



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL
NEATH PORT TALBOT SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY BOARD**

March 9th 2023

**Report of the Head of Children and Young People Services –
Keri Warren**

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Report Title

Early Intervention and Prevention Support within Children Services.

Purpose of the Report:

To inform the group about the Early Intervention and Preventative Support available to children, young people and families across Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

Executive Summary:

The report will give information about the Early Intervention and Preventative Services within Neath Port Talbot; it will focus on the support offered by services both during the Covid 19 pandemic and moving forward into the Cost of Living Crisis and the ongoing challenges faced by families today.

The focus on Early Intervention and Prevention is underpinned by the following National and Local strategic documents:

- Social Services Wales Wellbeing Act 2014
- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015
- LAC reduction strategy
- Family Support Strategy
- Participation and Engagement Strategy

Background:

Families, in whatever form they take, are the foundation of Neath Port Talbot's communities. They are the single most important factor in making sure that our children and young people are happy, healthy and safe.

Desmond Tutu once said '*there comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they are falling in*'.

The case for Early Intervention and Preventative Support is very clear it can secure better outcomes for families whilst reducing the likelihood of them requiring statutory intervention or becoming looked after. When it works effectively, it prevents families going into crisis and allows professionals to concentrate the intensive support for children and young people most in need.

There is a tiered approach to service provision within Neath Port Talbot, which consists of four agreed tiers of need:

Tier 1: Universal services

- Services available to meet a range of services that most children and young people require. E.g. schools, early year's

settings, leisure facilities, youth work. These services are universally available to all children.

Tier 2: Targeted services

- Services that provide extra help for those with emerging needs, which usually supplements continued access to universal services. E.g., voluntary and community services, parenting support, Team Around the Family.

Tier 3: significant needs (referred services)

- Services that require an assessed programme of support provided by providers with particular skills in meeting higher levels of additional needs. E.g., social work, Disabled children with complex health needs, YOT, multiagency programmes.

Tier 4 Complex needs (specialist services)

- Services that require an assessed programme of specialist support services for children and young people with complex needs. Safeguarding services, corporate parenting

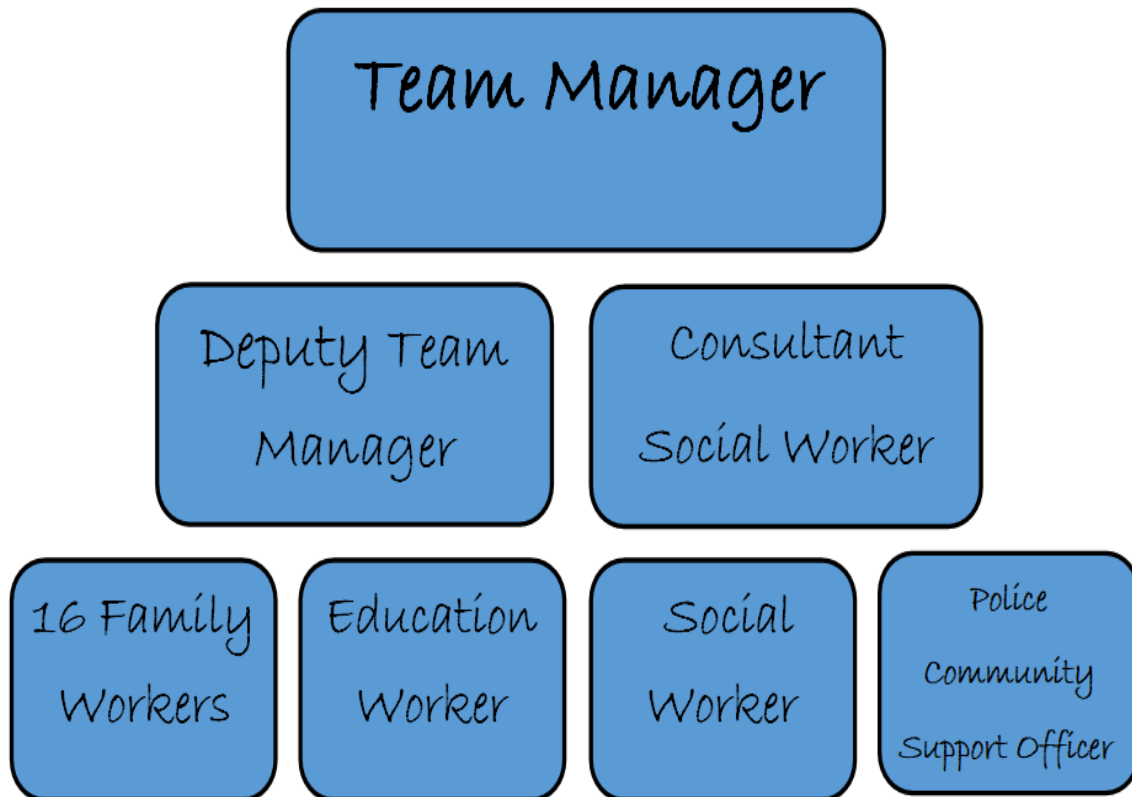


Team Around the Family is an Early Intervention and Prevention Service that is jointly funded by Families First and Children Services. The team was developed in 2012 and in 2016 came under the

governance of Children's Services. Team Around the Family is an outward facing service and aims to work collaboratively with partner agencies such as education, health and adult services.

Total funding for 2022/2023 is £761,950. Families First contribution £622,588 and Children Services £139,360. Whilst there has been continued financial support and investment from Children's Services – the contribution from Families First has remained static. The Principal Officer for Family Services has responsibility for the team and has experience in this area having previously managed Team Around the Family.

Team Structure



Referral Pathway

Team Around the Family receive referrals via a weekly Early Intervention Panel, which is a multi-agency forum where families are discussed and the most appropriate form of support identified.

Referrals also come into the team via the step down process from community teams where it has been identified that there are no longer any safeguarding concerns but ongoing support needs have been identified. There is an established robust step down process in place, which ensures families are at the centre of plans and involves communication between team managers and staff to ensure timeliness for families.

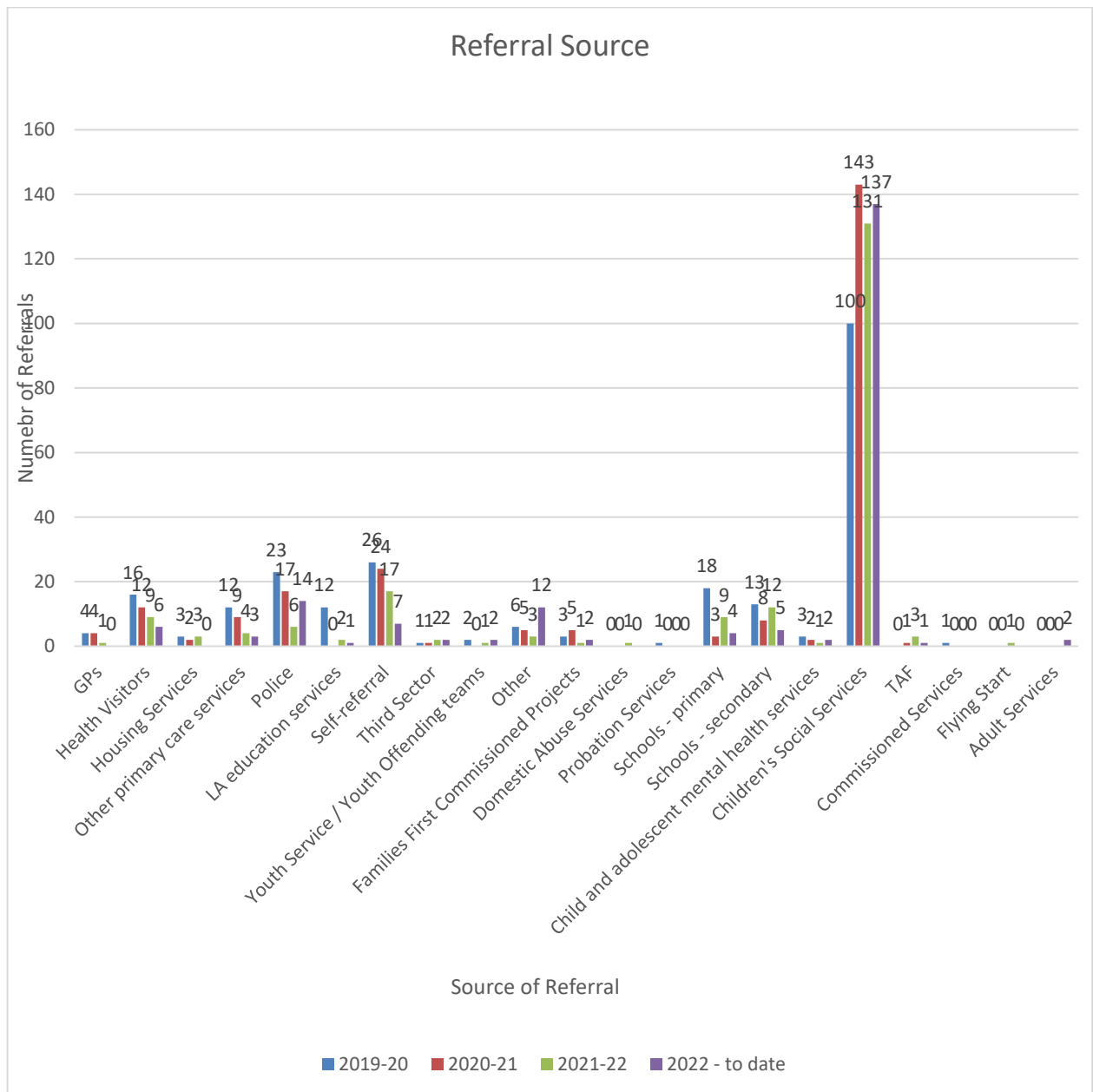
In the event of new safeguarding concerns, there is a step up process in place to ensure children's safety. This is adhered to in a timely manner, involves discussions with team managers, and involves the Single Point of Contact (SPOC).

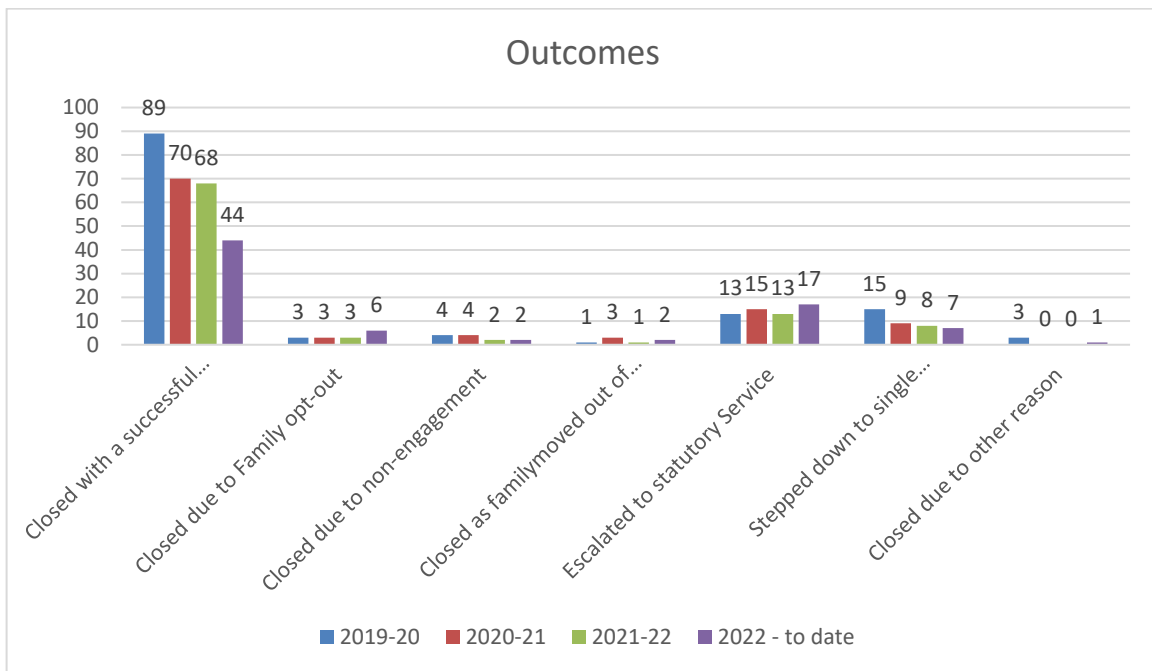
Transfer meeting is held every week, which is attended by Team Manager's from all of the social work teams, and has a representative from the Senior Management Team in attendance. Cases are discussed in this forum to ensure consistency of thresholds within the service.

The Social Worker that supports both the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and Team Around the Family will screen all referrals for an early offer of help. The social worker will have a 'what matters' conversation with the young person or family to ensure that their voice is heard and their views considered.

Team Around the Family work in an outcome focussed way and co-production is an essential part of our practice.

Referral Data





Support through the Covid 19 Pandemic

In March 2020, Team Around the Family had to change the way in which they were able to support families. Team Around the Family were able to adapt to the challenges and were able to offer support including parenting groups virtually, telephone support, doorstep visits to ensure families had face-to-face support and facilitated walk and talk sessions to ensure that children had the opportunity to spend one to one time with their allocated worker.

Family workers ensured that children and families were supported through a very difficult time and would deliver food bank parcels, essential items and schoolwork for those families in isolation.

Additionally staff provided emotional wellbeing support to children and families during an extremely anxious time and in turn as a team, we supported each other with the challenges.

Moving forward there has been an increase in the complexity of cases and certain aspects of virtual working continues to meet the needs, namely through the delivery of parenting groups. We now offer a hybrid model where those parents who wish to attend in person but for those parents who may face difficulties in attending can attend online – therefore making this service accessible for all.

Support Provided

The primary focus of Team Around the Family is assessment, planning and reviewing of support. Upon allocation, a comprehensive family assessment is completed in order to identify the strengths and needs within the family. All family members are involved in the assessment process.

The assessment then informs the creation of the Family Support Plan which focuses on the family outcomes. Again all family members are involved in the production of the plan.

Following a period of intervention the Family Support Plan is reviewed in collaboration with the family and partner agencies to ensure that the identified needs are being addressed.

In addition to the above the team provide support such a Nurture parenting groups, Non Violent Resistance parenting groups, direct work with young people to support with self-harm, confidence building, reducing isolation, encouragement into education and training, positive activities, financial support and practical support to manage home conditions.

Already this year the team have developed two programmes to facilitate direct work with young people. The FRESH programme is

aimed to support young children aged 4 to 9 and have been exposed to parental domestic abuse (see leaflet in appendices)

Secondly the Aspire programme which supports young people between the ages of 11-18 to improve their understanding of healthy relationships, understand the signs of exploitation and raise awareness of internet safety to name a few of the topics.

We run a successful school uniform bank and are in the process of further developing this to include clothing and baby equipment – this will assist families during this difficult period. These are available to all families across Children's Services.

To support girls and women we are able to provide 'period packs' to ensure that women are not forced to make a decision between purchasing essential items for their family or sanitary items. Again, this is available to all families across Children's Services.

Every year the team are responsible for co-ordinating the Mr X appeal within Neath Port Talbot. The appeal ensures that all children wake up on Christmas day to a gift and consists of a number of staff collecting, sorting and delivering gifts. The appeal last year supported approximately 700 children across the borough.

In addition to gifts, the team also ensures families have adequate food for the festive period; we have a good relationship with local food banks who ensure that families have the basics. In addition to this family worker Sarah Wells Jones established links with the 'Everyone Deserves a Christmas' campaign and was able to fundraise to provide 200 festive hampers to families across the borough that ensured they had a fresh turkey, fresh vegetables and many other food items for Christmas. A network of volunteers including staff, Swansea City Footballers, Osprey's staff and staff from the Welsh Rugby Union delivered these to family home. We are currently planning the roll out for Easter.

Collaborative working with these agencies are continuing with plans being developed to run 'summer camps' in conjunction with the Welsh Rugby Union to ensure that children have access to attend a fun play scheme with a hot meal during school holiday times. Attendance at such events can mostly be unobtainable for our children due to financial barriers.

Feedback

Feedback from the Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements held in 2021 states:

- There is early prioritisation of need and offers of help
- Good evidence of coproduction with Team Around the Family and partners
- Team Around the Family staff are confident and well supported
- There is a good relationship with Team Around the Family Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)
- Recognition that families need support beyond the Team Around the Family timescales
- Evidence of quality assessments in Team Around the Family
- Good step up/step down processes in place
- Early intervention and prevention services have innovative measures in place and are outcome focussed

The cabinet member for Children's Services recently visited the Neath Annexe where family support services are based and was given a visual overview of the support being offered to children and families across the borough and was able to talk to staff members about the work they do.

The Deputy Minister for Wales during a recent visit was also given the opportunity to discuss with staff the support provided to children and families in the area, positive feedback be given following the visit.

The below is feedback from a family supported by Team Around the Family who attended an NVR group:

“Sorry I couldn't stay today, I just wanted to thank the both of you, and show appreciation, the time and effort you put into families to help them is amazing and you both deserve credit for it”

Moving Forward

Team Around the Family have recently secured funding until March 31st 2025. There has been a recent recruitment of a Team Manager with Jenny McGrath being appointed, Jenny has a safeguarding background and will be an asset to the team.

The team will continue to offer support to children and families whilst being committed to developing our links with community initiatives such as ‘community hubs’ and ‘warm spaces’.

Team Around the Family will form part of the Neath Port Talbot Family Support Strategy that is due to be published in July 2023.

Financial Impacts:

No implications

Integrated Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring / information purposes.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications

Workforce Impacts:

Team Around the Family is partly funded by Families First with current funding agreed up to March 31st 2025. However should there

be a change in funding then a number of staff would be at risk of not having their contracts extended, this would have a detrimental impact on service provision.

Legal Impacts:

No implications

Risk Management Impacts:

No implications

Crime and Disorder Impacts:

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the Council in the exercise of its functions to have “due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent:

- a) Crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and
- b) The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area; and
- c) Re-offending the area”

The joint working within Team Around the Family and Family Support Services has a positive impact in respect of this duty.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Appendices:

Case Examples
FRESH Leaflet

Officer Contact:

Keri Warren – Head of Children’s Services

k.warren@npt.gov.uk

Ruth Griffiths – Principal Officer – Family Support Services

r.griffiths3@npt.gov.uk

Jenny McGrath – Team Manager – Team Around the Family

j.mcgrath@npt.gov.uk