

A new child and family support service

For children aged 0-12 yrs



Child and family support service

What is the Child and Family Support Service?

Child and Family Support is a new service available through Children's Centres and extended schools for children aged 0-12 and their families.

It is recognised that not all referrals made to Children's Services Social Care require such a high level of intervention, and that there is a need for a lower-level of services for children and their families. The danger is that without support there is a likelihood of these children being considered in need of safeguarding in the future.

To prevent these lower level needs escalating, the Child and family support service has been developed to provide appropriate and targeted support to children and families at a much earlier stage.

The service is part of a network of preventative services that deliver through Children's Centres alongside Community Parents and Family Support Workers to provide consistent and continuous support.

What does the service involve?

A team of Child and Family Support workers based in Children's Centres across the city are supported by two Principal Social Workers. They work with both the child and parents/carers on an individual and joint basis; their work supported and influenced through social work practice.

The main roles of the workers are:

- One-to-one family support and information for families with children aged 0 – 12 years.
- Delivery of structured parenting programmes through Children's Centres and Schools such as Family Nurturing and Triple P
- Delivery of information and advice sessions alongside schools for parents at key points in a child's education, especially at transition stage.
- Support parents to engage with their child's learning

Who is the service for?

The service is for families with children that have multiple needs. These are children who may already be identified as having additional needs or be accessing universal services (those services available to all children, young people and their families), but whose needs are not fully met through these services and whose life chances will be jeopardised without intervention or support. This could be due to the range, depth or significance of their needs.

Some of the following needs should be evident from either a practitioners' assessment or through a parent/carers request:

- Significant parental vulnerability identified (e.g. parental learning disability).
- Parents/carers with alcohol or drug misuse, mental health concerns or suffering domestic violence
- Concerns about a child's developmental progress
- Child displays signs of deteriorating mental health
- Parents/carers learning significantly affected by health problems
- Child is at risk of poor school attendance

- Child may display provocative or risk taking behaviour
- Child displaying disruptive/challenging behaviour
- Child or parent/carers display significant low self esteem
- Child's poor hygiene leads to alienation.
- Child on the borders of offending/antisocial behaviour

Please see the Children's Centre Referral criteria in the Children's Centres **'Guide to Services for Practitioners and Managers'** (page 23) for more detailed information.



How do I gain access to this service?

For families that require this service it is likely a multi agency discussion will be required and the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) should be considered first and foremost. The development and roll out for the CAF in Sunderland is as follows:

South & East:

Fully operational

North & Washington:

Fully operational by July 2008

Coalfields and West:

Fully operational by October 2008

If the CAF is not fully operational in your area then proceed with a referral (pages 28-31 of the Guide to Services for Practitioners and Managers) and the Children's Centre staff will arrange for a multi-agency discussion with you and the family. If you are unsure which area you are in please refer to page 33 of the guide.

For further information or clarification on the Children's Centre referral process please contact your local Children's Centre admin team:

Sunderland West:

0191 561 2050

Coalfields:

0191 553 6576

Sunderland North:

0191 561 8126

Sunderland South & East:

0191 553 8809

Washington:

0191 219 3995

For advice and guidance on a Multi-agency response via CAF contact the CAF Co-ordinator on 0191 561 1324.

This information can be made available in large print, Braille, audio and other languages. Please contact the Families Information Service on 0191 520 5505 or email fis@ Sunderland.gov.uk for help.

All information correct at time of going to press.
Published September 2008.

As part of Sunderland's commitment to a balanced and sustainable future this leaflet is printed on paper made from 100% recycled post consumer waste. Please recycle it again after use by putting it in your Kerb-it box or your paper bank.