



EMERGENCY OUT OF HOURS SERVICE

POLICY AND PROCEDURAL DOCUMENT

BOLTON DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

February 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this document is to describe the Council's arrangements for out of hours emergencies in the Children's & Adults Department

2. CONTEXT

2.1 Emergency Duty Team (EDT) covers all social care emergencies. The qualified social worker on duty carries out all statutory functions under children's legislation, the Care Act (2014) and the Mental Health Act. They are approved under the Mental Health Act 1983 (as amended 2007). All statutory responsibilities are listed in Appendix 1.

2.2 The social care emergencies referred generally fall into 6 categories:

- Safeguarding of Children
- Child Care
- Youth Justice
- Adults
- Mental Health
- Homelessness

2.3 EDT carry out homeless welfare duties under the Housing Act 2004.

2.4 EDT are listed in the department's plan for critical incidents.

3. PHILOSOPHY

3.1 EDT follow the philosophy of the Council in relation to the Children Act 1989 and 2014, Care Act 2014 and Mental Health Act 1983 (as amended 2007).

3.2 When an emergency occurs, either because of a new situation, or a breakdown of care arrangements there will be an assessment of risk and provision of necessary services until office hours staff are available to complete a further assessment.

3.3 The EDT social worker is available to assess social care emergencies. Priority will be given to cases in greatest need where there is significant risk of harm, in line with the department's levels of vulnerability and eligibility criteria. This includes neglect, deprivation and self-harm. EDT will respond when there is a statutory requirement, or the skills of a qualified social worker are required.

4. EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM

4.1 EDT consists of qualified and experienced social workers who, on a shift basis, cover out of hours service. **There is only one social worker on duty at any point in time.**

4.2 Cover is from 5pm to 9am during the week and on a 24 hour basis over weekends and public holidays.

Staff from mainstream teams are required to finish tasks started during office hours even if they extend past 5.00pm. The EDT Social Worker should not be asked to undertake routine visit out of hours.

4.3 The social worker is based at the EDT office, (address available via the Council Directory). They have access to Liquid Logic and PARIS IT systems. At times the EDT social worker may work from home depending on the needs of the service.

4.4 This service is enhanced on a Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday daytime and evening shifts with a Backup Social Worker on standby from a pool of daytime staff. This is based on volunteering and the rota is not always filled due to availability of daytime staff.

4.5 Health and safety requires the EDT social worker to visit with Police when there is any concern in relation to risk and safety. Also in high risk situations the EDT social worker must contact both the EDT Team Manager and Senior Manager on rota for support and advice.

5. ACCESS TO THE SERVICE

5.1 The telephone number for EDT is 01204 337777. This number is published to the public and other agencies.

5.2 Careline answer calls for EDT from 5pm to 9am Monday to Friday and from 9.00am to 9.00am weekends and public holidays. They will take messages for the EDT social worker and email the information to the social worker on duty.

5.3 When away from the base the social worker will endeavour to check in with Careline at least every 1 ½ hours. Those waiting for a response will then be given advice by Careline or an indication of when the social worker can deal with that situation. Careline staff inform referrers

when the EDT worker is likely to be able to contact them if the worker is busy with another emergency.

A Protocol, Appendix 2, has been agreed to outline this working arrangement.

6. CALLS AND REFERRALS

6.1 EDT are required to complete a log for all calls taken. This will include brief details of action taken.

6.2 Contact Proforma on Liquid Logic are completed in the following circumstances:

- On new cases
- On closed cases
- Requests for assessment or reassessment.

If a case is open to the department, then a Case note(s) is completed, and an alert sent to the Social Worker and the Team.

7. LINKS WITH MAINSTREAM TEAMS

7.1 There is a protocol for links between mainstream social work teams and EDT, see Appendix 3. This recognises that there are occasions when mainstream teams need to request involvement of EDT. The protocol explains the constraints on EDT.

7.2 It clarifies that when staff are actively engaged in a course of action, they should continue it after hours.

7.3 It requires any requests for emergency action by daytime services to be agreed with the Manager of EDT or the Senior Head of Service who is responsible for EDT. In their absence another Senior Manager in Children's Services can be contacted, and sufficient information emailed to the EDT Team Manager and EDT.

7.4 Staff are also asked to send information by e-mail to EDT to warn them of possible crisis/emergencies which may trigger involvement. Liaison/discussion may also be necessary.

7.5 There is a Senior Manager from Children's Services available on a rota basis who should be contacted if a Case Management Decision regarding an urgent matter is needed out of hours. The Senior Manager will endeavour to make a decision or liaise with an alternative manager who has a particular specialism.

7.6 Contacts/information are forwarded via Liquid Logic to the relevant team/section in the departments. If this system is not working, they will be emailed to the relevant team. The EDT worker will attempt to discuss complex referrals requiring immediate further action directly with the Team Manager or duty officer at the opening of office hours.

7.7 The worker will inform the Senior Manager on call or another Senior Manager or any member of the Departmental Leadership Team if a serious incident occurs out of hours.

8. OUT OF HOURS SERVICES

8.1 The EDT worker is responsible for child protection/safeguarding enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and 2004. He/she will co-work with the police and other agencies as appropriate. The worker has responsibility to initiate Emergency Protection Orders if necessary. They can arrange to see a Magistrate via a list of clerks available outside hours. The EDT worker can seek the assistance of the police to immediately secure the safety of a child through requesting that the police use their Police Powers of Protection (known as PPP).

The worker also has delegated responsibility to accommodate children under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 when appropriate.

The worker has access to emergency foster carers, if they are available. A list is e-mailed to EDT every Friday by the Fostering Team.

8.2 For members of the public in financial difficulties that results in an emergency EDT has a small amount of Section 17 money available. Food parcels can be sought from other establishments across the town.

8.3 The worker has responsibilities under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. He/she will act as the appropriate adult in specified circumstances when no one more suitable is available. The worker has access to the Child Action North West Appropriate Adult Scheme and there is a separate protocol available regarding this matter. These are for a young person looked after, for a young person whose parents refuse or are unable to attend the police station or cannot be contacted, for a mentally disordered young person/adult and other vulnerable adults.

The EDT social worker has access to remand foster care placements, if available, for PACE admission from police stations.

8.4 In all circumstances when a child/young person is becoming 'looked after' the worker must place a contact /case note (open cases only) on

ICS. As much information as possible should be sought to complete the Initial Placement Agreement.

For all placements the worker should also endeavour to assess risk as much as possible and ensure this is recorded. A Service User Risk Assessment should be completed. The Senior Manager on call should be informed by e-mail if a child/young person has been accommodated into care, the reasons for this or if there has been a change of placement for any child.

- 8.5** The EDT worker carries responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 to assess the needs of vulnerable adults out of hours, including the Safeguarding of Adults (Section 42 of The Care Act 2014).
- 8.6** When there is a need to organise home care services outside office hours for older people, the worker will contact the Admission Avoidance, Reablement Team or Crisis Team.
- 8.7** EDT have statutory responsibilities under the Mental Health Act 1983 (as amended 2007) for completing assessments under Section 2 and 3 of the Act. EDT workers will work in conjunction with local 136 policies to ensure assessments are carried out within the appropriate legal timescales. All workers are Approved Mental Health Practitioner Social Workers.
- 8.8** The worker can access Benjamin Court Housing Department Emergency Accommodation by contacting the Duty Manager. This is available as the worker acts as the Homeless Welfare Officer for the Local Authority under the Housing Act 2014.

9. EMERGENCY ASSESSMENT AND RISK

The team operate a risk assessment model consisting of:

- History
- Previous incidents of concern, taking note of carers and other agency staff reporting.
- Current behaviour patterns, including use of alcohol or drugs (including prescribed drugs).
- Family – do family members present any risk to the client? If so how? Or does the client present a risk to family members?
- Presentation – how does the client present now as opposed to what has been previously reported? What are the differences and how significant are they?

- Client and Family Strengths – What works well for them? How do they perceive they are able to keep themselves safe. What wider support networks are available to them.

10. COMMUNICATION

When referrals are made to EDT in relation to people whose first language is not English, the social worker has access to interpreters via the Council's approved interpreter service.

11. WORK WITH OTHER AGENCIES

11.1 EDT need to work closely and jointly with other key agencies outside office hours, in particular the Police, Health Services and Careline.

11.2 This work is supported by inter-agency protocols. These have been developed to cover work arrangements with:

- Police
- Consultant Psychiatrists and Police Surgeons
- District Medical Services such as BARDOC (Out of Hours GP Service)
- Accident and Emergency
- NHS 111 Service and NWAS
- Housing Department.

12. MANAGEMENT SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

12.1 EDT is managed by the Team Manager with oversight from the Senior Head of Service in the Social Care & Early Help division of the Department of Children's Services.

12.2 EDT are provided with individual supervision and also attend monthly team meetings. Team meetings are attended by managers and staff from relevant specialisms across the department, who attend meetings to update the team and discuss case issues. EDT staff will also receive Approved Mental Health Act (AMHP) supervision from a Senior Manager seconded and located within GMMH if practicable, or the alternative by a suitably qualified manager located within the Council. EDT will attend the AMHP forum both of which are a statutory requirement for AMHP practice.

12.3 When consultation and support is required from a Manager when on shift, the EDT Social Worker should firstly contact the Team Manager, who will liaise with the Senior Manager on duty.

12.4 The department invest in specialist regional training specifically for EDT workers and is committed to involving workers in this training.

12.5 Additional training will be available for the team when necessary eg training to assist in re-approval as AMHP's, ASW's, Looked After Children Training.

Sarah Edmunds
Emergency Duty Team Manager.
Department of Children's Services
February 2023.

APPENDIX 1

The Statutory Responsibilities of the department that the Emergency Duty Team primarily work within are the following:

Investigation of the need for an Emergency Protection Order (Section 47 Children Act 1989)

Investigation of the need to provide services for a child in need in an emergency (Section 17 Children Act 1989)

Investigation of the need to accommodate a child (Section 20 Children Act 1989)

Compulsory Admissions to hospital (Section 2, 3 and 4 Mental Health Act 1983)

Assessment under Section 136 of the Mental Act 1983 (amended 2007)

Assessment under the Care Act 2014 including the Safeguarding of Adults (Section 42, Care Act 2014).

Homeless Welfare provision (Housing Act 2004)

Assistance (Section 17 Children Act 1989)

Children and Families Act 2014

PROTOCOL

Calls for Emergency Duty Social Worker Out of Office Hours

Arrangements for receiving calls on first contact

1. INTRODUCTION

This protocol outlines the working arrangements for Careline to receive and take messages for the Emergency Duty Social Worker.

2. PRINCIPLES

2.1 Calls out of office hours for emergency Social Services will be received promptly by Careline. He/she will receive the caller's information in line with customer care standards. Information will be passed on to the Emergency Duty Social Worker for further action via telephone and also by email.

2.2 The two teams (Careline and EDT) will work jointly and collaboratively to ensure service users/other agencies receive a prompt and informative response to their request for a service. This will depend on commitment to effective joint working and good communication between the two teams.

3. WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 Careline will:

Take all calls for EDT from 5pm to 9am, Monday to Friday and from 9am to 9am, weekends and bank holidays.

3.1.1 Careline will complete a log sheet for all calls.

3.1.2 Calls for EDT:-

Sufficient information should be taken to allow the emergency social worker to assess priority and make contact with the caller.

This message should then be passed onto the social worker via telephone and then an email should be sent to the Emergency Duty Team inbox.

If the social worker is away from base and Careline are concerned that the emergency needs an immediate response, (information that a child/adult is at risk of harm) Careline must always advise the caller to contact the police.

4.2 The Emergency Duty Social Worker will:

4.2.1 Respond immediately to callers when accessible at the EDT office.

4.2.2 Keep Careline informed when leaving the EDT office and likely timescale for return.

Check messages held for them at least every 1½ hours when away from The EDT office.

Sarah Edmunds
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Feb 2023.

PROTOCOL FOR LINKS BETWEEN TEAMS WITHIN THE COUNCIL AND THE EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM

1. PURPOSE OF PROTOCOL

The purpose of this protocol is to set out guidelines to assist district teams and sections of the Council and EDT with regard to working together. It seeks to recognise that on occasions requests for work need to be made but that the EDT do operate within constraints that do not apply to other teams even when they are themselves operating out of hours.

2. CONSTRAINTS ON EDT

- 2.1** Members of EDT are on duty on their own. In difficult situations therefore, EDT are obliged due to health and safety reasons to visit with the Police and this itself can create further tensions and problems.
- 2.2** The social worker works under considerable constraints. They may have no previous knowledge of a family and limited access to information about them or views from other professionals. Simply identifying various family members may be difficult for them. They may be visiting without forewarning and at times that involves risk.
- 2.3** Also, because of their lack of previous involvements, they can only obtain a snap-shot of the situation at that point in time.

3. INFORMATION AND REQUESTS TO EDT

- 3.1** All requests to EDT for action should bear in mind the constraints set out above.
- 3.2** Where daytime staff are already actively engaged in a course of action, they should continue it after hours.
- 3.3** Requests for action for EDT should be essential and be as clear and precise as possible. They should relate to clearly-identifiable circumstances and identify appropriate courses of action.
- 3.4** Requests for action by EDT should be accompanied by full information. The requests for action should first be made to the Senior Head of

Service for EDT or another Senior Manager in Children's Services if this is not possible. Once approval is given, information should then be e-mailed to EDT Team Manager and EDT.

- 3.5** Information must be provided to EDT to warn them of possible developments or to assist them in a situation which is likely to crop up.

It is important to be clear about for how long that information is valid.

- 3.6** If there is likelihood of the need to apply for an EPO or other statutory order outside office hours, draft application forms should be prepared by legal services, in consultation with the social work team, and sent through with guidance.

4. INFORMATION FROM EDT

- 4.1** Where EDT are involved in a case, whether by request or not, it is important that information is provided back to the social worker involved, or where there is no involvement to the Integrated Front Door for children or appropriate Referral and Assessment Teams for Adults.
- 4.2** Information from EDT generally will come via Liquid Logic, or if this is not possible for whatever reason this needs to be shared by e-mail. Wherever possible, EDT should undertake to provide full information regarding the service user(s) with whom they have been involved, the cause of their involvement and any actions they have taken.
- 4.3** Wherever possible, EDT will endeavour to discuss with a manager or social worker cases they have been involved in which are particularly complex or serious. Ideally, this will be in person, or failing that by telephone.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1** This protocol seeks to address issues around the links between EDT and other teams/sections in the Council. It is not exhaustive but does seek to set out general principles and guidance.

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Children's Services
Feb 2023.