

BEXLEY THINK FAMILY PROTOCOL AND PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Refreshed February 2024

THINK FAMILY
APPROACH



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I. Purpose of the protocol – our Think Family approach in Bexley

In February 2021, the Executives of Bexley Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) and Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D came together to consider the early learning from a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review including where there were lessons for both partnerships around working with adults and children within one family by taking a joined-up approach ('Think Family'). The development of this protocol and practice guidance was agreed as a next step by both Executives to capture what Bexley means by Think Family and to set out best practice for all partner organisations to respond to. A survey to partners was issued in June 2021 and its findings used to inform this protocol.

The definition of 'practitioner' in this protocol is any professional who works with either adults with care and support needs or children and young people. In both cases, the protocol reinforces the need for practitioners to be curious and alert to circumstance, responsibilities and needs of all family members in the same household and to think in a holistic, joined up and Think Family way.

In their responses to the partnership survey described above, Bexley partners provided the following responses in terms of their understanding of Think Family as a practice approach:

- "In order to support families to make changes that are helpful and long lasting. we need to work with all the members of the family in terms of decision-making and planning. Think Family involves seeking understanding of family composition and dynamics."
- "Think family encourages adult and children's professionals to consider the needs of the whole family; the support network and professional network."
- "Assessing the needs of and planning care packages for the child and the family as a whole rather than taking each need or issue into consideration in isolation."

Partners also noted the following key challenges to working in a Think Family way:

- Promoting and encouraging family network meetings
- Being aware of family dynamics
- Silo working and workforce anxiety relating to confidentiality
- Not always enough consideration given to contextual safeguarding issues
- Thinking of the 'bigger picture' can sometimes get lost in the need for immediate or lifesaving medical care
- Strategy meeting and core groups do not have enough representation by adult services
- Not involving all of the professionals who support an adult or child in key meetings.

The survey responses also suggested the following ways to improve practice around Think Family:

- Think Family included in all policies / procedures
- Reminders on referral documentation about Think Family
- The sharing of good practice cases where joined up working evidenced
- 7-minute briefings, multi-agency training and other toolkits for practitioners
- An overarching protocol on Think Family.

This protocol (including the accompanying practice guidance in **section 7**) was originally issued in September 2021 and promotes early intervention as key to best practice. Think Family as a practice approach provides an opportunity for practitioners who work with either

adults or children to evidence how they have worked together to safeguard children, young people, adults, carers and families. This shared responsibility must be at the heart of practice across all organisations which make up Bexley Safeguarding Adults Board, Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D, as well as any other partnership arrangements where safeguarding risks are discussed and shared.

The protocol also sets a framework for all practitioners to ascertain the views and wishes of individuals so that they are listened to and, wherever possible, acted upon. This will ensure they experience help and support that is both joined up and effective, which will in turn achieve better outcomes for individuals and their families. Equally, the protocol contributes to ensuring that communities and individuals are safe and protected from harm.

Our Think Family approach has significant benefits for children, young people, adults, carers, families and for organisations, they include:

- Improved outcomes for children, young people, adults, carers and families (including in relation to safeguarding, health and wellbeing)
- Reduction in significant harm
- Enabling a system to embed new learning and implement best practice
- Better use of resources including finance and time
- Less duplication between organisations and services
- Improved record-keeping and information-sharing
- Improved staff morale.

2024 Refresh

The Think Family protocol was refreshed in February 2024 with an updated action plan and strategic priorities.

2. Our Think Family principles

The overarching guiding principle will be '**Nothing about You, Without You**'. Our core Think Family principles are:

- We will follow a multi-agency whole system approach to working with families (this includes extended family and friends). Adults and children will be assessed for services in a holistic manner and not in isolation. Where needed, guidance will be sought from a number of sources: the family network, professional advisors, senior managers
- We will be individual-led and outcome-focused, engaging the individual adult or child in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving their quality of life, well-being, and safety
- We will promote effective interagency working which puts children, young people, parents, carers and individuals at the centre. This approach recognises the importance of their family, relationships and environment on their health, wellbeing, and aspirations.
- We understand that safeguarding is a shared responsibility and is 'everyone's business.'
- We will promote early intervention and support which are both crucial to provide better outcomes for all children and their families (and to avoid the need for crisis intervention)
- We will encourage early multi-agency conversations taking place in a timely way between professionals and outside of statutory meetings

- We will encourage professionals to be curious about safeguarding issues (including potential issues) within a family and amongst its members
- We will support people within their cultural context, ensuring diversity is valued and understood
- We will share information and communicate with partner organisations, parents, carers, and children in a timely, appropriate, and accessible manner.
- We will involve and act upon children's wishes and feelings, ensuring the voice of the child is heard. The needs of the adults should not marginalise the needs of the children.

Our Think Family approach will ensure that the safety and well-being of adults and children is paramount.

SOME OF OUR "THINK FAMILY" PRINCIPLES



3. Scope of the protocol

The protocol is for partner organisations working with children, young people, adults, and families in Bexley and should be used by all professionals who work with Bexley families.

4. The legal framework

One of the reasons for this joint protocol is to identify where safeguarding partners can work together across adults and children's services to ensure the health and well-being of all individuals. There are several pieces of legislation that set out and reinforce how we work with children, adults and carers. These are listed below:

- Care Act 2014
- Children Act 1989
- Domestic Abuse Bill 2019
- Equality Act 2010
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Mental Health Act 2007
- Mental Capacity Amendment Act 2019
- Human Rights Act 1998

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005
- Policing & Crime Act 2017
- Children & Families Act 2014
- Children & Social Work Act 2017
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Health & Social Care Act 2012.

The above legislation is described in more detail in **Appendix I**.

5. The role of the statutory safeguarding partnerships

5.1 The responsibilities of the statutory safeguarding partnerships

The safeguarding partnerships in Bexley will:

- Provide strong leadership on Think Family and safeguarding at a senior level to ensure the approach has a high strategic profile
- Make the Think Family Protocol available on their websites
- Challenge and seek assurance that Think Family is put into practice by partner organisations and is co-ordinated, effective, and underpinned in day-to-day practice by timely information sharing (for example, through audits, Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs), Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs), and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs))
- Seek assurance that Think Family is embedded in safeguarding training
- Include Think Family in our annual reports, strategic plans and communications
- Ensure the ongoing review of the Think Family protocol and practice guidance
- Will convene joint Executive meetings as required to review the effectiveness of Bexley's Think Family approach
- Promote Multi-Agency Learning Forum training and learning events
- Endorse joint safeguarding campaigns and information-sharing
- Take any necessary steps to resolve safeguarding concerns where individual agencies' own escalation procedures are not able to fully address those concerns for all parties involved
- Evaluate and demonstrate whether Think Family is co-ordinated and effective in safeguarding people and helping achieve positive outcomes (and will record this in their respective annual reports). Assurance will be sought by monitoring first line management evidenced by case supervision, clinical supervision, live case file monitoring, closed case file monitoring and serious case reviews for adults and children.

The strategic priorities that underpin the work of Bexley's safeguarding partnerships are set out in **Appendix 2**.

5.2 Four steps for assurance

The four steps for assurance checklist has been produced to help safeguarding partnerships assess the effectiveness of their approach to working in a Think Family way:

- Step one: Are you Think Family ready?
- Step two: Do you understand Think Family?

- Step three: Make a plan that works for everyone
- Step four: Check it's working for the whole family.

The assurance checklist is also useful for individual partner organisations to review the effectiveness of their own practice. The assurance checklist set out in **Appendix 3**.

5.3 Think Family action plan

The safeguarding partnerships in Bexley have produced an action plan to take forward to development of Bexley's Think Family approach. The action plan is reviewed by the Executive meetings of the safeguarding partnerships and can be found in **Appendix 4**. The Multi-Agency Learning Forum will support the development of Bexley's Think Family approach and any joint learning events and areas of the action plan.

5.4 Arrangements for reviewing the protocol

The safeguarding partnerships will review the Think Family protocol on an annual basis as part of the review of their strategic plans and will provide an update in their annual reports to this effect.



6. The role of all partner agencies working in Bexley

Partner organisations will:

- Actively implement the protocol as a part of the safeguarding arrangements within their own agency by promoting ownership of it at all levels
- Ensure all staff are aware of the protocol and practice guidance
- Ensure their staff receive training on Think Family
- Ensure they have quality assurance systems in place to monitor the implementation of Think Family in the context of safeguarding, reviewing staff compliance and the overall impact of their arrangements (for example, through supervision and auditing).

In order to embed Think Family as an approach in practice, all partners are encouraged to consider the following:

- How well are Bexley's Think Family principles understood by professionals within your organisation?
- What is in place in terms of:
 - an organisational definition of Think Family
 - policies and procedures relating to Think Family?

- systems to support a Think Family approach?
- training?
- staff supervision?
- information for people using our services / members of public?
- auditing around performance and the effectiveness of arrangements?
- What more could be done to promote Think Family as an approach and improve practice?

The four steps for assurance checklist as found in **Appendix 3** is a useful tool for partners to assess the effectiveness of their own arrangements.

7. Practice guidance

7.1 Using the protocol in everyday practice

Everyone has a responsibility to take a Think Family approach in the context of safeguarding children and adults. Professionals should note that there is an increase of risk and harm to children and adults when they live with an adult with one or more of the following vulnerability factors:

- Substance use
- Learning disabilities
- Domestic abuse
- Looked After Children
- Mental ill-health.

Professionals should be aware of the Think Family principles set out in **section 2** above and have attended any training as required by their organisation.



7.2 A Think Family checklist for practitioners

The following questions should be used by practitioners to consider their own practice in relation to Think Family:

- Have I asked who makes up the family and understood the role(s) of each family member and how these relate to each other?
- Do I know everyone who lives in the household or has regular contact with the child or adult I am supporting?
- Do I have a picture of the family as a whole (this might be in the form of a genogram)?

- Have I understood all the current demands on the family and their levels of resilience to manage these demands?
- Have I considered the family's strengths and what is working well for them?
- Have I considered if other family members are in need of support or are at risk? Do I know what support the family might want?
- Have I explored caring responsibilities for any family member?
- Do I know if other practitioners are working with the family?
- Have I explored what the family's solutions to their support needs might look like?
- Have I been open and honest about my concerns as a professional?
- Have I made any assumptions about the family?
- Have I taken my concerns to supervision with my manager/team?
- Have I considered what may make a difference for the family?

This checklist is also set out in **Appendix 5** and can be printed and used a practical tool within teams and workplaces.

7.3 Reporting safeguarding concerns in Bexley

All concerns must be recorded and reported to the appropriate local authority. There are two points of referral within the London Borough of Bexley:

- In Bexley, where there are concerns, all children, young people and their families must be reported to the Bexley MASH as the operational front door for Children's Services' oversight, and ensuring adults at risk are referred to Bexley Screeners. Details of how to contact Bexley MASH can be found here:
<https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/health-and-social-care/social-care-for-children/reporting-concerns-about-child/worried-about-child>
- In Bexley, all adults at risk must be reported to Bexley Screeners as the operational front door for Adult's Services' oversight, ensuring adults at risk are identified, but referrers must also consider if there are children and/or young people at risk and refer them to Bexley MASH where appropriate to do so. Details of how to contact Bexley Screeners can be found here:
<https://www.safeguardingadultsinbexley.com/protecting-adults/>

Further details about reporting concerns into Bexley MASH can be found in **Appendix 6**.

7.4 Responding to ongoing concerns and risk issues – our escalation procedures

Generally, there is a good working relationship between partner agencies in Bexley. Differences and debates are all part of multi-agency working. If there are serious differences of views on how best to manage risk and safeguarding, and protect child(ren), young people and adults at risk, then escalation processes can provide a useful framework for exploring and resolving professional disagreements.

Agencies will have their own escalation policies and should use these first. There is an expectation that agencies will have systems for recording when escalation policies are used and how disagreements are resolved. There is also an expectation that the terms of reference for all multi-agency panels and meetings include reference to what to do if there is a disagreement.

The intention is for issues to be resolved at the earliest stage and by practitioners and their managers themselves. However, where agencies own escalation procedures are not able to

resolve a disagreement, managers can escalate unresolved issues using the Bexley safeguarding partnerships escalation process found below:

- If it has not been possible to resolve professional differences between agencies, relating to safeguarding, then this can be brought to the attention of the statutory three partners (also known as executive). An email should be sent to the statutoryreview@bexley.gov.uk inbox so that the Practice Review and Learning Manager(s) can identify next steps to resolve the conflict
- The Practice Review and Learning Manager(s) will then support partners to resolve their differences
- Each quarter the safeguarding partnership Executives will ask for information from all partner agencies on any issues escalated, including from, panels, meetings and any cases escalated to the safeguarding partnerships. This will be examined for any practice improvement lessons to be learned.

Finally, some guiding principles for all partner organisations:

- The Bexley safeguarding partnerships encourage agencies to speak up and arbitrate different views on practice issues
- Any statutory agency can request a multi-agency meeting where there is a need to resolve professional differences
- As a last resort the three statutory partners (Police, CCG and Local Authority) can act as an arbitrator/mediator in the case of protracted or intractable disagreements.
- All partners are expected to make use of escalation procedures to avoid exacerbating or prolonging conflict and avoid any possible impact on a child(ren), young people, adult, their carers and family members.

8. Multi-agency training

The safeguarding partnerships have developed multi-agency training for professionals to examine Bexley's Think Family protocol and practice guidance and to consider its day-to-day application. This training is advertised by the safeguarding partnerships in their regular bulletins. Contact details for the safeguarding partnerships can be found in **Appendix 7**.

Appendix I – Key legislation

Care Act 2014 – The Care Act 2014 places a general duty on local authorities to promote the wellbeing of individuals when carrying out care and support functions. The Local Authority must have oversight as identified in the Care Act 2014. If the Local Authority is not aware of the concerns, then the Local Authority does not have oversight and cannot act where appropriate. Also to note:

- Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to make enquires, or ask others to make enquiries, when they think an adult in their area with care and support needs may be at risk of abuse or neglect, and where the adult is unable to protect themselves due to those needs for care and support
- Adult safeguarding enquiries should be person centred, seek to ascertain and understand the view and wishes of the adult, and to find out what, if any, action may be needed. This applies whether or not the authority is actually providing any care and support services to that adult. It is crucial that practitioners have conversations with people about how we might respond in safeguarding situations in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety
- The definition of well-being as described by the Department of Health includes:
 - personal dignity including treating individuals with respect
 - physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing
 - protection from abuse and neglect
 - control by the individual over day-to-day life
 - participation in work, education, training or recreation
 - social and economic wellbeing
 - domestic, family and personal relationships
 - suitability of living accommodation
 - the individual's contribution to society.

Children Act 1989 – This Act allocates duties to local authorities, courts, parents, and other agencies in the United Kingdom, to ensure children are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted. It centres on the idea that children are best cared for within their own families; however, it also makes provisions for instances where it is not possible for children and young people to remain living with their families usually when they do not co-operate with statutory bodies.

Part I: Introductory

- Welfare of the child: the Children Act 1989 states that children's welfare should be the paramount concern of the courts. It also specifies that any delays in the system processes will have a detrimental impact on a child's welfare. The court should take into account the child's wishes; physical, emotional and educational needs; age; sex; background circumstances; the likely effect of change on the child; the harm the child has suffered or is likely to suffer; parent's ability to meet the child's needs and the powers available to the court
- Parental responsibility: parental responsibility is defined in the Act as "all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in

relation to the child and his property', If the child's parents are married both have parental responsibility; if they are unmarried, the father does not automatically have parental responsibility, however. A father of a child, who was not married to the mother at the time of birth may apply to the courts for parental responsibility, or this may be done through mutual agreement between the mother (or child) and father. The Act specifies that more than one person can have parental responsibility, although they can act alone in decision making for the child. If a child does not have anyone to care for them with parental responsibility a guardian can be appointed by the court. That appointment can be overturned on application of the parent with parental responsibility, by the child or in family proceedings.

Part II: Orders with respect to children in family proceedings - Residence, contact, prohibited steps, and specific issue orders

Part III: Local authority support for children and families

- Children in need: local authority has a duty to "safeguard and promote the welfare" of children who are assessed as being in need. A child is deemed as "in need" if they are disabled or unlikely to achieve a reasonable standard of health or development unless services are provided. The local authority has a duty to provide or facilitate others to provide services for children in need. The local authority must provide day care for children in need who are under the age of five and not attending school if appropriate. There should also be provisions for out-of-school hours activities
- Accommodation and looking after children: under section 20 of the Act local authorities must provide accommodation for any child in need who has no-one with parental responsibility to care for them. This may also be extended to children that have a parent available if it is deemed that by staying with them it would put the child at risk
- Children leaving care: children leaving care should be given advice and assistance from the local authority; this may involve giving assistance in kind or in exceptional circumstances in cash. They may also contribute to the expenses incurred by the young person regarding employment, training or education
- Reviewing cases: Section 26 of the Act outlines the obligation of the local authority to review cases regularly and they should have a complaints procedure available to the children they are caring for
- Multi-agency working: local authorities also have a duty to communicate and share information with other agencies if it complies with their own statutory obligations. The local authority must consult with educational authorities when a child becomes looked after and ensure they are informed of the educational arrangements for the child
- Payment for services: a fee may apply to services provided under Sections 17 and 18 of the Act ("other than advice, guidance or counselling") to the parents of the child, the young person if over the age of 16, or to a family member (if they receive the service). But the local authority should only charge them if it is reasonable to assume they can pay for the service.

Part IV: Care and supervision

- Care and supervision orders: a care or supervision order may be granted by the court if a child is or is likely to suffer significant harm if they are not placed into local authority care. This also includes children who are 'beyond parental control'. The court may

grant a care order in place of a supervision order if they believe it is more appropriate or vice versa. If, during family court the court has concerns for a child's welfare, they can direct the local authority to investigate. The local authority can then decide if they are going to apply for a care order or supervision order. If they decided not to take any legal action, they must explain to the court their reasons for doing so

- Care orders: when a care order is issued the local authority must take the child into care and accommodate them for the period of time the order is in force. The local authority will have parental responsibility for the child. Parents and guardians should be given reasonable amounts of contact with the child during the time they are in care unless otherwise directed by the court. However, in urgent situations to protect the child the local authority may refuse contact for up to seven days. Local authorities may apply to the court to prevent contact to safeguard or promote the child's welfare
- Supervision orders: a supervision order makes it the duty of the supervisor to "advise, assist and befriend" the child and to consider applying to the court for a variation on the order if it is not being fully complied with. An education supervision order may be granted if it is deemed that a child is not being properly educated. Before an application for an order is made, the education authority must consult with the "social service committee"
- Interim orders: an interim order may be made if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the subject child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. An interim care or supervision order is commonly drafted so as to last until the conclusion of the proceedings or further order. A care order, full or interim will confer parental responsibility ("PR") upon the applicant local authority. This does not extinguish the PR held previously by members of the child's family and thus their PR is shared with the local authority. A supervision order, interim or final, does not confer PR upon the local authority
- Guardians: a guardian shall be appointed by the court to safeguard the child's interests unless this is deemed not be required by the court. The court can also appoint a solicitor to represent the child. A guardian has access to and may take copies of any local authority records relating to the child concerned. The Guardian is under an obligation to represent and safeguard the interests of the child during the currency of the legal proceedings. A Guardian will invariably be represented by a solicitor. Older children may, if they disagree with the view of their Guardian, instruct their own solicitor to act on their behalf. Guardians have social work expertise but are independent of social services.

Part V: Protection of children

- Child assessment orders: a child assessment order can be requested by the local authority if they believe it would not be possible to complete a proper assessment without an order. It must only be requested if the applicant has reason to believe that the child is likely to suffer significant harm or that an assessment is required to determine if the child is likely to suffer significant harm. The child should not be removed from home for the assessment to be completed; though the courts may deem this necessary for the period of assessment
- Emergency protection orders: an application can be made to the court for an emergency protection order (EPO) if it is believed a child is likely to suffer significant harm if they are not taken to, or remain in, a place of safety. The name and a description of the child should be provided to court upon application if possible. The order gives the local authority parental responsibility for the child though this should

only be exercised as required to safeguard or promote the welfare of the child. As part of the order, the court can direct contact conditions and medical examinations of the child. The local authority has the power to return the child if it is assessed it is safe for the child to return home. It is an offence to obstruct someone who is carrying out the directions of the court in the case of an emergency protection order

- Police protection provisions: *Police child protection powers in the United Kingdom* - If there are concerns of a child suffering significant harm the police have the power to ensure that child is removed to, or remains in, a place of safety for up to 72 hours. They do not require a court order, but they must ensure that the local authority is informed and the child is accommodated appropriately
- Section 47 investigations: a local authority must investigate if they are informed that a child in their area is subject of an emergency protection order, is in police protection or is suffering or likely to be suffering significant harm. They must then take any steps, as reasonably practicable, to ensure that the child is safeguarded. If any concerns arise regarding a child's education, the relevant local education authority should be consulted. If as part of the enquiries they are unable to gain access to the child, and they still have significant concerns, the local authority can apply for an emergency protection order, a child assessment order, a care order or a supervision order. If it is deemed an order is not required they may establish a date to review the case
- Abduction of children in care: a person is committing an offence if they knowingly take a child, who is in care, away from the responsible person as ordered by the court. It is also an offence to encourage or assist a child to run away from the responsible person; this can be punishable by imprisonment up to 6 months or a fine. A recovery order can be made by the court to retrieve a child who is believed to have been abducted.

Part VI: Community homes

All local authorities must ensure they have community homes available to utilise for children looked after. This may be a home which is controlled by the local authority or a voluntary organisation working on behalf of local authority.

Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 – To make provision for and in connection with the establishment of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner; to prohibit cross-examination in person in family proceedings in certain circumstances; to make provision about certain violent or sexual offences, and offences involving other abusive behaviour committed outside the United Kingdom; and for connected purposes.

Equality Act 2010 – The Act protects people against discrimination, harassment or victimisation in employment, and as users of private and public services based on nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Mental Capacity Act 2005 – The Act applies to everyone involved in the care, treatment and support of people aged 16 and over living in England and Wales who are unable to make all or some decisions for themselves. The MCA is designed to protect and restore power to those vulnerable people who lack capacity. Click here for the **BSAB MCA Toolkit** - <https://www.safeguardingadultsinbexley.com/wp-content/uploads/Mental-Capacity-Act-Toolkit-2.pdf>

Mental Health Act 2007 – The Act sets out how people with a mental health disorder what their rights are and how they can be treated. The term "mental health disorder" is used to describe people who have a mental illness, a learning disability or a personality disorder. Being detained (also known as sectioned) under the Mental Health Act is when you're made to stay in hospital for assessment or treatment.

Mental Capacity Amendment Act 2019 – The purpose of the Mental Capacity Amendment Act 2019 is to reform the process under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 ("MCA") for authorising arrangements enabling the care or treatment of people who lack capacity to consent to the arrangements, which give rise to a deprivation of their liberty.

Human Rights Act 1998 – The Human Rights Act (HRA) came into force in October 2000. It enables individuals to enforce 16 of the fundamental rights and freedoms. The fundamental rights include rights that impact directly on service provision in the health and social care sector. Rights particularly relevant to dignity in care include: the right to life, the right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment and the right to a family life. A balance has to be reached between rights and responsibilities. Not all rights are absolute and frequently practitioners are required to balance competing rights.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 – Every employer is required to carry out a risk assessment for **the workplace** which should identify any hazards present in **the workplace**, assess the risks arising from such hazards and identify the steps to be taken to deal with any risks.

Policing & Crime Act 2017 – This Act enables important changes to the governance of fire and rescue services. The changes will build capability, improve efficiency, increase public confidence, and further enhance local accountability.

Children & Families Act 2014 – The aim is to give good support to children and young people with special educational needs or a disability, and their families. The Act helps children with disabilities too, even if they don't have special educational needs.

Children & Social Work Act 2017 – This Act is intended to improve support for looked after children and care leavers, promote the welfare and safeguarding of children, and make provisions about the regulation of social workers. It also establishes a new regulatory regime for the social work profession.






Modern Slavery Act 2015 – This Act makes provision about slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and about human trafficking, including provision for the protection of victims, and for connected purposes.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 – It is the biggest change to homelessness legislation in 40 years and brings in new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness. This is a new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need.

Health & Social Care Act 2012 – The legislation had two key objectives: To improve the quality of care and outcomes for patients and to reposition the mode of provision so that health service provision becomes more patient-centred and facilitates choice.

Appendix 2: Bexley strategic priorities

Bexley Strategic Priorities for the four Strategic Partnership Boards. Supporting agencies to work together to improve outcomes in safety, safeguarding and wellbeing for residents in Bexley.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Shared Members: Care Quality Commission, Bexley Community Safety Partners, Healthwatch Bexley Lay Members, London Ambulance Service, London Fire Brigade, London Metropolitan Police Service, National Probation Service, Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations, London Borough of Bexley – Adults, Housing, Children’s, Communities SEL Integrated Care Board, Bexley |   <p>Health & Wellbeing Board wants people in Bexley to be healthy, happy and resilient, and we believe that everyone has the right to access good health and care opportunities. There are 4 priorities set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (these priorities are mirrored by the South East London Integrated Care System). In addition, tackling health inequalities remains a priority across the health and care system.</p> | <p>SHIELD wants healthy, safe, resilient family networks in communities that are also safe.</p>  <p>Developing a strategic multi-agency approach to Early Help in Bexley</p> | <p>Bexley Safeguarding Adults Board is to empower the partnership to work with adults at risk in order to prevent abuse and offer proportionate responses to individuals with care and support needs, so that they are protected, and agencies are held accountable for their actions.</p>  <p>Ensure that staff understand Making Safeguarding Personal especially with adults who self-abuse and self-neglect.</p> <p>Improve access to safeguarding information so people know where to go and who to speak to in a timely and effective way.</p> |  <p>Bexley Community Safety Partnership Board aims to keep people who live, work, study or visit the London Borough of Bexley safe - “keep crime low, feel safe.”</p> | |
| | <p>Ageing Well (Frailty, Dementia and End of Life)</p> | | | <p>Tackle identified antisocial behaviour in our communities.</p> | |
| | <p>Tackling childhood and adult obesity</p> | | | <p>Continue to reduce residential burglary and its impact on the community.</p> | |
| | <p>Children and Young People</p> | | | <p>Reduce substance misuse related to crime and antisocial behaviour</p> | |
| | <p>Mental Health</p> | | | | |
| | <p>Tackling Health Inequalities</p> | | | | |
| | <p>Cross Cutting</p> | | | | |
| | <p>Supporting people with addictions – including smoking, alcohol and drugs</p> | <p>Better understanding the multi-agency approach in Bexley to (a) children and young people going missing and (b) safeguarding in and by the wider community</p> | <p>Getting basic child protection right</p> | <p>Safeguard and support victims and families of domestic abuse and hate crime.</p> | |
| | <p>Dementia</p> | | <p>Improve professional curiosity for staff’s safeguarding practice against all areas regarding Mental Capacity.</p> | <p>Early intervention to safeguard people against violent crimes.</p> | |
| | <p>Enablers - Engagement approach ensuring residents’ voice influences the work of the boards and embedding learning and evidence in practice</p> | | | | |

Appendix 3 – Four steps for assurance checklist

Step one: Are you Think family ready? A safeguarding partnership that ‘thinks family’ will show:

- There is leadership and commitment across the partnership to a whole-family approach with protocols in place across a wide range of local partnerships to enable services to be coordinated.
- A Workforce Change Programme ensures the skills and referral arrangements are in place so that service protocols are operating ‘on the ground.’
- Family-related questions are embedded in processes at first contact and subsequently, such as:
 - Who else lives in your house?
 - Who helps with your support and who else is important in your life?
 - Is there anyone that you provide support or care for?
 - Is there a child in the family (including stepchildren, children of partners or extended family)?
 - Does any parent need support in their parenting role?
- There is an active approach to establishing if there are any significant potential changes in families’ lives and working with them to plan for these
- Families and carers are an integral part of the design delivery and evaluation of services and support

Step two: Do you understand Think Family? A safeguarding partnership that gets the whole picture will show:

- There is a joint Think Family protocol in place between children and adult services that makes clear where responsibilities lie and how services work.
- Information on the assessments and care and support plans that family members are having from other organisations is routinely identified. Where possible and appropriate, assessments are coordinated or combined.
- Proportionate assessments are undertaken in a way that is most appropriate to each family.
- People providing care and support are identified and involved in the assessment to provide their expertise and knowledge and views of what works and what does not.
- Risks to carers of sustaining their caring role are always considered.
- Carers’ willingness to continue caring is always established.

- Carers are always provided with an assessment on the appearance of need. Carers' eligibility for support in their own right is always considered.
- In all instances, even when a person can achieve an outcome independently, consideration is given to any impact on others and whether they might be adversely impacting on the health or safety of others, particularly family members and including children.
- At assessment, all of a person's eligible needs are identified regardless of whether such needs are being met by any carer.
- When looking at eligible needs, consideration of the ability to maintain family or other significant relationships, including with any children, and the impact of these not being maintained on the adult's wellbeing is always considered. This applies to both the person in need of care and support and their carer.
- When a child may be a young carer, consideration is always given as to whether to undertake a young carer's needs assessment under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
- Assessments of an adult identify any potential child in need who does not have any caring responsibilities.

Step three: Make a plan that works for everyone. A safeguarding partnership that makes plans that work for everyone will show:

- Support planning takes into account the wellbeing of *all* the family and the impact of any services and support on other family members. This includes identifying and responding to situations such as mutual caring, and carers living at a distance or outside of the local authority area.
- Support planning always involves any carer and consideration is given to the involvement of other family members.
- Support planning considers how carers can be supported to look after their own health and have a life alongside caring.
- Plans include consideration of support to ensure a carer is able to fulfil any parenting role.
- Consideration is given to how a person's circle of support can be developed, where this might benefit them.
- Where the local authority is going to meet the needs of multiple people in the same family, consideration is given to producing a combined plan with a joint personal budget (where this is appropriate, and all involved agree).
- Plans from different organisations for any family members are identified and

consideration given as to whether these can be aligned, coordinated or integrated into a single plan (where all involved agree).

- Where plans are integrated, a lead organisation is established to undertake monitoring and assurance and it is clear about when the plan will be reviewed and by whom.

Step four: Check it's working for the whole family. A safeguarding partnership that knows its approach is working for the whole family will show:

- The impact of the plan and results being achieved are reviewed in relation to both the individual and the whole family. This includes consideration of any unintended consequences for other members of the family.
- Consideration is given to any changes that can be made to maximise the benefit to the whole family.
- Carers' (including young carers') needs are routinely reviewed and the support they are willing and able to provide, as well as the outcomes they want to achieve, is re-established.
- Any anticipated changes in the family that may impact on needs and support are identified and considered in any revised plan.
- The plan is checked to see that it is providing adequate support to ensure children are not expected to offer inappropriate or excessive levels of care

Appendix 4 – Bexley Think Family action plan (v.6 February 2024)

| No. | Activity | Lead | Timeframe | Status update |
|----------|---|------------------------|------------|---------------|
| 1 | Seek the views of BSAB and S.H.I.E.L.D. Executives on current practice relating to Think Family | | | |
| 1.1 | Hold joint Executive meeting in relation to Young Person S Child Safeguarding Practice Review and issues relating to Think Family | AE/AG/EB | 3/2/21 | |
| 1.2 | Hold follow-up joint Executive meeting in relation to Young Person S Child Safeguarding Practice Review and issues relating to Think Family | AE/AG/EB | 7/5/21 | |
| 2 | Seek the view of key stakeholders on current practice relating to Think Family | | | |
| 2.1 | Issue Think Family survey to S.H.I.E.L.D. Partnership Board members and collate findings | TW | 8/7/21 | |
| 2.2 | Present findings at to S.H.I.E.L.D. Partnership Board for further discussion | TW/CM | 12/7/21 | |
| 2.3 | Issue Think Family survey to Multi-Agency Learning Forum members and collate findings | AE | 8/7/21 | |
| 2.4 | Facilitate learning theme session on Think Family at Multi-Agency Learning Forum and collate feedback to inform protocol development | AG | 21/5/21 | |
| 3 | Development of a Bexley Think Family Protocol and Practice Guidance | | | |
| 3.1 | Identify good practice examples | CH, PU, AE, NS, TW, AG | By 31/7/21 | |
| 3.2 | Complete first draft of protocol document | AE | 30/3/21 | |

| | | | | |
|------|--|-------------------------------|---------|--|
| 3.3 | Provide feedback on first draft of protocol document | CH, PU, NS, TW, AG | 16/4/21 | |
| 3.4 | Seek feedback from Chris McCree (SLAM) on first draft of protocol document | TW | 4/5/21 | |
| 3.5 | Review and refresh core principles section of draft protocol | CH | 30/6/21 | |
| 3.6 | Agree timeframe for progressing the protocol document and practice guidance (including any sign-off arrangements within BSAB and S.H.I.E.L.D.) | CH, PU, AE, NS, TW, AG | 31/7/21 | |
| 3.7 | Produce an updated draft of the protocol document and circulate for comments | TW | 5/8/21 | |
| 3.8 | Feedback to TW on current draft of the protocol document | CH, PU, AE, NS, AG, Alex G | 17/8/21 | |
| 3.9 | Confirm with DS any additional content required from Community Safety Partnership | TW | 17/8/21 | |
| 3.10 | Share latest version of draft protocol document with Execs for info and outline plan to survey MALF members as final consultation exercise | TW/AE | 18/8/21 | |
| 3.11 | Feedback to TW on current draft of the protocol document via MS Forms survey | MALF members | 10/9/21 | |
| 3.12 | Update final version of protocol document with MALF feedback (as required) | TW | 15/9/21 | |
| 3.13 | Seek sign-off of final Think Family protocol and practice guidance in S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive | TW | 30/9/21 | |

| | | | | |
|----------|--|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 3.14 | Seek sign-off of final Think Family protocol and practice guidance with BSAB Executive colleagues | AE | 30/9/21 | |
| 4 | Commission multi-agency training relating to Think Family (to include Bexley's new protocol/practice guidance) | | | |
| 4.1 | Agree new set of dates for Think Family training with Chris McCree (SLAM) – part of DfE-funded project within S.H.I.E.L.D. | TW/AG/CM | 18/6/21 | |
| 4.2 | Advertise above training via S.H.I.E.L.D. and BSAB | NF/AB/RK | 31/8/21 | |
| 4.3 | Review course evaluation and agree any next steps | TW/AG/CM/AE | June 2022 | |
| 4.4 | Review attendance records for 6 Think Family sessions (Nov 2021-May 2022) and collate by agency/job role and share with partnership leads for ongoing planning/targeting | TW/NF | 31/7/22 | |
| 4.5 | Agree list of named chairs/coordinators for all strategic meetings from BSAB and S.H.I.E.L.D. who would require Think Family training | CH/PU/AE/TW | 30/6/22 | |
| 4.6 | Agree further series of 5 Think Family sessions (Nov 2022 and Oct-Dec 2023) | TW | 8/7/22 | |
| 4.7 | Deliver 5 Think Family sessions | CM/S.H.I.E.L.D. | Nov 2022 and Nov-Dec 2023 | |
| 4.8 | Plan and deliver Think Family conference (BSAB and S.H.I.E.L.D.-led) | TW/AE | Feb 2024 | |
| 5 | Comms | | | |
| 5.1 | Agree comms and dissemination plan for the Think Family protocol and practice guidance | CH, PU, AE, NS, TW, AG | 31/8/21 | |
| 5.2 | Add Think Family protocol and practice guidance to BSAB and S.H.I.E.L.D. websites | TW/AE | October 2021 | BSAB website updated |

| | | | | |
|-----|---|----------------|---------------------|--|
| 5.3 | Agree comms for any news story via LBB or other partner comms channels | CH, PU, AE, TW | June 2022 | Discussed at joint BSAB/ S.H.I.E.L.D. meeting on 23/6/22 |
| 5.4 | Raise Think Family developmental work at MALF on 25/7/22 to get member feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed workshop/open morning to showcase current practice/resources etc | TW | 25/7/22 and ongoing | |
| 5.5 | Prepare paper for LB Bexley CLT to raise profile of Think Family approach – to include feedback from Think Family conference (February 2024) | AE/TW | March/April 2024 | |
| 5.6 | Work with LB Bexley Comms team to develop news item to publicise Think Family work to date and next steps in Bexley – to be shared with SEL CCG comms et al | AE/TW | March/April 2024 | |

| | | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|---|------------------|
| Key for RAG rating | Red = Achievement of activity is a month late | Amber = Achievement of activity will be 2 weeks late | Green = All activities are progressing as planned | Blue = Completed |
|--------------------|---|--|---|------------------|

Appendix 5 – Think Family checklist for practitioners

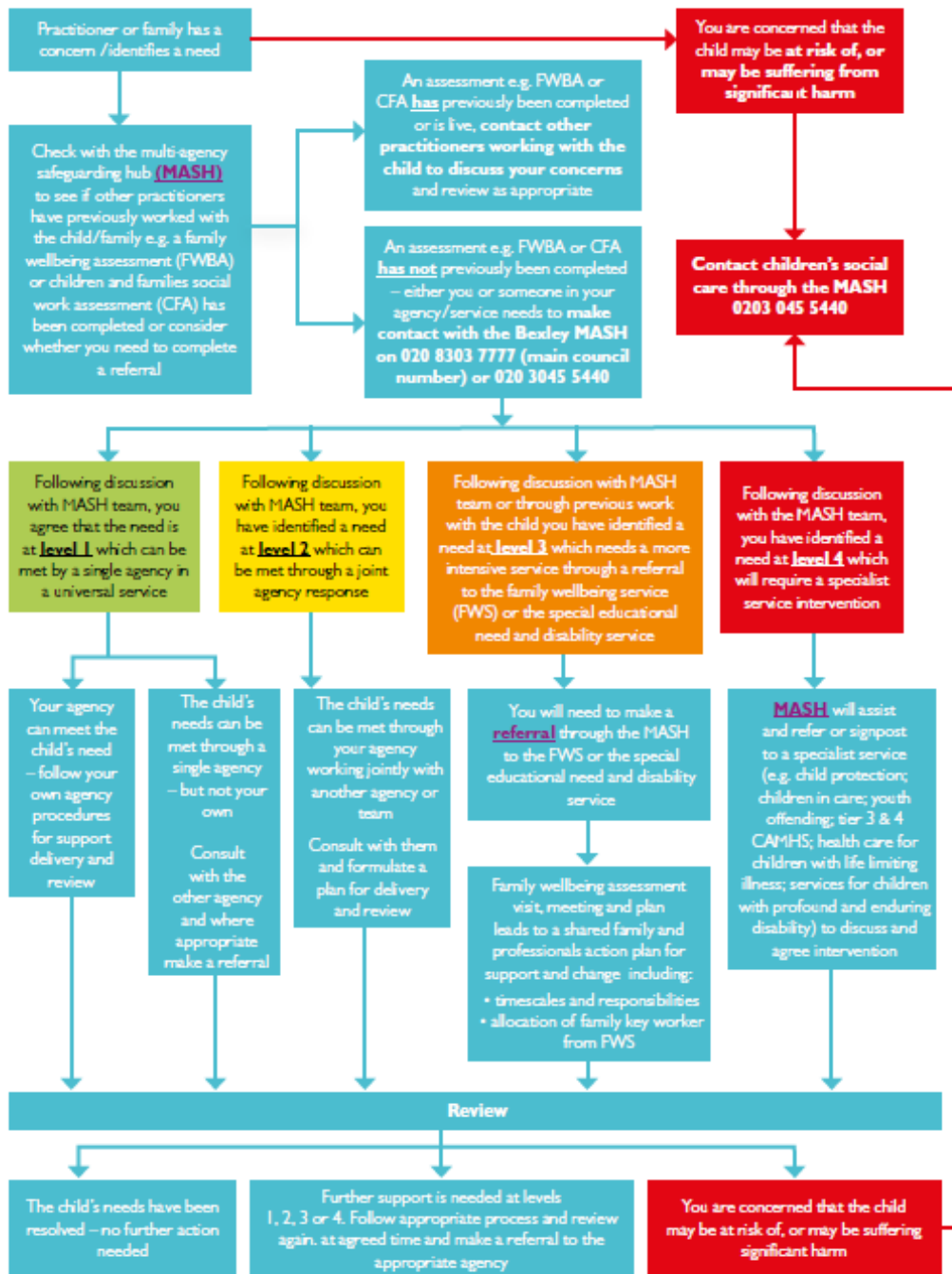
- Have I asked who makes up the family and understood the role(s) of each family member and how these relate to each other?
- Do I know everyone who lives in the household or has regular contact with the child or adult I am supporting?
- Do I have a picture of the family as a whole (this might be in the form of a genogram)?
- Have I understood all the current demands on the family and their levels of resilience to manage these demands?
- Have I considered the family's strengths and what is working well for them?
- Have I considered if other family members are in need of support or are at risk? Do I know what support the family might want?
- Have I explored caring responsibilities for any family member?
- Do I know if other practitioners are working with the family?
- Have I explored what the family's solutions to their support needs might look like?
- Have I been open and honest about my concerns as a professional?
- Have I made any assumptions about the family?
- Have I taken my concerns to supervision with my manager/team?
- Have I considered what may make a difference for the family?



Appendix 6 – Reporting safeguarding concerns in Bexley

10. Effective support at a glance

Call 020 8303 7777 (main council number) or Bexley MASH on 020 3045 5440



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Effective Support for Children, Young People and Families in Bexley

<https://bexleysafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/effective-support.pdf>

Appendix 7 – Safeguarding partnership contact details



Email: bsab@bexley.gov.uk

Website: www.safeguardingadultsinbexley.com



Email: shield@bexley.gov.uk

Website: <https://bexleysafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/>