

Children and Families Staffordshire

Referral Criteria and Procedure

There is an open referral process - a referral may be made by any professional or individual and self-referrals are welcomed.

Any family with children and young people aged between 0-16 years may be referred.

The service is for those families:

- experiencing difficulties that have the potential to escalate without support
- who would benefit from friendly and non-judgmental support from a trained and supported parent volunteer

Support is intended to be provided at an early stage to prevent escalation wherever possible.

Should a situation escalate to safeguarding levels an appropriate referral will be made to statutory agencies and our service will be withdrawn.

Support will be provided to those families 'stepping down' from statutory interventions where longer term support is needed at a lower level to help sustain successful outcomes and progress.

All referrals must be made on a referral form available either from the office or downloaded from the website.

The referrer must discuss the service with the family and their consent must be gained to make a referral.

Once a Referral is Received

All referrals will be considered equally and we aim to make contact with the family within 4 working weeks, this may be a telephone call, appointment letter or actual home visit.

We will undertake a home visit to make an initial assessment of the needs and wishes of the family. This will also be an opportunity to explain our service, to inquire how we may be able to help, and what outcomes families wish to achieve.

The families have another opportunity to choose to receive our support –if they decide at this stage that they do not need or want support, no further action will be taken, except to signpost them to other more appropriate services if needed.

Should the family agree to accept support an appropriate volunteer will be selected.

The volunteer will be contacted and the referral will be discussed including the level/type of help and support required. The volunteer has the opportunity to agree to provide support or not. If the volunteer agrees, a date and time will be arranged between family and volunteer to make an introduction.

The introduction will give the family and volunteer chance to meet in an informal way and discuss help and support. The family and volunteer are again given the opportunity to agree or disagree with the support. Once support has been agreed the volunteer and family arrange when and duration of the visits.

The referrer will be informed of the actions taken and the plan for supporting the family.

The volunteer will provide support to the family for up to 12 weeks according to the agreed plan before a review takes place, providing no further issues have arisen during this time.

Forms are completed with the family for the referral, initial visit and action plan.

Reviewing the Support

A review of the support will be carried out at 12 weeks unless issues have arisen in the meantime.

The review will include feedback from:

- parents/carers
- children and young people where possible
- volunteer
- referrers
- any other practitioners involved

The review also provides an opportunity to identify any further additional needs and any further or additional support that is required. This information will be recorded. A copy of the review is available for referrers with consent from parents/carers.

Ending the Support

Support may end when:

- The family has made sufficient progress and support is no longer required
- the situation escalates to safeguarding levels
- The family disengage and withdraw
- The volunteer can no longer visit and another volunteer is unavailable (in this case we aim to signpost/refer families to other appropriate services wherever possible)

The referrer will be informed of the end of support and the reasons for this.

A home visit will take place, unless the family have chosen to disengage, to discuss the overall support and service and will include feedback from:

- parents/carers
- children and young people wherever possible
- volunteer
- referrer
- any other practitioner involved

The plan will be reviewed and information about progress and successful outcomes recorded and used to improve and further develop the service.

A copy of the evaluation is available for referrers with consent from parents/carers.