

MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Merthyr Tydfil
County Borough Council



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sêl
Merthyr Tudful

‘THINK FAMILY’ YOUTH SUPPORT

OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND

Families First

Families First is a Welsh Government innovation programme that promotes the development of effective multi-agency systems and support, with a clear emphasis on prevention and early intervention for families, particularly those living in poverty.

Families First is a key response to the Welsh Government's Child Poverty Strategy. The strategy has three strategic objectives and Families First is an important driver to achieving these objectives:

- reducing the numbers of families living in workless households.
- improving the skills of parents/carers and young people living in low income households, so they can secure well-paid employment.
- reducing inequalities that exist in health, education and economic outcomes for children and families by improving the outcomes of the poorest with a focus on supporting families to achieve better outcomes.

The above objectives have been translated into the following vision for Families First in Merthyr Tydfil:

- ensure families, who are in need, are able to identify constructive solutions to the problems they face, so that the entire family unit can enjoy positive, meaningful lives and become resilient and independent;
- and to;
- ensure services are family focused, and for those families in need services will work alongside them, as early as possible, to clearly define the problems they face, identify potential solutions.

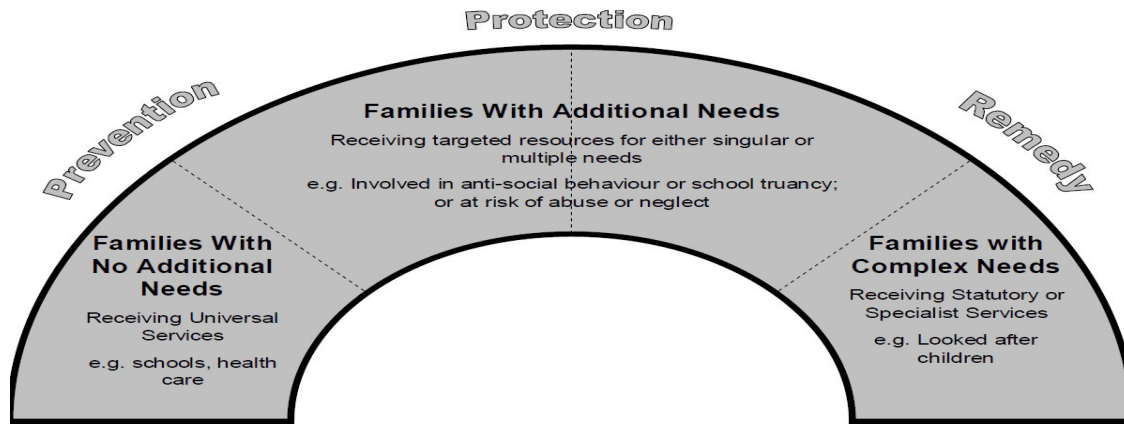
Think Family

In Merthyr Tydfil the strategic approach to achieving the above Families First vision is referred to as 'Think Family'.

The 'Think Family' requires the local authority, health and the voluntary sector to work more closely together with the focus on a whole family approach in order to secure better outcomes for children and young people and their families.

The 'Think Family' is based on a two tier approach, prevention and protection, and will focus on two target groups:

- Target Group 1: Single Agency Response: Families with lower end additional needs (tiers 1/2).
- Target Group 2: Multi Agency Response: Families with additional needs (tiers 2/borderline 3). A full Team around the Family (TAF) approach is utilised for this group.



The aim of the approach is to identify, at the earliest opportunity, a family's additional needs which are not being met by the universal services they are receiving, and provide timely, co-ordinated and participative support to meet those needs.

In order to identify families with additional needs, who are not yet eligible for statutory services, the 'Think Family' approach will utilise numerous primary and secondary indicators (appendix 1).

YOUTH SUPPORT: LINKS TO THINK FAMILY

The Youth Support element of the 'Think Family' approach will support children and young people aged 10-18 years to recognise and resolve their risky, challenging and disruptive behaviour. The Youth Support project will provide a range of interventions for the child, young person and their family and will adopt a co-ordinated Team around the Family (TAF) approach when required.

Youth Support is agreed as a preventative service and will not usually need to react to family emergency or crisis situations.

The Youth Support project is funded under the following Families First outcomes and indicators:

- Welsh Government Outcome 4: Families are confident nurturing and resilient.
- Local Indicator: Family issues that are dealt with successfully.
- Local Indicator: Family issues that have been prevented from escalating.

The project will aim to improve the relationships within family environments and prevent escalations of family breakdown or statutory interventions while responding to the following needs:

- Improving the skills of young people and their families to identify and resolve issues associated with risky behaviour.
- Reducing the number of first time entrants into the criminal justice system.
- Supporting the reduction of part-time exclusions and full-time exclusions within schools.

‘THINK FAMILY’ YOUTH SUPPORT: VISION & DIRECTION

Vision

The Youth Support project will seek to achieve the following Vision:

Ensure families, with children and young people displaying risky, challenging and disruptive behaviour, are supported to develop the necessary skills and attitude to identify constructive solutions to difficulties and prevent negative behaviour commencing or escalating.

Target Group

The Youth Support project will support children, young people (10-18 years of age) and their families demonstrating multiple issues within tier 2 and borderline 3 of the Merthyr Tydfil tier model. The project will also undertake promotional preventative work at tier 1.

Aim 1:

Improve family relationships by preventing communication breakdown in families and statutory intervention.

Objectives:

- 100% of cases referred have an appropriate assessment on accommodation issues and appropriate actions are developed.
- 90% of children, young people and families identify their individual concerns and recognise the impact of negative behaviour on family / personal life.
- 100% of families recognise the need for boundaries and routines.
- Design and implement two structured communication interventions which support the development of the child and young person's communication skills.
- Design and implement, with the Parenting team, 1 structured communication intervention which supports the development of the parents' communication skills.
- 60% of children and young people develop positive social networks through engagement in integrated community / group activity.
- 60% of children, young people and families engage in basic skills support when identified as a concern.
- 75% of families engage in shared quality time as a family unit through planned positive activities.
- At least 60% of families engaged in the project that have been assessed as a tier 2 / borderline 3 do not progress on to receiving a statutory intervention.

Outcomes:

- Reduction in family breakdown and the need for statutory interventions.
- Improved relationships and communication skills amongst family members.
- Families understand the impact of environmental factors on behaviour and have the necessary skills and attitude to pursue resolutions.
- Young people and families identify and understand the impact of their negative behaviour on family / personal life.
- Families regularly implement boundaries and routines.
- Family members improve their basic skills and increase their resilience.
- Decrease in young people identified as homeless or sofa surfing.

Aim 2:

Contribute to reducing the number of first time entrants into the Criminal Justice System.

Objectives:

- 60% of children and young people, engaged in the project, are deterred from entering the Criminal Justice System.
- 100% of children, young people and their families receive the interventions agreed in the Family Support Plan.
- 100% of families identify their individual behaviour patterns and triggers.
- 60% of children and young people increase their personal management of feelings and behaviour through structured 1-to-1 interventions and family mediation.
- 75% of families engage to identify issues, explore and agree pathways to address, and access specialist agencies when required.
- 50% of young people access mainstream and integrated activities within the wider community setting.
- Liaise with the Gelli-Deg Family Centre and Parenting team to design, implement, and evaluate 1 parenting intervention to support the parent's positive implementation of boundaries and routines.
- At least 10 workshops delivered to school pupils across the borough on identified issues e.g. knife crime, bullying, sexual exploitation, and anti social behaviour.
- 5 vulnerable young people supported annually to access employment.
- At least 30 street based sessions are supported to access young people engaged in anti social behaviour.
- In 2013, canvass the views of first time entrants (previously supported by Youth Support) in terms of why they engaged in offending and produce a research and evaluation report in partnership with the YOT.

Outcomes:

- Contribute towards reducing the number of children and young people entering the Criminal Justice System for the first time.
- Reduction in risk factors and an increase in protective factors for children, young people and their families.
- Families increase their skills to manage risky, challenging and disruptive behaviour.
- Parents have the required skills to successfully implement boundaries and routines.
- Children and young people develop new positive relationships through participation in integrated activities.
- Families supported by specialist agencies to address and resolve identified needs and issues.

Aim 3:

Support the reduction of part-time and permanent exclusions within schools.

Objectives:

- 100% of children and young people are discussed with schools / Educational Welfare Officers (EWO) identifying attendance record, academic performance, projection to achieve and current status within school.

- 100% of children and young people are discussed with the schools links officer identifying key issues, concerns, involvement in specialist programmes, and implemented interventions.
- 60% of parents increase their understanding of the interventions delivered in school and the best way to support their child or young person.
- 60% of parents engage and develop positive relationships with schools.
- 75% of families understanding the impact of truancy and exclusion on future hopes and aspirations of their children and young people.
- For 100% of children and young people at risk of exclusion develop agreed prevention strategies in partnership with school and family.

Outcomes:

- Reduction in school exclusion for children and young people displaying risky, challenging and disruptive behaviour.
- Improvement in school attendance for children and young people displaying risky, challenging and disruptive behaviour.
- Parents engage and develop positive relationships with school.
- School interventions and proposed educational outcomes are communicated and shared effectively with parents.
- Co-ordinated and seamless support provided to families from school and Youth Support.

Aim 4:

To improve the management systems, processes and partnership working that support decision making.

Objectives:

- 100% of families have an agreed Family Support Plan following the completion of the Common Assessment Form (CAF).
- 100% of MIA process requirements are implemented as outlined in the 'Think Family' MIA toolkit.
- 100% of children, young people and families receive an assessment on their risk and protective factors utilising the Onset Over to You toolkit.
- By July 2012, agree the process and protocol for step up and step down with statutory services and implement.
- By July 2012, agree a formal information sharing process with Education and implement.
- 60% of parents referred to the Parenting team for 1-to-1 support receive a service and report back effectiveness.
- 10% of case files are audited by the Service Improvement Manager and improvement action plans developed as required.
- By August 2012, develop an electronic case management system (stage 1).
- By April 2013, develop an electronic performance management database (stage 2).
- By October 2012, develop and implement a participation framework to capture the views of children, young people and their family.
- By December 2012, reassess all targets set for the programme in order to establish evidence-based baselines due to lack of previous data availability.

Outcomes:

- Families supported appropriately through the implementation of the 'Think family' MIA processes.
- Effective quality and performance management systems in place ensuring continuous improvement and evidence-based future service planning.
- Families effectively supported when transferred between Youth Support and statutory services.
- Evidence-based baselines established for 2013/14.

'THINK FAMILY' YOUTH SUPPORT: WORKING PRACTICE**Youth Support Team**

The Youth Support team will initially consist of the following officers:

- 1 part-time Co-ordinator
- 2 full-time Key Workers
- 1 part-time Key Worker
- 1 part-time Evaluation Officer

The Co-ordinator and the Key Workers will be responsible for promotion and awareness (e.g. within schools), managing case loads, delivering and managing interventions, and co-ordinating the TAF approach.

The Co-ordinator will be responsible for managing Key Workers, providing professional support, allocating cases, and assessing performance. The Co-ordinator will provide additional support to the Key Workers responsible for high risk cases and ensure a continuity of service during periods of high demand and in the absence of Key Workers.

The Co-ordinator will deputise for the Head of Youth and Family Regeneration and Development at MIA Panel meetings as required and will ensure all MIA Panel information is provided within agreed timescales. The Co-ordinator will also contribute to the evaluation, analysis and further development of the project.

The Evaluation Officer will collate key information and undertake relevant research that will inform the future planning and improvement of the service.

Key Workers

Children and young people displaying challenging and disruptive behaviour will be allocated with a Key Worker following a referral from the MIA panel. The Key Worker will adopt all of the agreed MIA toolkit processes and practice.

The Key Worker will undertake the CAF along with the necessary detailed and comprehensive risk and protective factor assessments (Onset: Over to You) within 30 working days following engagement with the family. The Key Worker will also conduct other specialist assessments when required (e.g. SERAF, DUST, Risky Behaviour Assessment).

The Key Worker will work in partnership with schools and families to develop agreed strategies that impact on reducing short-term and permanent exclusion. The Key Worker

will deliver promotional and awareness raising sessions for Education on agreed and relevant topics (e.g. bullying, hate crime, anti social behaviour, etc).

The Key Worker will follow up a family that has exited the Youth Support project by making contact every 3 months for a period of 1 year. This will identify whether the outcomes and progress achieved by the child, young person and their family have been sustained following the project's interventions and support.

It is acknowledged that Youth Support is a preventative service and will not usually need to react to emergency or crisis situations. In these cases the usual emergency procedures should be implemented.

Interventions

The Youth Support team will provide children, young people and their family with effective early interventions through their allocated Key Worker. The interventions will be based upon the outcome of the assessment process and the agreed Family Support Plan.

All interventions will be bespoke to the child, young person and their family's needs. The interventions delivered by the Youth Support team include the following:

Structured Interventions:

Non-Purchased:

- Mentoring / 1-to-1 support.
- Motivational interviewing.
- Mediation & intergenerational work.
- Individual and family problem solving support.
- Confidence building.
- Low level parenting skills and advice.
- Low level substance misuse advice.
- Understanding the consequences of offending, risky, challenging and disruptive behaviour within the home and / or community.
- Support to engage in a range of mainstream and integrated activities.

Purchased / Specialist:

- Counselling service.
- Therapy service.
- Positive family activities.
- Specialist interventions that cannot be provided by the TAF approach.
- Medical assessments.
- Employment support.

Workshops:

The Youth Support team will deliver a range of structured workshops to young people engaged in educational services. The team will liaise with education to identify the key issues currently experienced and will deliver workshops accordingly to meet their needs. The Youth Support team, for example, will be able to deliver workshops such as:

- Knife crime workshop

- Bullying workshop
- Sexual exploitation awareness workshop
- Anti social behaviour workshops
- Crimes and consequences workshop
- Anger management workshop
- Stand against violence workshop

Team around the Family

In order to provide an effective early intervention and prevention service there needs to be strong partnership and teamwork with other key professionals and agencies which focuses on supporting the whole family not solely the child or young person in isolation. When identified as appropriate the Youth Support team will lead and co-ordinate the TAF approach.

The Key Workers will adopt the agreed 'Think Family' MIA toolkit process and practice when implementing the TAF approach.

The Youth Support team will also work alongside other Key Workers and agencies to support families by delivering interventions as part of their agreed Family Support Plan and participate in their TAF approach. The Youth Support team will only deliver appropriate interventions as defined within this framework.

Key Partners

For those children and young people of statutory age the Youth Support team will liaise and work in partnership with key partners especially when undertaking the CAF and devising an agreed Family Support Plan. The first point of contact for the Youth Support team will be with the following officers:

Education: it has been agreed that the below key officers will be the first point of contact for the Education department. This will be reviewed following the initial 6 months of implementation.

- Schools: Headteacher or Pastoral Deputy
- EOTAS: Amber Sims
- Exclusion and Attendance: Adrian Hall
- Additional Learning Needs: Teresa Winiarski
- Wellbeing in School: Sarah Bowen

Health: the key contact officer for Health will be the Cwm Taf LHB Lead Officer, Allyson Allman.

Youth Offending: the key contact officer for the Youth Offending Team will be the Youth Offending Principal Manager, Lyndon Lewis.

Social Services: the key contact officer for Children Social Services will be the Intake and Family Support Principal Manager, Nikki Smith.

Police: the key contact officer for the Anti Social Behaviour Unit within the Police will be the Community Safety Sergeant Richard Gardiner.

Referral Process

The Youth Support team, due to its funding from Families First, ***is not able to accept referrals from any other source other than those allocated through the MIA Panel*** as the project is contracted by the Families First programme.

The involvement of the Youth Support project is determined by the MIA Panel through the implementation of a single referral process. Referrals are submitted to the MIA team based at the Integrated Children's Centre with the MIA Panel meetings being held fortnightly.

When a family meets more than one of the 'Think Family Indicators' and the presenting issue is the child or young person's risky, challenging or disruptive behaviour then allocation from the MIA Panel to the Youth Support team would be appropriate.

Eligibility Criteria

The Youth Support project will be available to families that have multiple additional needs meeting more than one 'Think Family Indicator' and the child or young person within the family, aged 10-18 years, displays any of the following:

- risky, challenging, and disruptive behaviour in the family and / or community.
- risk of first time entry into the Criminal Justice System.
- early signs of anti social behaviour and has received anti social behaviour warnings (stage 1, 2 & 3).
- poor attendance rates in education (below 75%) due to risky, challenging and disruptive behaviour.
- at risk of exclusion from school due to risky, challenging and disruptive behaviour.
- excluded from school due to risky, challenging and disruptive behaviour.
- additional support is identified as required to build upon the interventions provided by school for risky, challenging and disruptive behavior, using a family approach.
- substance misuse and poor use of leisure time.

The Youth Support project will also be available to children and young people, aged 10-18 years, displaying risky, challenging and disruptive behaviour as an:

- exit strategy from Social Services intervention based on assessment.
- exit strategy from a statutory Youth Offending Team (YOT) intervention based on assessment.

Step Up Process

The step up process to statutory provision (e.g. Children's Social Services) will be utilised when the needs of a child, young person or the family situation escalates in severity or complexity (e.g. child in need, child protection proceedings, child or young person removed from the family).

During the step up procedure the case will be transferred from the Key Worker within the Youth Support team to the statutory service (e.g. Social Services, YOT) who will allocate an appropriate individual (e.g. Social Worker) to take full responsibility for assessment and the ongoing case management. During this transition stage the Youth Support project will remain supporting the family whilst the assessment is completed.

If a statutory intervention is required the Youth Support project can support elements of the care / action plan delivery as part of the TAF approach. This will be by agreement between the Service Improvement Manager and the responsible Manager for approving the care / action plan (e.g. Senior Social Worker). The interventions provided by the Youth Support team will be time limited.

In order to support the statutory service and prevent any delay in support to families the Youth Support project will need to be informed in advance of the proposed interventions required from the team. These requests will need to be shared in writing with the Youth Support Project.

When a case is escalated and transferred to a statutory service the Youth Support team will provide the MIA Panel with an update outlining that the Key Worker role is no longer being fulfilled and that the Youth Support team are now supporting the TAF approach, thus, closing the case to MIA. On successful completion of the time limited interventions the Youth Support will withdraw from the TAF process and update the MIA team accordingly.

The Youth Support team will adopt the agreed 'Think Family' MIA toolkit process and practice when implementing the step up approach with health.

Step Down Process

As part of any planning process employed by statutory services regular review activity will occur. This may eventually lead to the statutory service deciding that the child or young person and their family's issues have been addressed and that the risk factors have reduced sufficiently to either close the case or engage a step down process.

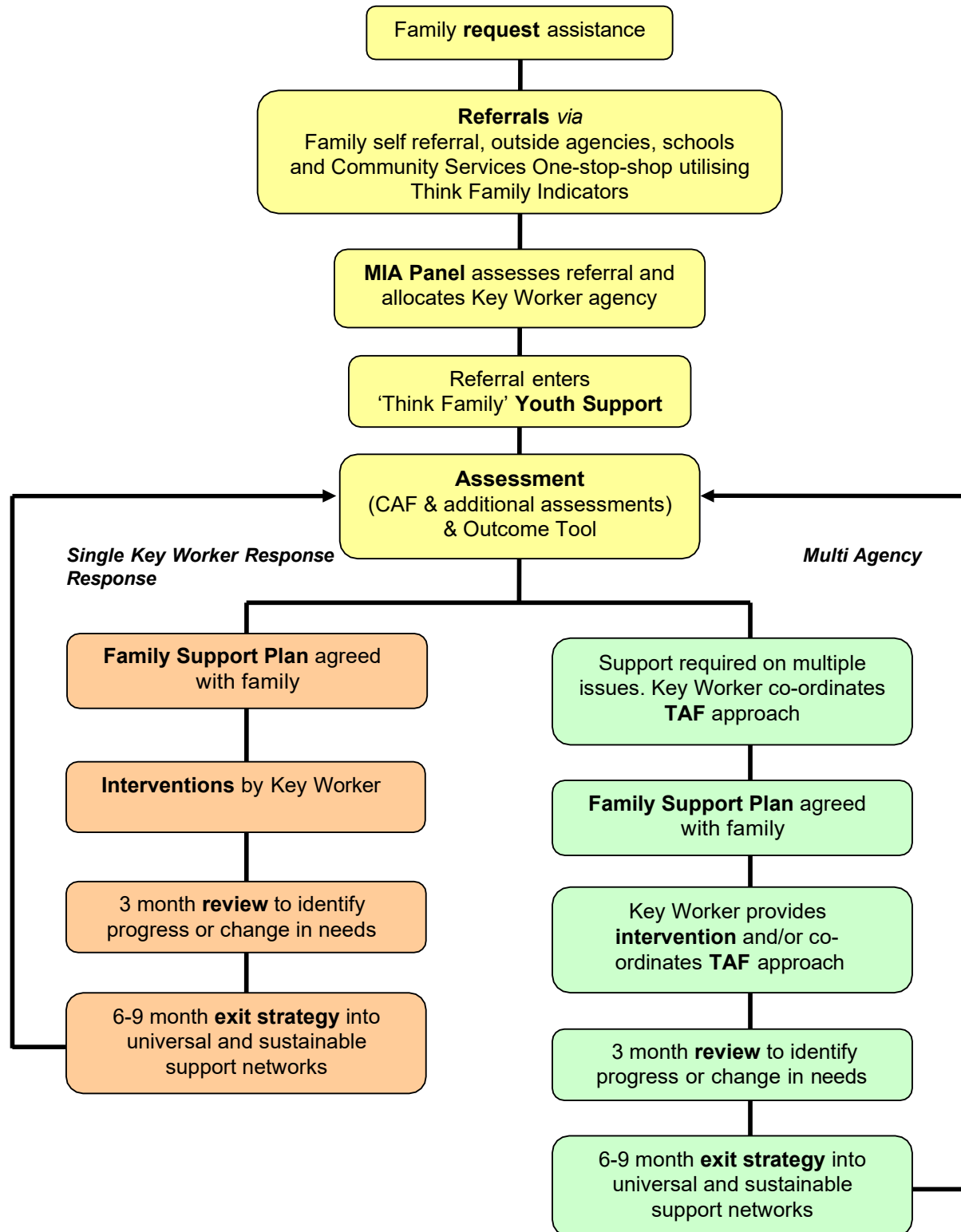
It has been agreed that a period of stability, minimum 12 weeks, should elapse prior to the step down of the case. As part of this process the statutory service will be required to re-refer the case to the MIA Panel for further support due to potential changes in family needs and situations.

Safeguarding & POVA

If at any point there are reasonable concerns that a child or young person may have suffered significant harm or may be at risk of significant harm then this will be discussed with the Children's Social Services department without delay and the All Wales Child Protection Procedures will be followed.

Similarly, the protection of vulnerable adults will also be an integral element of the effective operation of the Youth Support team. If a Key Worker, or any other person involved with the family, has concerns regarding potential abuse or neglect in relation to a vulnerable adult then they will contact Social Services immediately.

FLOWCHART



If at any time you have reasonable concern that a child or young person may be at risk of harm you should follow the All Wales Child Protection Procedures and contact Merthyr Tydfil Children's Services

APPENDIX 1

‘THINK FAMILY’ INDICATORS

A good basis for identifying families with multiple needs who are not yet at the threshold for statutory services involvement is to use the indicators¹ outlined below.

The primary indicators are:

1. No resident in the family is in work.
2. The family lives in temporary, overcrowded or poor accommodation.
3. No parent in the family has any academic qualifications.
4. The mother has a mental health problem.
5. At least one parent has a longstanding illness, disability or infirmity that limits their daily activities.
6. The family has a low household income (below £287 per week).
7. The family cannot afford certain food or clothing items.
8. There is evidence of domestic violence in the household.
9. There is evidence of substance misuse in the household.

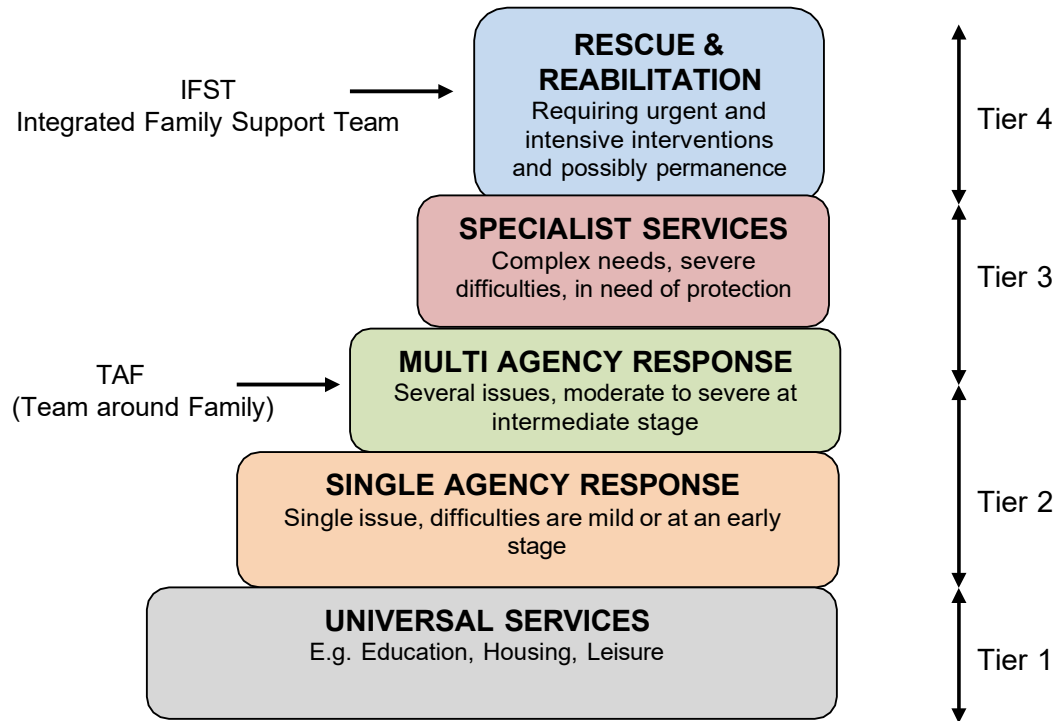
Additional indicators can also be used, based on local intelligence and experience of factors that may make families vulnerable. These secondary indicators reflect the high levels of local deprivation:

1. There is evidence that a child in the household has a school attendance that is below 75%.
2. There is evidence that a child in the household displays challenging behaviour.
3. There is evidence that one or both of the parents have previously been in social care or experienced abuse as a child.
4. There is evidence that one or both of the parents have had a limited education due to special educational needs or poor attendance.
5. There are signs of ‘inappropriate’ or ‘inconsistent’ parenting in the household.
6. There is evidence that members of the family have a history of offending or of criminal behaviour.
7. There is evidence that the family regularly miss routine health/immunisation appointments.
8. There are signs that the family is experiencing loss.

¹ Based on Think Family research carried out by the London Cabinet Office in 2007 and local secondary indicators relating to levels of deprivation.

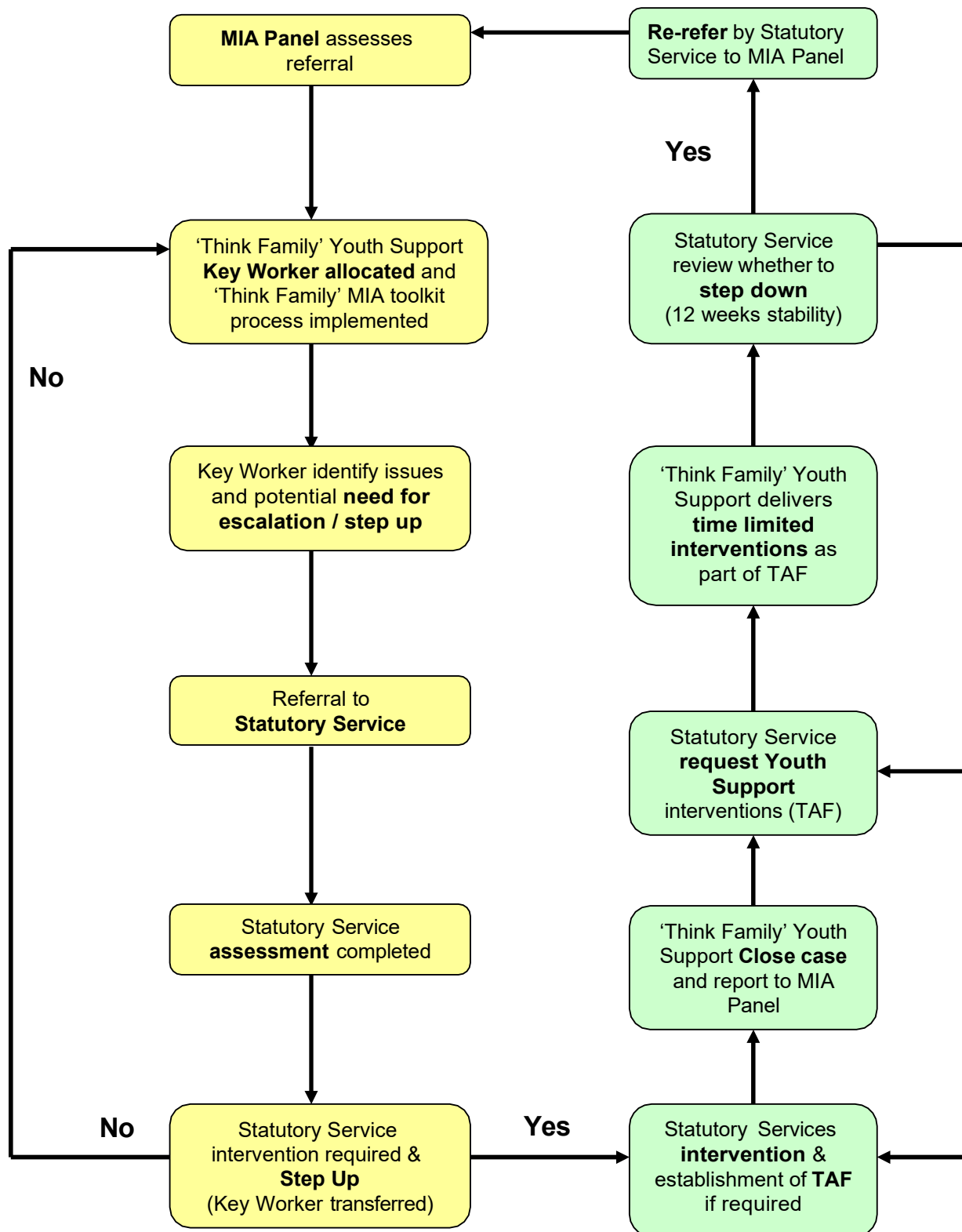
APPENDIX 2

TIER MODEL



APPENDIX 3

STEP UP & STEP DOWN



YOUTH SUPPORT CONTACTS DETAILS

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