their child in a family-based environment.
- To support families to develop the skills, experience and knowledge to safely parent their children.
- To enable and encourage parents to develop a better understanding of their child's needs and meet these independently.
- To support families in building a network of support and maintain parents and their children close to their local community.
- To work with families in a trauma informed way, which includes the use of a strengths-based framework, and includes trauma awareness, providing safety through positive working relationships and clear boundaries, encouraging self-efficacy and service user involvement, with a focus on developing skills required for future living.
- To provide evidence-based parenting assessments which will inform care planning decisions for children and families and reduce delay in the achievement of permanency

Our approach is based on working with families using restorative practice.

For our service this means;

- Recognising families as experts in their own lives, helping them identify and build on strengths and resources in their communities that can improve outcomes for their children;
- Listening to and working with families and other professionals, building trusting relationships and using common language to find solutions together;
- Being reliable and respectful, keeping promises and being accountable for our actions;

- Being honest and realistic about risks and the extent and limits of what we can offer and what families need to do to keep their children safe;
- Taking time to listen to families, showing genuine interest and warmth, to enable family led problem solving and decision making and shared accountability.

Assessments

The Service provides child and parent placements with skilled and experienced foster carers. Our work includes interventions to support parents in developing skills and knowledge whilst also assessing the parents' capacity and ability to look after their child safely and to a 'good enough' standard. Assessments are completed by a multi-disciplinary team made up of foster carers, a family practitioner and a lead Assessing Social Worker. This provides the child and parent with a high level of teaching, guidance, monitoring and assessment within a supportive context.

Our aim is to help parents acquire the information and understanding of their child's developmental needs which will determine their ability and potential to be safer parents in the future. We demonstrate parenting skills and encourage parents to learn and apply these in caring for their children.

The Child & Parent Assessment Team (CPAT)

The team use a wide range of assessment tools and can tailor the parenting assessment to an individual family's needs.

The team have experience of undertaking and delivering parenting assessments for parents who have additional needs including learning disabilities, learning difficulty, mental ill health, drug and alcohol dependency and autism. We work with parents, foster carers and social workers to tailor the assessment programme to accommodate parent's additional needs.

The team follow the best practice guidelines (Good Practice Guidance on working with Parents with a Learning Disability- updated September 2016 DOH/DfES) and are trained in the delivery of PAMS Assessments.

We work with families where there are significant safeguarding concerns and where there is or has been domestic violence in partner relationships.

We use a range of evidence based assessment tools and interventions including the Adult Attachment Style interview(ASI) , Care Index, Video Interactive Guidance (VIG), and Standard Assessment Measures to support Capacity to Change Assessments.

Parenting Assessment Social Workers and Family Practitioners are experienced child care practitioners in child protection, safeguarding and court work. Practitioners within the team

have received training in attachment focused therapy (DDP) and motivational interviewing to offer parents the best opportunity to engage in work to develop their parenting skills and knowledge.

The Child & Parent Assessment Team can be contacted at:

Child & Parent Assessment Team (CPAT)

Room 248

County Hall

Topsham Road

Exeter

EX2 4QD

Tel: 01392 38 2373/3000

Childandparentassessment-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

Guiding Principles

The aim is for assessments to be completed within 12 weeks although this will have to be flexible and dependent on court timescales and instructions.

Parents can come into placement pre-birth. This is normally up to 3 weeks before expected delivery date.

The service works primarily with parents and babies/preschool children.

The foster carer will provide daily and weekly observation reports which will be used to inform the assessment.

Foster carer's recording is shared with parents and parents are encouraged to use this to reflect on their parenting.

Foster carers provide role modelling and parenting support in a family environment.

'In the moment' feedback is provided so that parents are fully involved and understand how and where they need to make changes to their parenting.

The Child & Parent Placement Arrangement

Understanding the nature of the arrangement is essential from the outset. Key questions are as follows:

- What is the proposed legal status of the parent and child? Who is being 'looked after'?

- What are the aims, tasks and proposed duration of the arrangement? This is detailed in a letter of instruction which forms the basis for the parenting assessment
- Is this a court directed assessment and have all parties agreed the letter of instruction?
- Who is carrying out the specific risk assessment of any adult parent prior to the arrangement starting to ensure that the local authority has met its duty of care towards foster carers and any children within the fostering household?
- Has the parent been provided with information about child and parent placements, the carers and the placement standards/expectations?

It is good practice for the parent to have the opportunity to visit the placement and meet the carers prior to moving in.

A placement planning / set up meeting will be held within 72 hours of the start of the placement.

A placement agreement will be signed and form the basis of the arrangement.

If a placement needs to be made in an emergency the emergency placement agreement can be used to enable the family to move into placement. A placement planning meeting must be held within 72 hours of the start of the placement.

Regular weekly network review/planning meetings will be held throughout the placement.

Plans of assessment will be formally agreed via a letter of instruction.

Assessments are underpinned by The Department of Health Framework of Assessment for Children in Need and their Families.

Assessments will be undertaken by the 'Team Approach'.

The parenting assessment report is provided at the end of the assessment and interim reports are provided where required.

At all times the welfare of the baby/child in placement is the paramount consideration.

The key attachment figure and main care giver for the child should be their parent. Parents will provide for all their children's needs in placement with the support of the foster carer/s

Foster carers will provide a supportive home environment for the parent and child and will endeavour to work in a clear, open and honest way with the parent.

The Restorative practice approach is mirrored in the foster carers skills in working with parents. Foster carers will focus on the strengths the parent has and the progress made but also highlighting any area where there are areas of need, concerns or where additional support is needed.

The Child Care Social Worker has responsibility for care planning and has the key responsibility to ensure there is no delay in the planning for children.

Placements period shall be agreed for a maximum of 15 weeks duration. Up to 3 weeks outreach assessment and community support can be provided once the family leave the fostering arrangement. This will hold the placement open for the parent and child to return to should they need to for safeguarding reasons.

Table A: Proposed timetabling of activity.

Week	Activity
Week 1	Initial Setup Meeting;
Week 2	
Week 3	Network Review Meeting; Review exit planning.
Week 4	
Week 5	
Week 6	Network Review Meeting; review exit planning. Interim Report.
Week 7	
Week 8	
Week 9	Network Review Meeting; Review exit planning/start community step down plan
Week 10	
Week 11	
Week 12	Network Review Meeting. Exit plan confirmed
Week 13	Final Report completed
Week 14	
Week 15	Placement end

Pre-Birth/Community-Based Assessment

The Child & Parent Assessment team can be commissioned to undertake community-based assessment work with families. There must be a clear rationale for a specialist parenting assessment and the independence of this work being undertaken by Child & Parent Assessment team. Examples of where this may be appropriate;

- The parent is previously known to Children’s Services and has had Children previously removed from their care.

- There are existing Care Proceedings already in progress in relation to older sibling/s to the unborn Infant.
- The Local Authority is considering instigating Care Proceedings, or the family is subject to the Public Law Outline processes.

Risk Assessment and Management

It is not appropriate for a CPAT placement to be considered if the parent has significant mental health difficulties which are impacting on their capacity to care for the baby and require a very high level of supervision from the foster carer. There is an expectation for all CPAT placements that foster carers will provide continuous monitoring and supervision during the first three weeks of placement. Foster carers are there to oversee babies care and support parents however, there does need to be an expectation that the parent will be able to take on the care of their child in placement in order for the placement to progress. There may be an agreement that for example, the baby is cared for at night by the carer for a short period of time at the outset of the placement. Likewise, it would not be appropriate to consider a care plan for a CPAT placement if the parent has substance misuse issues and this is not managed through a sustained programme of support through substance misuse services.

CPAT placements are protected addresses and parents are requested not to share the placement address with others.

Ending the Arrangement

At the Setup meeting and network review meetings clear exit plans involving other support agencies for the child and family should be identified. It is expected that the arrangement will end when the parenting assessment has been concluded. An extension to the placement timescale may only be agreed by the CPAT Team Manager and should be based on an identified need for ongoing parenting work or assessment.

Should the Arrangement be terminated due to a serious breach of the agreement, or the wellbeing of the child being compromised or because the parent(s) have left the placement the expectation will be that the baby will be moved to a child only placement as soon as possible. Continuation of the parent and baby arrangement solely for the child beyond 28 days from the date a parent has left the placement will only be made in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the CPAT carers and will require the agreement of the CPAT Team Manager.

Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Devon County council believes that service users, their carers and their families have the right to express their views and make complaints, suggestions or representations about the services that are arranged and delivered, and that by doing so we can improve quality and effectiveness. As a service we seek feedback from service users at week 3 and week 12 of the placement. In addition to this you can provide your views by contacting the service direct via the CPAT team manager or by contacting the customer relations team;

Customer Relations Team

Devon County Council

Room 120

County Hall

Topsham Road

Exeter

EX2 4QD

Tel: 0800 212 783 (freephone)

customer.relations@devon.gov.uk

Web: devon.gov.uk/feedback

CPAT Qualifications and Experience

Team Manager

Mrs Kathy Houlihan is employed as a team manager within the Child and Parent Assessment Service. Mrs Houlihan practices as a Qualified Social Worker and is registered with the Health and care professional's council.

Mrs Houlihan manages and oversees all the work of the Child and Parent Assessment team. Mrs Houlihan provides training, consultation and support to social work practitioners and the child and parent foster carers. The use of research and evidence-based practice is a significant part of the work of the team.

Mrs Houlihan holds the following qualifications; Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) (1981), Training Skills for managers and practitioners (1989), Family Therapy Centre Intensive training programme (1989), Post Graduate Certificate in Management Development (1997), Level 1 in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (2017), Adolescent and Adult Attachment Style Interview (2015 and 2019), Solution Focused Brief therapy. Motivational Interviewing, Safeguarding Restorative Supervision (2019). Assessment of Disorganised Attachment and Maltreatment (ADAM) Restorative Practice (2019). She is licenced to use the NSPCC Graded Care Profile 2 assessment tool.

Post qualification training has been undertaken in the following areas of social work and management practice; Working with Parents with Learning Disabilities, Understanding Autism, Advanced Supervision skills, Court skills, Fostering and adoption practice, Child protection, Risk assessment, Working with children who have experienced trauma, Assessing capacity to change, Making good assessments, Managing performance through people, Influencing skills, Leadership and management.

Mrs Houlihan has been employed by Devon County Council since 1989.

Prior to employment with Devon County Council Mrs Houlihan worked as a Child Care and Mental Health practitioner with Cornwall County Council. Mrs Houlihan has worked as an Accredited Mental Health social worker (ASW).

As a Team manager Mrs Houlihan has been responsible for the management of all areas of childrens social work including adoption, fostering, safeguarding, children in care, care leavers and children with disabilities. Mrs Houlihan has worked as the professional advisor to the Devon Fostering panel and has managed the recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers for the Devon Fostering service.

Parenting Assessment Social Workers

Ms Shona Ware, Assessment Social worker, in the Child and Parent Assessment Team holds an MA in Social work (Plymouth University), a BSc Hons degree in Psychology (University College London), a Post Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice (Bournemouth University), a Post Graduate Diploma in Addiction Counselling (King's College London), a Diploma in Counselling (CSCT London).

Ms Ware has worked for Devon County Council since September 2014, within Children and Families team, followed by a 32-month secondment to the Family Drug and Alcohol Court Team in the South West Peninsula. Prior to this, following qualifying in 2011, Ms Ware worked for Plymouth City Council in the Advice and Assessment Team and in a Children in Care team.

Before qualifying as a Social Worker, Ms Ware worked in a drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation centre, and in adult mental health. Ms Ware worked as a counsellor to adults and children for 19 years.

Ms Ware has been trained to undertake PAMS assessments, in Advanced Court Skills, Motivational interviewing, and Attachment and Relationship Based Practice. She is licenced to use the NSPCC Graded Care Profile 2 assessment tool.

Miss Amy Riddick, Assessing Social Worker in the Child and Parent Assessment Team holds a BA (Hons) in Sociology and Community Studies from Plymouth Marjon University (2007), a Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work from University of Plymouth (2012) and a Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice from Bournemouth University (2013).

Miss Riddick has worked for Devon County Council since May 2018 in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub before moving to the Child and Parent Assessment Team in April 2019. Miss Riddick has prior experience working within Child Protection, Looked After Children and Fostering services at Plymouth City Council and two Independent Fostering Agencies. Miss Riddick has completed the working with Parents with Learning Disabilities training (Highbury Trust)

Prior to qualifying as a Social Worker, Miss Riddick worked in a residential drug and alcohol detox and rehabilitation centre.

Mrs Stacey Lovell-Cook, Assessment Social worker in the Child and Parent Assessment Team holds an MSc in Social work (Bristol University), a BSc Hons degree in Psychology (Open University), and a Post Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice (Bournemouth University). Currently studying for a Post Graduate Certificate in Practice Education (Bournemouth University).

Mrs Lovell-Cook qualified in 2016 and has worked within frontline Child Protection statutory services in the Initial Response team and Children and Families team before moving to the Child and Parent Team in November 2019.

Before qualifying as a Social Worker, Mrs Lovell-Cook has worked with women with personality disorder in a NHS setting, been a contact supervisor for court ordered contacts and worked in children's residential homes in both open and secure settings. Prior to this Mrs Lovell-Cook has worked in a primary school setting as a specialist teaching assistant.

Mrs Lovell-Cook has undertaken training in working with parents with learning disabilities (Bristol University and Research in Practice) and Working Together with Parents Network, is trained and accredited to use the HOME Inventory and Graded Care Profile 2 and attachment and relationship based practice (ADAM) and foundations of PACE parenting approach (Psychology Associates).

Miss Amy McDowell, Assessing Social Worker in the Child and Parent Assessment Team holds a BA (Hons) in Social Work from Plymouth University (2018) and a Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice from Bournemouth University (2019).

Miss McDowell has worked for Devon County Council since September 2018 in the Children and Families Team before moving to the Child and Parent Assessment Team in December 2019. Miss McDowell has prior experience working within Child Protection, a Domestic Abuse Service and Pharmaceuticals.

Specialist Family Practitioners

Miss Janet Horrocks is a Specialist Family Practitioner for the Child and Parent Assessment Team. She has worked for DCC since 2012 in the Children and Families and Child Protection arena. She also has experience of working with children in residential settings. Miss Horrocks previously worked for Torbay Council and Torbay NHS as part of the School Nurses team and the Healthy School Scheme.

Miss Horrocks holds the NNEB qualification, and has a foundation degree in Health Care Practice and a level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young people's Workforce: Social Care Pathway. Miss Horrocks has completed training in Assessment of Disorganised Attachment and Maltreatment (ADAM). She has qualifications in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, attachment-based play, CARE-Index (.63), advanced court skills, is accredited in Domestic Violence and Abuse - The Impact on Children, and Domestic Abuse level 4 – Working with perpetrators, solution focused brief therapy and motivational interviewing.

Miss Horrocks has completed the working with Parents with Learning Disabilities training (Highbury Trust) and is accredited in the Parent Assessment Manual Software 4.0 (PAMS).

Miss Horrocks is qualified and accredited to use the Adolescent and Adult Attachment Style Interview, and licenced to use the Graded Care Profile 2.

Mr Gary Jackson has worked as a Specialist Family Practitioner with Devon County Council since February 2015, prior to this he worked with children and families in universal services as a Family Support Practitioner with Action for Children and Barnardo's. He has experience as a Youth Worker, Forest School Practitioner, Play Leader and a Teaching Assistant (mainstream & SEN). Mr Jackson holds a First-Class BA (Hons) Degree in Education Studies (University of Plymouth), studying modules around Disability Studies, and also holds a MA in Education (University of Plymouth). Mr Jackson holds an Early Years Professional Status qualification and has been trained in Breastfeeding Management, Here's Looking at You, Solihull, Webster Stratton, Working with Parents, Makaton, Domestic Violence Parts 1 & 2, Challenging Domestic Abuse Part 3, Advanced Court Skills, Assessment of Disorganised Attachment and Maltreatment (ADAM) and Solution Focus Assessment Tool. Mr Jackson is also qualified and accredited to use the Adolescent and Adult Attachment Style Interview and has completed the Initial Training Course in VIG and is presently training towards gaining full accreditation as a VIG Practitioner.

Mr Jackson has completed the Graded Care Profile Version 2 Training and is trained and accredited in the use of PAMs. He has also undertaken a short course in Understanding Autism (run by Devon Transforming Care in partnership with Devon Partnership Trust).

Mrs Lisa Down, Specialist Family Practitioner for the Child and Parent Placement and Assessment Service. Mrs Down joined Children and Young People's Service in December 2007, working as a Family Intervention Worker. Within this role Mrs Down undertook child focused work, with vulnerable families, who were either part of child protection, child in need or child in care. This role included generalised or more specific parenting support/ guidance, undertaking parenting assessments. Prior to this Mrs Down has worked in a primary school for two years as a teaching assistant. Mrs Down holds a degree in BSc Education and Sociology. Mrs Down is qualified and accredited to use HOMES Inventory and the Adult and Adolescent Attachment Style Interview. Mrs Down is trained in DDP (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy) to level 1, CARE-Index, and Graded Care Profile 2. She has undertaken training in Motivational Interviewing. Mrs Down has completed the working with Parents with Learning Disabilities training (Highbury Trust) and is accredited in the Parent Assessment Manual Software 4.0 (PAMS).

Mrs Clare Williamson, Specialist Family Practitioner for the Child and Parent Assessment Team. Mrs Williamson joined Children's Social Work in 2001, working as a Community Care Worker and Family Practitioner. Within this role Mrs Williamson undertook child focussed work, with vulnerable families where she undertook initial assessments and parenting assessments and provided parenting support and guidance. Mrs Williamson holds a BA (Hons) degree in Spanish and French, and an MA in Applied Population Research, where she

specialised in gender power relations in the context of sexual relationships. Mrs Williamson has an advanced diploma in therapeutic counselling (WEA). Prior to working in social care Mrs Williamson worked in the field of reproductive health. Mrs Williamson is accredited in DDP (dyadic developmental psychotherapy) to level 1 and has trained in solution focused assessment, motivational interviewing and working with parents with learning disabilities (Highbury Trust). Mrs Williamson is trained and accredited to use the HOME Inventory and Graded Care Profile 2 and attachment and relationship-based practice (ADAM). Mrs Williamson has completed the Initial Training Course in VIG and is presently training towards gaining full accreditation as a VIG Practitioner.