

## Guidance for Meeting with Parents

Where you think a child/family might have some additional support needs it will be useful to have a meeting with child/young person, parent(s) and any professionals/services working with the family or who may be identified to work with the family. You might start by having a meeting/s with child and parents and then invite professionals to a future meeting.

Simply put, the meeting is a chance to **find out more** about what is happening for a child/family;



Tools such as a daily routine sheet, eco-maps/family trees or scaling questions (see attached) can be helpful to start conversations flowing. Any additional information is likely to help you understand more clearly what is going on for a family including what additional support may be needed and/or if a MASH referral may be required.

These meetings don't have to follow a structured process. The aim is to try to support families and make this as accessible to them as possible. Sometimes using language such as a TAF can be off-putting/frightening for families (and for professionals!) so just inviting parents in for a chat may be the best way to start.

From the meeting you may be able to draw up on a plan of action (alongside the family) this may be just to have a further meeting or may include referrals for support and intervention from services identified at the meeting. It might be helpful to then set up a further meeting to review progress.

## Things to Consider:

- Make sure you have consent from parents before any meeting
- Try and include the child/young person for all or part of the meeting where appropriate
- Try and keep the child/young person (their needs and experiences) at the centre of the meeting
- Make sure everyone at the meeting introduces themselves
- Be honest with families about your worries. This can be daunting but they usually appreciate your honesty rather than feeling like concerns are being spoken about behind their back. Being upfront with them may provide them the opportunity to open up about what is really happening.
  - For example:
    - *'I've noticed Noor seems very tired lately – is everything okay?'*
    - *'Jamie's behaviour has changed, he was outgoing and confident, but is always quiet now. Have you any idea what could have caused this?'*
    - *'Rosie is coming to school in unclean clothes and other children are making comments. Do you have all you need at home to wash clothes?'*
    - *'Harry seems angry at the moment, it's not like him – is there anything happening that could explain this?'*
- Don't interrogate, but don't be afraid to probe or challenge a little if needed (in a sensitive way) including if what they are telling you does not add up with what you are seeing. Reassure families that the aim is to support them not catch them out.
- Ask families if any professionals/services are involved and, in consultation with them, consider who may be relevant to attend meetings.
- If concerns escalate and you do need to make a MASH referral let the family know this is what you will be doing. Remember Social Care are still there to support families, and this should be highlighted to them. Try to not to feed into parents' anxieties that Social Care is the enemy.