EHA & TAC Policy -Federation

Updating Policy Procedure

When a policy is due for review it will be emailed to the reviewer who will revise and highlight those updates and return the policy in full with the highlighted updates back to the Administrator.

When a policy reviewer becomes aware of ***any updates*** they will ask the Administrator to email the policy to them and follow the above procedure.

A policy is a statement of intent and the guidelines we follow, that is adopted by the Fortuna and Athena Federation's Governing Body.

Policy Reviewed by:	Abi Thorpe - Fortuna Debra Houlton - Athena
Updated on:	January 2025
Date to be reviewed:	January 2026
Date ratified at FGM:	24/02/2025

Early Help Assessments and Team Around the Child Policy

What is Early Help?

Early Help is defined as anything that supports children, young people and their families to achieve their potential, by either preventing difficulties, or stopping things getting worse.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) identifies the critical features of effective Early Help as:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- undertake an assessment of the need for early help which considers the needs of all members of the family
- ensure good ongoing communication, for example, through regular meetings between practitioners who are working with the family
- co-ordinate and/or provide support as part of a plan to improve outcomes. This plan will be designed together with the child and family, and updated as and when the child and family needs change
- engage effectively with families and their family network, making use of family group decision-making, such as family group conferences, to help meet the needs of the child

What is Team Around the Child (TAC)?

TAC is a shared assessment and planning framework, which is in use by a variety of agencies across the county and is employed in similar format throughout the country. It aims to help with the early identification of additional needs of children and young people and promote a co-ordinated multi agency response to meet them.

TAC can be used to support children and young people between 0–19 years, including unborn babies and can also be used with consent up to the age of 24 where a young person has a learning difficulty or disability.

Main vision for a TAC:
The first step is to have an open and honest discussion with everyone, either separately or together, about the worries and strengths, to make sure that everyone's voice is heard.
The next step is to identify and agree what the key worries are and set goals that everyone can work towards.
The TAC then has everything it needs to empower the family to create a plan which shows who will do what, when and how they will know this is making a difference to the child.

Early Help Advisors

Qualified Social Workers who will advise on all levels of Safeguarding, thresholds and hold hypothetical consultations for new cases where you need some advice or guidance that aren't currently open to TAC or Social Care.

Early Help Consultants

Provide support to all partner agencies for TACs from pre-birth upwards Support offered through: Case advice to all Lead Professionals in Workshops, Forums and Group Supervision for all professionals.

Support Conversations and Collaborative Quality Assurance visits with Lead Professionals

TAC Administrators
Administrative support, maintaining records, monitoring processes, signposting to services.

Team Around the Child Meetings
The first TAC review will be initiated by the professional who has completed the assessment; they will be TAC Lead Professional at this point. During this conversation and subsequent reviews, the child/young person and their family can request and should be given the opportunity to decide who they would like their Lead Professional to be, it does not matter how many times the Lead Professional changes; this is the family's choice.

What's important is the positive steps that have been made so far are celebrated and there are conversations led by the child, young person and family about how they want this progress to continue. This is achieved by using affective worry statements, goals, scaling and best questions.

Review date is to be set at the end of the meeting and these should be arranged for every 6-8 weeks.

Closure and sustainability Plan
From the start of the EHA process, it is important throughout, that there is a clear focus on what closure looks like, so everyone involved knows what they are working towards; this makes it much easier when you are coming to the point of closure as discussions will already have taken place and closure will not be a shock to anyone.

When we are closing the TAC it's important to make sure that this support network still has their ongoing plan to help maintain positive changes and look towards a bright future to ensure the child or young person feels safe, happy and loved.

The closure summary paperwork helps to celebrate all the successes so far, as well as highlighting the views of the child, family and professionals. This is a really good reflection tool for the family, which they can also use in the future.

Paperwork is to be submitted to TAC admin.

Transfer from TAC to Social Care
At any stage the Early Help Consultant can be contacted for advice and guidance.

- Social Care involvement is appropriate if the criteria are met under sections 17 or 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- If a safeguarding concern is identified on a child who is subject to TAC, the professional who has the concern should immediately make a referral to Customer Service Centre (CSC) following school's guidelines.
- If during the course of a TAC meeting those present consider that the case may meet the criteria social care intervention, this should be explained to the family and

a clear arrangement made to refer the matter immediately to CSC. The lead professional should take necessary actions on behalf of the group. One referral from the TAC meeting will suffice (Agreed by LSCB in April 2007). However the Lead Professional should ensure a further review date is agreed and if the case is transferred to social care, this date may be used for a CIN Meeting.

- The referrer must telephone Customer Service Centre (01522 782111) to inform them of their concerns for every child in a family.

Implementing the transfer from Social Care to TAC

When a child or young person has been supported by a Social Worker and they are looking to end their piece of work because of the good progress the family have made, TAC should be considered with the family and they can chose a new TAC Lead Professional from the team who is continuing to offer support.

The Social Worker will then give the Lead Professional the worry statements and goals so that the plan can continue to be reviewed within TAC, these will be updated and changed from the danger statements and safety goals that the family were working towards whilst being supported by the Social Worker.

Resolving Professional Disagreements and Disputes

The Fortuna and Athena Federation follow the Lincolnshire Professional Resolution and Escalation Protocol see Appendix 1 for flowchart.

Appendix 1

LSCP
Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Professional Resolution & Escalation Protocol

Escalation to Resolution Process Escalation can be via telephone, face-to-face or internet meeting. All escalations should be recorded to ensure that the procedure is effective, transparent and for LSCP auditing purposes. Escalation via e-mail is not recommended as effective multi-agency working requires professional challenge in a suitable format and escalation is to resolve conflict and areas of concern relating to children and their families, a priority need. Any escalation should follow the steps below within the timescales stated

Step 1 - Direct Professional to Professional Discussion

Differences of opinion or judgment should be discussed amongst frontline professionals to attempt to achieve a shared understanding and agree a local resolution, in line with the plan, or to ensure a plan is developed if needed. This must occur immediately with an acknowledgement and mutually agreed plan of action, including timescales within 48 hours (2 working days)

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Step 2 - Direct Manager to Manager Discussion

If Step 1 does not resolve the issue then each professional should discuss the issue with their line manager or safeguarding supervisor. The line manager should review the concerns and ensure that they are justified and meet the purpose of this protocol. The line manager should then liaise with the other professional's line manager in an attempt to reach a resolution. Consultation with senior managers within each organisation can be used if this would be felt to assist resolution. The discussion between managers must occur within 5 working days of step 1, with a mutually agreed plan of action including timescales.

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Step 3 - Direct SLO to SLO Discussion

If Step 1 and 2 do not reach a mutually agreeable resolution then the agencies' LSCP Senior Liaison Officer (SLO) should be contacted immediately to liaise with the other agency's SLO or assist as appropriate to resolve the conflict. A mutually agreeable plan of action including timescales should be in place within 48 hours (2 working days). This may involve a resolution meeting to ensure the learning points are recorded and brought forward.

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Step 4 - Urgent resolution required LSCP Independent Chaired Meeting

If the SLO's cannot resolve the issue that is causing conflict between professionals and agencies then a meeting should be convened with an independent chair selected from the LSCP partner organisations where the agencies can discuss the case and conflict issue in a chaired and minuted meeting, with resolution being agreed and recorded. The meeting should take place ASAP with a date set within 24 hours of step 3.

Step 4 – Non-urgent and/or lessons learned

Senior Liaison Officers can advise that the learning points from a non-urgent case should be referred to the next LSCP Policy and Procedures, Education and Training (PPET) sub group for interagency consideration. The group may make recommendations for individual agencies to review performance and/or involvement, or for LSCP policy and procedural review and development.

At every stage of the discussion the actions should take place within the stated timescales and be followed up in writing between the agencies and in the single agency record.

FORTUNATHENA FEDERATION

Useful Information

EHA (Early Help Assessment) – this is a process used to discuss your child's need and what support you want for them.

TAC (Team Around the Child) – A group of people, including you and your child, who work together to support your child.

LP (Lead Professional) – The person who is your main contact, coordinating the support and offering further advice.

Information about your family will not be shared without you agreeing to this unless there is a safeguarding concern.

Where can I find further information?

You can access all the information and paperwork within the TAC process via **lincolnshire.gov.uk/tac**

If you are worried and you feel a child is at risk of harm, please telephone our customer services centre, **01522 782 111**

For further safeguarding information please access the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Partnership via their website: **lincolnshire.gov.uk/safeguarding**

For further information around services supporting families in Lincolnshire, please visit the **Family Services Directory Website**

"The TAC Process helped in getting the right support. It has helped us deal with things differently. I felt listened to" (parent)

*remember to print me on the short edge

Team Around the Child in Lincolnshire

A guide for Parents and Families

LSCP Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Lincolnshire COUNTY COUNCIL Working for a better future