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The Role of the Lead Professional





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The Lead Professional's role is to coordinate the support and act as the key point of contact for the family and professionals where a child does not require a social work intervention but there are additional needs to be met through more than one agency



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“The Early Help Assessment should be undertaken by a Lead Professional who should provide support to the child and family, act as an advocate on their behalf and coordinate the delivery of support services.

The Lead Professional role could be undertaken by a General Practitioner (GP), Family Support Worker, Teacher, Health Visitor and/or Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

Decisions about who should be the Lead Professional should be taken on a case by case basis and should be informed by the child and their family.”

***(Working Together to Safeguard Children,
Department for Education, 2013).***



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What are the benefits of having a Lead Professional?

The Lead Professional:

- Makes sure that there is clear and agreed communication with children, young people and families
- Helps to put one clear plan in place wherein families' views are central
- Checks to make sure progress is being made
- Keeps families involved and informed
- Makes sure that others involved in the plan are clear about their responsibilities

Key functions

The lead professional role has three core functions which can be carried out by a range of practitioners from across the children and young people's workforce to:

- Act as a single point of contact for the child, young person or family
- Co-ordinate the delivery of the solution-focussed actions, and to ensure that progress is reviewed regularly
- Reduce overlap and inconsistency in the services received

A Lead Professional is accountable to their own agency for their delivery of the Lead Professional functions. They are not responsible or accountable for the actions of other practitioners or services.

Agreeing the issues

- The Lead Professional works with the young person and their family, using the Early Help assessment process to identify their strengths and needs - as well as the problems that may be causing concern.
- Together with the family and colleagues from other agencies, they work out what needs to change, how this will happen and what it would be like if the problems were sorted out. By doing this, a plan is formed so that everyone is clear what they are doing and what is expected from the outcome of everyone's actions.

Meetings

- The Lead Professional will need to bring together those agencies that might be able to help address the needs of the young person and their family.
- When a meeting is needed with the family and other services, the Lead Professional makes sure this happens.
- The Lead Professional will make sure that everybody involved shares relevant and up-to-date information and that the priorities for action are agreed. By the end of the meeting, it is important that the family agree to the action plan and that everyone involved is clear what they will be delivering.
- It is impossible to expect the Lead Professional to support the family at a meeting, chair and take notes of the meeting. All other practitioners involved are expected to provide support to the Lead Professional to ensure that the meeting is effective.



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Who is the best person to be the Lead Professional?

- This should be someone who is already working with the child, young person or their parents and knows them well, or is about to get involved and play a major role in supporting them. Often, the worker who works with a child or young person to complete an Early Help Assessment starts off by taking the Lead Professional role, but this can change when other practitioners get involved.