

WORKING WELL WITH CHILDREN & FAMILIES IN LANCASHIRE

This guide is for everyone who works with children, young people, and their families in Blackburn with Darwen.



BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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PURPOSE

This guide is for everyone who works with children, young people and their families in Blackburn with Darwen. It is not a standalone document and it is linked to Parts One and Two of the Working Well with Children and Families guide for practitioners working with children in Lancashire ([download here](#)).

This is a pivotal and publicly-available document linked to our Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP). The guide is particularly key for organisations including:

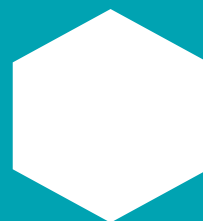
- Health
- The Police
- Local Authorities
- Schools
- Colleges
- Nurseries & Childminders
- Voluntary and peer group organisations working with children and families
- Providers of support for children and families

The guide is about families, children and young people, but it is relevant to staff working in a wide range of service areas such as adult mental health, community health, adult social care, substance misuse, probation, community safety, housing and leisure.

This guide talks about how we work with families in Blackburn with Darwen to build on their strengths and come together across agencies to put the child at the centre of our work. It is designed to ensure that we give families who are experiencing challenges the advice, information and support they need that helps them make a positive difference to their lives. In Blackburn our 7 key priorities support our offer to ensure that the right children receive the right level of support for the right length of time (see page 6).

SECTION ONE

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN



VISION FOR THE BOROUGH'S CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Approximately 42,000 children and young people now reside in Blackburn with Darwen, and Children's Services and our partners deliver a range of support through universal, targeted and specialist interventions. We use a collaborative approach to providing support through aligned services.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children will always be at the centre of the work that we undertake with children, young people and their families. The needs and wishes of each child will always be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates. The vision below recognises the importance of us being ambitious for our children and young people, but it is also appreciative of the fact that every child, young person or family may rely on us to provide advice, help and support at times in their lives:

Children in Blackburn with Darwen will grow to have a happy, healthy life and experience success and overcome challenges. To achieve this we will work with our communities, with our partners and our children, young people and their families to ensure that children get the right help at the right time by building on their strengths and the strengths of their family.

VISION FOR THE BOROUGH'S CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

The Children's Services department, together with our colleagues across the council who act as corporate parents, will work to secure the above vision by working to enable a child's own family (including their wider family) to meet their needs. To achieve this vision, we provide a range of services to support children, young people and their families across the borough in a way that is consistent with each child's safety and their physical and emotional wellbeing.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our strategic vision is set by the Service Development Board, which meets every month to consider how well we are delivering on our priorities for the borough's children and young people. This meeting is chaired by the Director for Children's Services. For 2020/21, seven priorities have been agreed upon.

Early Help

Children and young people getting a good start in life; Early Help and Support services that support delivery on a locality footprint to prevent escalation to statutory services and de-escalation as need reduces.

Delivery

Strengthened operating structure delivering quality and consistency of practice.

Commissioning

Providing the best possible placements where children and young people can thrive.

Workforce

Creating the right conditions for the workforce to excel and deliver standards of practice.

Ambitious Corporate Parents

Achieving and Aspiring - innovative approaches for 'children in our care'.

Assurance

Practice-driving systems that enable foresight, self-awareness, improvement and reduced demand.

Resilient & Engaged

Contextual Safeguarding and Adolescent Services; preparing young people and communities for the future to help themselves and each other succeed.

PRACTICE & APPROACH

The approaches we take when working with children, young people and their families are informed by recognised good practice at both the national and local level. Our senior leaders and staff have adopted both innovative and proven models of practice and embedded these into our approach.

Systemic Social Work Practice

Blackburn with Darwen Children's Services has been investing in systemic social work practice since 2019. The department has commissioned the Centre for Systemic Social Work (CfSSW) to train our staff in leadership, management, supervision and practice.

Our second cohort of staff begin training in September 2020 and it is anticipated that this investment as a social work model will continue. Relational approaches are pivotal when working with children, young people and their families to ensure a difference is made.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Awareness & Trauma Informed Practice

There is a growing recognition that early intervention and collaborative working can be instrumental in reducing trauma and the impact of ACEs. These are a complex range of stressful or traumatic experiences that children can be exposed to throughout childhood, including those that directly harm a child (e.g. abuse, neglect) and those that affect the environment in which a child grows up (e.g. parental separation, domestic violence).

Even in difficult circumstances, ACEs can be prevented. To support and nurture children and young people as they develop and grow, professionals across our partnerships have access to trauma informed training which is then incorporated into their practice.

PRACTICE & APPROACH

NEGLECT & GCP2

Neglect is the most common form of child maltreatment in the UK and is the initial category of abuse recorded in 46% of all Child Protection plans in England¹. In Blackburn with Darwen, this figure is 34%. In addition, and at a lower level, indicators are often present that may indicate a future risk of neglect for children who become subject to CAF or Child in Need Plans.

Blackburn with Darwen is committed to improving outcomes for children and families and we have implemented a Neglect Strategy setting out our approach to tackling neglect. The strategy is grounded in the culture and ethos of the Blackburn with Darwen partnership.

As such, it adheres to the following principles:

- Child-friendly practice
- Voice of the child
- Restorative practice
- Participation of parents and carers
- Preventative and Early Help response
- Holistic approach
- Effective planning and reviews

Part of this strategy is introducing the Graded Care Profile 2, in order to provide a common language through the BwD Risk Assessment, Analysis and Management Model and also through the multi-agency use of Graded Care Profile 2 as an effective tool for assessing neglect. It is an evidenced based approach that evaluates levels of parental care alongside ages and development of children. The assessment uses a graded scale (1=best 5=worst) to capture levels of physical and emotional care. This is based on Maslow's hierarchy of need. Working with parents to identify strengths as well as areas for improvement, this approach provides evidence that can inform care and intervention plans.

¹ Department for Education (2018). Children in need of help and protection: Data and Analysis. [online] Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/690999/Children in Need of help and protection Data and analysis.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/690999/Children_in_Need_of_help_and_protection_Data_and_analysis.pdf)

PRACTICE & APPROACH

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What will we do?

- Complete GCP2 with families in order to effect change and improve outcomes for children that are suffering neglect.
- Review our Neglect Strategy in 3 years and evaluate how effective it is for our families within Blackburn with Darwen.

How will we do this?

- Provide training to our workers and partner agencies in order to embed this into our working practice.
- We will use the Graded Care Profile 2 as an assessment tool that will continue to review and evidence a reduction in neglect within families.

PRACTICE & APPROACH

RISK MODEL

The Risk Model provides a way for practitioners who work with families to identify and manage need and risk at an appropriate level and ensure that children and young people are safeguarded against significant harm. It is an evidence-based approach which provides a framework that supports assessment, analysis and a risk-sensible approach to risk management.

The model ensures that practitioners are using a common language when considering risk and that all elements of the child's lived experience and their family networks are considered. It also encourages practitioners to use their professional curiosity to explore all domains within the framework for the assessment of children and their families and to formulate and test out their hypothesis as to the child's lived experience.

Practitioners gather information through discussions with families and hearing their story and also through considering research and historical evidence (actuarial means). This process involves enquiry, observation and communication with others. By identifying high risk indicators (factors which are a risk to children), underlying risk factors (factors often present in risky situations but are not themselves a risk) and strengths (factors that do not reduce risks but rather can build resilience) practitioners can make informed decisions around the response required.

This process of risk analysis involves making sense of the information gathered and evaluating the impact of the child's experience of the risk of harm whilst considering the individual and family strengths alongside support services that could reduce the likelihood of future harm.

This then allows practitioners to develop an approach to managing this risk. This is through a SMART plan which identifies that actions that will be taken, by whom and within what timescales to work to achieve desired outcomes for the child. These are based around agreed measures of identifying a reduction in the risk for the child or young person.

PRACTICE & APPROACH

RISK MODEL

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What will we do?

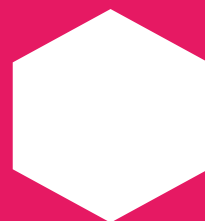
- Place the Risk Model at the centre of our decision making around interventions for children and young people.
- Use the Risk Model to complement the ongoing embedding of systemic practice across Blackburn with Darwen.

How will we do this?

- Provide training to our workers and partner agencies in order to embed this into our working practice.
- We will use the Risk Model to inform all assessments of children, young people and their families.

SECTION TWO

CONTACTS & REFERRALS INTO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE



CHILDREN'S ADVICE & DUTY SERVICE (CADS)

All contacts and referrals to Children's Social Care should be made to the Children's Advice & Duty Service (CADS). The CADS provides a single point of contact for professionals who want to seek support, advice and guidance or raise concerns about a child.

CADS accommodates our partner agencies to ensure that when appropriate, information is shared to determine any unmet need/identified risk and the appropriate level of support. Unless there is a reason to dispense with consent you should have the consent of the family to share their details and seek information, advice or guidance or make a referral to CADS.



01254 666400

All contacts and referrals into CADS should be made via telephone. Please note that CADS do not accept contacts or referrals via email.

Shared Partner Vision for Blackburn with Darwen CADS

To identify and make safe, at the earliest opportunity, all vulnerable children in our communities, ensuring that they receive the right support at the right time. This may require the sharing of information and intelligence across the safeguarding partnership.

Our motto is 'Never Do Nothing' – but how we respond to enquiries will have clear focus around safeguarding and the team will support partners where appropriate to have confidence to accept more responsibility.

For any call raising concerns about a child, we will ask for:

- All of the details known to you/your agency about the child;
- Their family composition including brothers and sisters, and where possible extended family members and anyone important in the child's life;
- The nature of the concern and how immediate it is;
- Any and what kind of work/support you have provided to the child or family to date.

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What will we do?

Receive and consider:

- When receiving a referral into CADS there will be a conversation between the referrer and one of our Social Workers to explore the concerns and an agreement will be reached with regard to a way forward.
- Receive information about children who have been reported missing from home or a care placement and ensure that this is promptly shared with the Engage Team and allocated SW.
- Manage requests for information and advice from other authorities and public bodies about families.

Gather information and make decisions in context

- When appropriate the team will bring together information including the known history from key organisations (including the Police, Schools, and Health etc.)
- Not all contacts into CADS require multi-agency information sharing, and often advice and guidance provided by the Advanced Social Work Practitioner (AP) or Social Worker (SW) is a sufficient response. Some contacts into CADS will require a multi-agency approach to decision making to consider whether statutory social work intervention is required.
- Decisions will be made based on relevant and proportionate information being obtained and reviewed.

Decide on the next step

- If the family need support – the team will consider whether the kind of support that is needed requires a formal assessment or an early help assessment.

CHILDREN'S ADVICE & DUTY SERVICE (CADS)

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What will we do?

Decide on the next step (continued)

- If the family need support due to worries about significant harm the team will send the referral to the Referral and Assessment Team for them to consider a formal assessment, however, there is an exception to this if the child has been open to the Assessment and Safeguarding Team within a 3-month period will transfer directly to this team to ensure consistency in relationship for the child.
- If the family need support because they are struggling, an early help assessment should be undertaken by the most appropriate professional, which is often the referrer. In some circumstances this assessment may be undertaken by a Children's Advice & Duty Service Support Officer (CADSSO).
- There are CADSSOs based within CADS, who can work with professionals and families to identify local services in their community that can offer help, where this could include support from Targeted services.
- If it does not require an assessment, advice will be given with regard to supporting the family to access support directly and this will be recorded.
- If the family does not want support and there is no significant harm, this will be respected.

Determine what kind of assessment is appropriate

- If a formal assessment is required to support planning with the family, this might be through a Section 47 Enquiry or a specialist assessment (i.e. from the Children with Disabilities Team) or a Child and Family Assessment (C&F assessment).

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Why will we do this?

- So that decisions about whether a family would benefit from and the most appropriate form of intervention is from social care are made in context and using the relevant information.
- To ensure that only those families who require an assessment from Children's Social Care are subject to an assessment.
- To ensure that assessments from specialist teams are facilitated promptly.
- To make sure that information about children who are missing is followed up consistently.
- To make sure that there is a clear and professional response to requests for information from others.

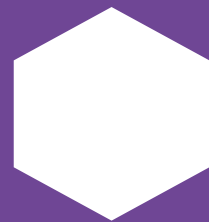
SECTION THREE

CORE TEAMS

IN CHILDREN'S

SOCIAL CARE

If you are working with children, young people and families who are known to Social Care, it can be helpful to understand how the services are designed to support them, the names of different teams, and what they do and why.



ASSESSMENT & SUPPORT OUR RAST TEAMS

The primary assessment stage should deliver an assessment to ensure families and children are well supported, including providing short term interventions to reduce harm and improve relationships during the period of assessment. This is done by the Referral & Assessment (RAST) teams.

What will we do?

- Decide what kind of assessment is appropriate.
In cases where there has been significant harm, or it is suspected and the risk is current, there will be a section 47 inquiry. In cases where it has been determined that the family needs support there will be a Child and Family Assessment.
- Assess families to make a meaningful plan with them and, if appropriate, organise support during the assessment process, reviewing progress with the family regularly.
- Coordinate the engagement of a wider partnership in the assessment and planning process if required.
- Determine next steps.
If during the assessment it is clear the family are no longer in need of support, they do not need to progress further with social care interventions. The child might be closed to the service during or after the assessment or stepped down to CAF or universal services. Clear and defensible decision making will be recorded by the Team Manager. If the family do need further support, this will usually be offered a Child in Need (CiN) plan to support them.
- Where appropriate to maximise effective relationships work with families with a Child in Need (CiN) plan for three months. The offer concentrates on strength based approaches which are outlined within this document.

ASSESSMENT & SUPPORT OUR RAST TEAMS

The primary assessment stage should deliver an assessment to ensure families and children are well supported, including providing short term interventions to reduce harm and improve relationships during the period of assessment. This is done by the Referral & Assessment (RAST) teams.

Why will we do this?

- So that the right assessments are carried out with the right families at the right time and there is a clear focus on the children and their needs.
- To ensure that families are supported through the assessment process to make changes which remove the necessity for statutory involvement.
- To reduce the number of unnecessary transfers of workers for children and families and ensure that when the plans for children and families are transferred, a clear and effective process is followed.
- To ensure that assessments from specialist teams are facilitated promptly.

Outcomes from this period of support may include 'stepping down' children and families to supportive services with clear decision-making where, following assessment and short periods of support, the thresholds for statutory intervention are no longer met.

If this is not possible, and following an assessment statutory support is required, this will be managed alongside the family through one of the following:

- A Child in Need (CiN) plan
- A Child Protection (CP) plan
- The child(ren) coming into our care

Where this is the case, the family will usually be supported by the Assessment and Social Work (AST) teams.

ASSESSMENT & SUPPORT OUR AST TEAMS

The Social Workers working with families who are being supported by Child Protection Plans will develop a professional productive relationship with the child(ren) and the whole family, using creative and evidence-based practice and direct work to support positive change alongside families that they can maintain. This work is done by the Assessment & Social Work (AST) teams.

Families will not be on plans longer than they need to be and there will be strong and visible ownership and reflective case supervision from managers. At the right time, our families will be 'stepped down' the planning process to supportive services with clear decision-making in cases where the thresholds for statutory intervention are no longer met. There will be active and effective participation in planning and service delivery from partner agencies that will be visible to the child and family.

When, despite a high level of support and intervention, the children cannot be protected from significant harm within their immediate family, a clear and timely process for the child to become 'looked after' will be followed. In most cases, children are placed with carers from within their network of family or friends who are both willing and able to look after them.

What will we do?

- Get to know a family well and ensure time spent together is purposeful and has a direct benefit for the child(ren).
- Support families to access support that helps them to improve their parenting capacity (housing, health etc.)
- Work with the family to develop a purposeful plan that they can deliver.
In most cases, this plan should start at the lowest level and be focussed on achieving change.
- Reassess the balance of protective factors, assets and threats to the family using the model of social work practice on a regular basis and reflect on progress and achievements.
Families should not stay on plans 'just in case'. When the plan outcomes have been met, the case should step down. In addition, cases should only escalate when the level or risk of harm escalates.

ASSESSMENT & SUPPORT OUR AST TEAMS

The Social Workers working with families who are being supported by Child Protection Plans will develop a professional productive relationship with the child(ren) and the whole family, using creative and evidence-based practice and direct work to support positive change alongside families that they can maintain. This work is done by the Assessment & Social Work (AST) teams.

Why will we do this?

- So that the children and families are supported to stay together and achieve good outcomes.
- To ensure that families are supported with an effective plan that they can own that helps them to make changes which remove the necessity for statutory involvement.
- To reduce the number of unnecessary transfers of worker for children and families.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The team includes Child Support Officers and a Social Worker who support the needs of children and young people with disabilities and complex health needs. The team work with children who are classed as Children in Need and the Social Worker undertakes statutory responsibility for disabled children who become looked after into the care of the local authority.

The team have an inclusive approach to children with complex needs and support them to access the same opportunities and experiences as other children. The children supported by this service can have wide and varied needs, and the team provide support to families such as the arrangement of short breaks, domiciliary care, and outreach so that they can continue to support children in their own homes. The team support children from the ages of 0-18 and there is a commitment towards supporting young people into adulthood through robust transitions planning.

What will we do?

- We will listen to children and young people with disabilities and their families to help them identify the most appropriate support for them.
- Work with other partners including education and health to ensure a coordinated plan is provided for families to have the right support at the right time.

Why will we do this?

- So that children and young people with disabilities are given the same opportunities and support in their aspirations as their peers.
- Families are supported to care for their children with additional needs at home and within their local communities.

CHILDREN IN OUR CARE

The Children in Our Care (CIOC) social work teams hold responsibility for:

- Supporting permanence planning for Looked after Children in fostering, residential and supported accommodation placements.
- Supporting children and young people placed on Care Orders at home where there are issues of safeguarding and compromised parenting requiring significant support to ensure safe care arrangements within the family home.
- A number of children and young people previously in care, who are on Supervision Orders and/or Child In Need Plans.
- Supporting private fostering arrangements
- Young people who are in supported accommodation including a number of young people who are unaccompanied asylum seekers.

What will we do?

- Make sure that children in care are living in homes where they are thriving
- Listen to the views and wishes of our children and young people and ensure that their views influence what happens to them in care.

Why will we do this?

- To enable children who are cared for are provided with safe, nurturing and supportive care to enable them to achieve positive outcomes.
- To make sure that children and young people are able to influence what happens to them and their families.
- Children and young people in care have the necessary skills and support to move into successful adult life when they are ready to leave care.

— SAFEGUARDING, REVIEW & QUALITY

The Safeguarding, Review and Quality Service are an independent service within Children's Social Care. Whilst maintaining independence, we work in partnership with the local authority and partner agencies in a collaborative way to promote and fulfil the vision of the borough.

The team of Independent Reviewing Officers and Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) work alongside professionals, children and young people and their families to ensure that our children within the borough are safe, happy and fulfilling every opportunity in life. The team's ethos is that practice within the service is child centred; with the views and wishes of our children and young people influencing their plans. As such, a restorative approach underpins our work with children young people and their families as well as other professionals.

What will we do?

The Independent Reviewing Officer will:

- Chair Child Protection conferences
- Oversee the review process for children in our care
- Ensure that all the children and young people understand and access an advocate/independent visitor where needed.
- Ensure children and young people have a voice in their plan, the services they receive and that the child's plan reflect their wishes and feelings.
- Ensure that plans are evidence based from up to date assessments and the service response reflect the identified risks and needs of the child effectively.
- Ensure that progress of the child's plan and support are timely and in line with achieving the best outcomes for that individual child. In line with their journey.
- Monitor the Local Authority's performance in relation to the children they are involved with.
- Support and challenge the local authority in line with the best interest of the child
- Create and develop positive relations with Cafcass to promote effective and seamless are planning within the court arena and beyond.

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What will we do?

The Independent Reviewing Officer will (continued):

- Quality assure the assessments, care planning and review process to improve planning, identify gaps and improve outcomes for children and young people.
- Capture the views of children and young people to influence the development of policies, procedures and service development.
- Provide relevant training to the local authority and partner agencies in line with the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP).

The Local Area Designated Officer will:

- Ensure that all allegations or concerns about professionals or adults working or volunteering with children are recorded appropriately, monitored and progressed in a timely and confidential way.
- Provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaising with the police and other agencies and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.
- Provide relevant training to the local authority and partner agencies in respect of LADO role and management of allegations within their service.

SAFEGUARDING, REVIEW & QUALITY

The Safeguarding, Review and Quality Service are an independent service within Children's Social Care. Whilst maintaining independence, we work in partnership with the local authority and partner agencies in a collaborative way to promote and fulfil the vision of the borough.

Why will we do this?

- To ensure that all our children and young people have a say in the decisions in their lives.
- To ensure that all our children feel safe and have every opportunity to achieve their full potential.
- To ensure that all our children have the right to family life.
- To ensure that all those involved with our children are accountable within their role and the service they provide to our families.
- To ensure that those working with our children and young people do so in a safe way; and where there are allegations made against a professional, these are investigated fairly.

SECTION FOUR

EARLY HELP & SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES



EARLY HELP ASSESSMENTS

The Early Help assessment in Blackburn with Darwen is still referred to as CAF but it has been developed, shaped and streamlined with parents, children and partners over the last six years. It is our underpinning tool for supporting children and their families, and ensuring that they receive the right help at the right time through a co-ordinated response.

The assessment tool is used to capture child and family strengths, and unmet needs for members of the family as well as supporting lead professionals to identify risk factors. One document is used to capture the assessment and SMART plan for a whole family ensuring that each individual's needs are captured and a plan detailed as to how these will be addressed. Whilst the needs of parents must be considered, the child/ren's unmet needs must remain the focus of the assessment.

All key documents are available at www.blackburn.gov.uk and on the Learning Platform.

Our CAF Link Workers provide advice, guidance and 'hand holding' support for front line practitioners from all partner agencies on undertaking CAFs or in moving a CAF forward that may not be making progress. The role also provides challenge to organisations who are unwilling, or refuse, to take the lead professional role. Workers will, where necessary, take the Lead Professional role to initiate the CAF until an alternative Lead Professional can be identified. The role also supports overview and scrutiny of incoming initial CAFs and TAF plans and closures, offering feedback and support to make improvements where needed.

Lead Professional Network Meetings take place quarterly, with a meeting in each of our four localities. They provide a forum for Lead Professionals to connect to other colleagues in the same locality area to share learning and experiences. The meetings also provide an opportunity to share new data, developments, training and feedback from QA activity.

EARLY HELP FAMILY SUPPORT

This team of Family Support Workers work at CAF level. The support offered by the team is driven by the CAF assessment and plan and is individualised to meet the needs of children and their wider family.

Each of the borough's four locality areas have an allocated Early Help team with a Team Leader, a named CAF Link Worker, and Parenting Worker. This means that all services and providers have access to advice, guidance and a listening ear about children and families who may need support. They can also access support with initiating CAFs, training, and case supervision where needed. The team acts as a knowledge hub for support, programmes and services that can work to support children and their families.

Where partners feel that their CAF would benefit from an intervention by a family support worker they can request this through the Team Leader or the Transforming Lives Panel.

What will we do?

- Routine ACE enquiry
- Working in the home e.g. routines, boundaries and meal times
- GCP2
- Positive activity groups/individual sessions for the children (often after school)
- Parenting programmes
- Interventions to reduce parental conflict
- Lead Professional role
- Positive activities and community involvement for parents

Why will we do this?

- So that the children and families are supported to stay together and achieve good outcomes.
- So that children and families receive the right help at the right time.

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This team of Family Support Workers work at CAF level. The support offered by the team is driven by the CAF assessment and plan and is individualised to meet the needs of children and their wider family.

Why will we do this?

- To ensure that families are supported with an effective plan that they can own that helps them to make changes.

FAMILY SUPPORT

The Family Support Team work in partnership with Children's Social Care Social workers to improve understanding of children's needs and family functioning, contributing and supporting in assessments and planning.

The team will provide a swift response to address presenting issues and needs such as home conditions, meeting young children's health needs, play, routine and boundaries for children and their families. Where younger children (under 11 years of age) are on the edge of care a discrete Family Support Team works intensively across the week, including weekends, where needed to seek to mitigate the presenting issues and prevent removal.

This work is interdependent with Family Group Conferencing (page 26) and family plans.

The Family Support Team works with a whole family approach and uses ACE-informed and restorative practice to underpin their work. The ambition is that a Family Support Worker will continue to support allocated families as they move down the continuum and into CAF, providing consistency and a sense of telling your story once.

FAMILY SUPPORT

The Family Support Team work in partnership with Children's Social Care social workers to improve understanding of children's needs and family functioning, contributing and supporting in assessments and planning.

What will we do?

- Routine ACE enquiry
- Enable families to develop problem solving skills, build resilience and achieve positive and sustainable behaviour change.
- Provide a timely response to children and families in crisis, enabling them to address and overcome the difficulties that have led to the family being at risk of breakdown, and prevent further escalation and referral to care proceedings, they will work alongside the Family Group Conferencing Team.
- GCP2
- Interventions to reduce parental conflict
- Deliver a range of evidence based parenting support programmes to contribute to and complement other aspects of work. This includes the delivery of parenting groups to support children across the Continuum of Need and Response e.g. Think Family, Henry, IY Baby, IY Toddler, Healthy Relationships, EPEC and Caring Dads.

Why will we do this?

- So that the children and families are supported to stay together and achieve good outcomes.
- To ensure that families are supported with an effective plan that they can own that helps them to make changes which remove the necessity for statutory involvement.
- Because we believe that children and young people should be supported in their family home by their families wherever possible and, if we can prevent family breakdown, we should.

FAMILY TIME

The Family Time Team work with children who are being looked after by the local authority to support them to see their families on a regular basis.

The Family Time team ensures that time spent with families is as rewarding, safe and supportive as possible. Workers provide support to children and their parents, undertake observations, and produce detailed reports to support ongoing assessment processes.

Where needed Family Time Support Workers will undertake specific pieces of direct work with children and families to enhance parental skills and expertise collect, and document information, precious moments and memories for Life Story Work for individual children.

YOUNG CARERS SUPPORT

The borough's Young Carers and Adult Young Carers service is delivered in partnership through a commission with Child Action North West (CANW).

The service provides information, advice and guidance to Young Carers who live in Blackburn with Darwen. Young Carers assessments are undertaken for all young people referred to the service. For those young people who have more complex needs, or face barriers in participating fully in the assessment process, a personalised approach is used.

The service also facilitates access to positive activities as a break from caring and support young carers in reducing their caring role.

MARYVALE

Maryvale Parent and Child Centre is a commissioned service in Blackburn that provides short-term accommodation and support to prevent vulnerable young parents and their children from becoming homeless. Maryvale works with parents to help them regain control of their lives and assists them with moving on to independent living through resettlement and aftercare support.

Access to the service is via a referral system, although Maryvale can admit a parent at short notice if they have space and can meet their needs. Parents who are referred are allocated a Key Worker who works with individuals to develop a support plan designed to address their needs. This includes their social, domestic, personal and care needs as well as the needs of their child(ren). Examples of needs covered include cooking, budgeting, general housekeeping, keeping appointments, attending clinics and dealing with other agencies.

CHILDREN'S CENTRES

Blackburn with Darwen has eight children's centres. Centres operate as a network to provide full borough coverage and to ensure that resource is deployed according to need across the borough. Whilst centres still deliver to the core purpose of Children's Centres (child development and school readiness, parenting aspirations, parenting skills, child and family health and life chances), delivery has stretched to cover a 0-11 years age range.

All centres provide or facilitate access to universal services such as midwifery antenatal appointments, access to vitamin D drops and breastfeeding support. Families can also access book/toy libraries and community café at each site. All eight centres have nursery provision on site - at six sites this is delivered directly by us, and private providers operate in the remaining two.

CHILDREN'S CENTRES

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The borough is organised into four locality areas. One children's centre in each locality operates as a 'service' hub/ base for a range early help and support services including:

- Early Help Family Support
- CAF support
- 0-19 Public Health nursing Teams (Health Visitors and School Nurses)
- Young Carers Support
- Early Years SEND support

In addition, two of our children's centres provide a work and community base for a range of child development services that are traditionally delivered in a hospital/clinical setting:

- Community Nursing and Therapies Team
- Paediatrician outpatients appointments
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapy
- Community emotional health and wellbeing services

SCHOOL READINESS TEAM

This discrete Children Centre team work on a locality footprint to deliver groups and activities to support improving outcomes for children and their families, with a particular focus on supporting children and their families to be ready to start school.

To support our ambition improving our children's readiness for school and ensure that transitions to school are smooth we have developed a school readiness framework. The framework was developed and agreed with all early years' providers, school colleagues and health teams. We have an agreed set of school readiness statements that reflect the skills and knowledge we believe children need to have in place as they move into their reception year. These statements reflect the prime areas of learning.

We have set out clear expectations with early years settings about what we mean by school ready, how to promote school readiness and how parents should be involved, engaged and supported in preparing their child for starting school.

The team provides a number of evidence-based programmes, including the following, that can be accessed by emailing parenting@blackburn.gov.uk

- **HENRY (Health, exercise, nutrition for the really young)**
The HENRY approach creates the conditions for change and to support families to adopt healthier lifestyles by combining evidence-based behaviour change models including the Family Partnership Model, motivational interviewing, and solution-focused support with the provision of information about a healthy start.
- **Chatter Chums**
Chatter Chums is a language programme designed to encourage and develop children's speaking, language and listening skills.
- **Look and Listen**
For children who need additional support before being ready to access the Chatter Chums programme, we have developed the Look and Listen programme.

To further our school readiness work we are working with our 0-19 Public Health Nursing Team (Health Visitors and School Nurses) to develop a more integrated approach to 2 year development checks and improved pathways into Children Centre groups, activities and support where developmental issues are starting to emerge.

PRE-BIRTH OFFER

In Blackburn with Darwen, there is a pre-birth offer for expectant parents that is open to parents across the Continuum of Need and Response. Our Family Support Workers work alongside expectant parents to help them to build on and develop their skills and confidence.

Blackburn with Darwen now accepts referrals at any stage of pregnancy as we recognise that the length of a pregnancy gives limited timescales for effective intervention. We want to ensure that parents can access the support that they need at the earliest opportunity.

What will we do?

- Routine ACE enquiry
- GCP2
- A minimum of twice weekly sessions, either in the home or at a children's centre, with a duration of no less than two hours per session for a minimum of 12 weeks. These sessions will feature both practical support and observational assessment.
- Interventions to reduce parental conflict
- Focus on parental capacity to change
- Contribute to assessments

Why will we do this?

- To support parents to make and sustain changes ready for their baby at the earliest opportunity.
- To support parents to create a safe and nurturing environment for their baby
- To support parents to have realistic expectations of their baby
- To support parents to engage with professionals
- To promote positive social networks and support

PRE-BIRTH OFFER

In Blackburn with Darwen, there is a pre-birth offer for expectant parents that is open to parents across the Continuum of Need and Response. Our Family Support Workers work alongside expectant parents to help them to build on and develop their skills and confidence.

We are currently implementing a new pre-birth assessment through newly developed in-house training, with the aim of developing the expertise of our Social Workers in this area.

The purpose of this work is to ensure there is a robust pre-birth assessment that identifies the areas of need and risk, informing the appropriate intervention and planning so this can be implemented as early in the pregnancy as possible. Pre-birth assessment work is held within our Social Work and Assessment teams. Where risks to the unborn baby are at a greater level, an experienced Social Worker in one of our AST teams will hold the case.

RECURRENT CARE

Through work with Research in Practice and Lancaster University, we have developed an evidence-based recurrent care support package. This work is aimed at parents who have had at least one previous removal of a child and in cases where we are progressing through the Public Law Outline (PLO).

Information about this offer is shared with parents through PLO meetings, as an offer of support post-proceedings should the outcome of a court hearing be removal at birth.

The Family Support Worker, who delivers recurrent care offer, is aligned with those who support pre-birth work. This provides an opportunity for relationship-building ahead of any recurrent care offer.

What will we do?

- Using an ACE-informed approach, the worker will work with partners to support swift and easy access to housing support, substance misuse support, emotional health and wellbeing support and sexual health (the contraception discussion).
- Provide support for any issues highlighted in assessments and psychological reports undertaken through court proceedings (if we are able to access these).

Why will we do this?

- To build resilience
- To support parents to look at community participation and contribution to support positive engagement.
- To support parents to address their issues and engage with the right services.
- To support parents to make and sustain changes and be prepared for future parenting that is child-centred.

SECTION FIVE

TARGETED

INTERVENTION

SERVICES



FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCING

Family Group Conference is a family-led decision-making process using an evidence based model. It is a transparent, culturally sensitive, solution focused and restorative process. It provides families with an opportunity to come together to make safe and achievable plans for their children.

Family Group Conferencing principles are based on the fact that families have knowledge about themselves that professionals cannot easily match and are therefore able to make better decisions in relation to themselves. This empowering process enables them to make decisions about their children by giving them the opportunity, information and support to do so. Referrals for Family Group Conference must be made with the explicit consent of parents, or person with parental responsibility, as the family's willingness to work with the model is essential. Referrals are made via the allocated Social Worker who attends a consultation session with a Family Group Conference Coordinator.

What will we do?

- Use the Family Rights Group model of delivery of Family Group Conferences to support open and honest conversations about problems within families and how children can be supported within a wider network to thrive.
- Organise the practical support for conferences and coordinate agreed plans

Why will we do this?

- So that families can come together to work with professionals to take ownership of concerns for children and make solution focussed plans to address them, including tapping in to the assets of their wider network of support.

YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE

The Youth Justice Service (YJS), sometimes referred to as the YOT, is a co-located multi-agency team. Overseen by the Youth Justice Board at government level, this is a statutory multi-disciplinary service, whose primary focus is on the needs of the child to prevent offending or reoffending.

The partnership is made up of staff from social care, education and careers services, Police, the Probation Service and local health services. The YJS works with young people at a prevention level, supporting individuals or groups identified as being at particular risk of offending in order to prevent them from entering the criminal justice system.

Through its prevention work, the YJS co-ordinates a multi agency team to support young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours. The focus of this work is to prevent young people from repeating their behaviours, avoid their criminalisation where appropriate and promote healthy relationships.

The team also work with young people who have committed a crime, supervising 10–18-year-olds who have been sentenced by a court, or who have come to the attention of the Police because of their offending behaviour, but have been diverted and dealt with outside of a formal court.

As an agency, the Youth Justice Service aims to support children/young people during any point of contact with the youth justice system, whether that be prior to a crime to prevent it occurring, when at the Police station if they are arrested, at court and for those serving sentences in the community, or in the secure estate.

ENGAGE (CSE/CCE)

The Engage team is a multi-agency, co-located team based at Greenbank Police Station. Through effective partnership working they seek to identify, support and protect children and young people who are vulnerable to, or are experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation and/or Child Criminal Exploitation.

The multi-agency team consists of staff from Children's Social Care, Police, Health and the Ivison Trust. However, wider partnership work with internal council services and external agencies is integral to the support and intervention that the Engage team provides. This includes all Children's Social Care Teams, Young People's Services, the Youth Justice Service, The SEEDS, education, housing and various third sector organisations, including but not limited to Brook and Early Break.

Each child or young person open to Engage has a dedicated Young People's Worker who is highly specialised in completing exploitation assessments and delivering trauma-informed support. This includes direct work interventions to work towards the child being safer and to ensure that effective risk management is in place. The intensity and duration of intervention is determined on the level of vulnerability, need and risk, balanced against the child's wishes and feelings, and is reviewed in line with Children's Services Care Planning.

Parents are also offered support through the provision of the Ivison Trust commissioned Parent Liaison Officer when necessary. The Parent Liaison Officer works in partnership with parents to assist in developing their understanding of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and/or Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), and how to respond effectively to it. They also help empower parents to work proactively with other professionals to ensure that their child is safeguarded.

Engage work closely with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) by screening new referrals into social care for indicators of contextual safeguarding concerns.

By their very nature, Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation are hidden crimes. Engage offer and provide awareness-raising and training initiatives across agencies, professionals and the community to raise awareness and encourage proactivity to further assist in the early identification of concerns, risk and vulnerability.

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The Engage management team are also the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for all National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referrals for Children's Services where children are identified as being victims of modern slavery. A flow chart has been agreed in collaboration with the police in supporting NRM and Children's Services colleagues can access this via the SharePoint site.

Missing From Home or Care

Engage holds responsibility for the local authority's response to children who get reported Missing from Home or Care within Blackburn with Darwen, including those children who are not currently open to Children's Social Care. Once the Police have located a child, the Engage Missing from Home Worker offers the child a Return Home Interview within 72 hours. This Return Home Interview assists to inform a wider assessment of risk in regards to understanding why a child went missing, early identification of risk, vulnerability and/or unmet needs, and also addresses strategies to prevent the child going missing again.

What will we do?

- Through effective partnership working we will identify, support and protect children and young people in Blackburn with Darwen who are vulnerable to or are experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation and/or Child Criminal Exploitation.
- Work with children, young people and their families to reduce the risk of exploitation and disrupt the activities of people who seek to exploit children.

Why will we do this?

- So that Blackburn with Darwen is a safe place for children and young people to thrive without being exploited

THE SEEDS (ASU)

The SEEDS Adolescent Support Unit (ASU) operates in accordance with statutory requirements such as the Children Act 1989 & Children Act 2004, the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, and quality standards.

The service was previously recognised as the Adolescent Support Unit (ASU). The young people accessing the service have been instrumental in choosing the name 'The SEEDS'.

"Support, Experiences, Enjoy, Develop & Succeed"

The SEEDS has the capacity to offer short breaks to five young people, including provision for one emergency. The age range is predominantly 11 to 17 years on admission for access to both outreach and short breaks. Young people and their families referred to The SEEDS are generally regarded as 'in need'. The SEEDS is offered alongside other relevant services and supports parents and/or carers and works alongside other relevant family members.

An integral part of our approach is to recognise that each young person exists as part of a network of relationships involving parents, family and other significant people. Young people and their families and carers who receive support from The SEEDS are involved in the development of the service and we empower young people, families and/or carers to feel that their opinions are respected, listened to and acted upon. This strengthens the quality of communication and relationships with both staff and other professionals.

The service supports young people through times of trauma to make better life choices that help support young people's development and help families to stay together and be happier together. The ethos and culture of The SEEDS is founded in relationship based practice, which promote the development of meaningful relationships between staff and young people. Young people are at the centre of the service. The SEEDS provides young people with positive short breaks, outreach and various educational experiences.

At its core, the aim of our service is to support the personal and social development of young people through informal education. Its distinctive characteristics include the voluntary engagement of young people, young people's active involvement in developing provision, the use of informal education as the primary method of youth engagement, and an approach to provision that is responsive to young people's abilities, preferences and availability. In addition, young people are able to gain ASDAN accreditations for short courses they achieve when engaging with specific aspects of the service.

THE SEEDS (ASU)

The SEEDS Adolescent Support Unit (ASU) operates in accordance with statutory requirements such as the Children Act 1989 & Children Act 2004, the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, and quality standards.

For young people to achieve their potential, they need to feel valued in order to support them to raise their aspirations, build in resilience and develop a self believe that they can achieve. All direct 1:1 work that is undertaken with young people is based upon enabling young people to develop positive relationships with both the staff supporting them and their peers, family and carers. Young people need to feel that those supporting them are invested in supporting them to achieve positive outcomes.

SEEDS staff members recognise the importance of having 'quality time' with the young people; this is reinforced through the case structure. Relationships are based on the core values of mutual respect and good parenting, respectful to the values of privacy, dignity, independence, choice, rights and fulfilment. This is the priority of the SEEDS approach.

The SEEDS continues to develop and embed an Adolescent Hub to create a therapeutic environment where key partners and multi-agency professionals can work collaboratively to support the needs of adolescents. The Adolescent Hub will provide holistic support to young people, parents & carers.

What will we do?

- Use a relationship based approach to support young people and their families and/or carers to stay together and be happier together.
- Intensive practical, emotional and educational support thorough outreach and short breaks.

Why will we do this?

- To ensure young people achieve their full potential, feel valued and raise their aspirations, build resilience and develop a self belief that they can achieve.
- Positive experiences can set young people on the path to success, overcoming challenges relating to self and/or family and circumstance.

SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE

As a local authority, we acknowledge that young people are increasingly at risk of becoming homeless and that there are a number of factors that influence this risk. We work in partnership with housing support in order to provide appropriate accommodation for our homeless young people.

Young people coming out of custody

Young people in custody are overseen by the Youth Justice Service and are individually case managed with an identifiable worker. The resettlement process commences at the point of entry into custody, with plans being formulated to ensure a successful return to the community upon release. This covers many aspects of the young person's life, but places particular emphasis upon them having suitable accommodation and access to appropriate education, training or employment.

All remanded young people are allocated a Social Worker who attends relevant meetings in custody and helps to plan for potential release or sentence. We have two young people currently remanded to custody aged 16 and 17 - both have an allocated Social Worker.

18-25 year olds that present as homeless

When a young adult presents as homeless, an assessment is carried out that looks at the their housing circumstances, the options available to them, and any existing support services that the person is involved with. If there are any identifiable unmet needs they are referred onto the relevant services to support these needs e.g.

Asylum-seeking children that present as homeless

Only 1 new unaccompanied asylum seeking young person has arrived in the last 12 months and, in total, we have 20 children and young people with this status, all of which were under 18 years old upon arrival. 17 of the 20 are now over 18 years old, and one is 17. The remaining two were very young siblings (10 and 11) when they arrived in 2016, and they remain looked after in long term matched foster placements. All unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are age-assessed on arrival and supported by the Leaving Care service. The 20 children and young people with this status travelled from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Eritrea respectively.

SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE

As a local authority, we acknowledge that young people are increasingly at risk of becoming homeless and that there are a number of factors that influence this risk. We work in partnership with housing support in order to provide appropriate accommodation for our homeless young people.

What will we do?

- We will work with partner agencies such as housing need to assess and support young people.
- CADS will engage to reintegrate young people back into education or training
- In emergencies, accommodation will be found the same day
- Support and guidance will be offered
- We will strive to use appropriate accommodation and not use B&Bs
- Work with other teams across Children's Social Care and the Youth Justice Service to coordinate planning, risk assessment and risk management.
- Work alongside young people and families to prevent breakdowns and homelessness.

How will we do this?

- CADS aims to make a decision within 24 hours. If the outcome of the referral is to progress for Child and Family Assessment this would usually be completed within 10 working days.
- An Advice and Consultation Social Worker will be allocated to advise each young person of their rights and entitlements.
- Nightsafe provides emergency overnight accommodation via the night shelter and support for young people to move on.

SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE

As a local authority, we acknowledge that young people are increasingly at risk of becoming homeless and that there are a number of factors that influence this risk. We work in partnership with housing support in order to provide appropriate accommodation for our homeless young people.

How will we do this?

- Young people in custody are overseen by the Youth Justice Service (YJS) and are individually case managed with an identifiable worker.
- Blackburn with Darwen has good resources for homeless 16 and 17 year olds, including a mediation service and access to the SEEDS, which supports young people and their families where there is a risk of homelessness.
- The SEEDS helps to repair and build relationships between young people and their parents / carers to prevent home circumstances from breaking down.
- We support young adults (18-25 years) by working alongside other services such as Nightshelter, Canterbury House, Islington, Salvation Army and Union House.

SEND INCLUSION OFFER

Every child, whatever their needs, has the right to participate fully in their community and to have the same choices, opportunities and experiences as other children. This includes the opportunity to make local friends and to access play, leisure and recreational facilities in Blackburn with Darwen.

Children with disabilities and their families suffer from social exclusion, often as a result of a combination of issues, including poverty, segregation, discrimination and inadequate provision of support services. Children and young people with a disability are considered vulnerable and at risk. Blackburn with Darwen has signed up to the 'Every Disabled Child Matters Charter' which ensures we uphold the framework of effective ways of working.

The SEND Inclusion Project has been delivering services for children and young people in Blackburn with Darwen for over 18 years. The project provides a high quality provision for children and young people and works with the whole SEND range – with projects tailored to meet the needs of children and young people with both additional and complex needs.

The term-time offer provides evening and weekend opportunities for children and young people with SEND to access activities and support in a traditional youth club environment.

Over the holidays, the provision contributes to the council's short break agreement – being that the offer is shaped around full-day provision from Monday to Friday. This helps staff to develop relationships with the children and young people in attendance, who benefit from an opportunity to take part in a range of positive activities. Families benefit from this offer as the consistent scheduling enables them to plan their days and weeks effectively, and it allows parents and carers time to carry out non-caring duties, promoting their wellbeing.

The Project advertises its schemes and weekly clubs through the council's Disability Links Register although this does not mean that a child or young person who was not registered would be excluded from accessing provision. The Blackburn with Darwen Local Offer also brings together helpful and useful information for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families. The Local Offer provides information on services across education, health, social care, the voluntary and private sector, leisure and recreation, and preparing for adulthood. The SEND Inclusion project forms part of the Local Offer and is advertised on the website, available at www.bwd-localoffer.org.uk

TARGETED YOUTH SUPPORT (TYS)

Targeted Youth Support (TYS) is a voluntary participation service designed to address the needs of vulnerable children and young people aged 8-19 in Blackburn with Darwen by offering them tailored intervention and support.

Children and young people are referred into the service via the referral panels listed below.

- **Children's Services Adolescent Panel**

This is a weekly panel that supports children and young people who are already open to Children's Social Care to access further intervention and prevention support.

- **Transforming Lives Panel**

This panel supports requests for intervention, prevention and support across all ages and takes in cases referred in via schools, Children's Social Care, the Children's Advice & Duty Service (CADS), our VCF partners, the Police and teams in Adult Social Care.

The Targeted Youth Support (TYS) team works with some of Blackburn with Darwen's most challenging and vulnerable young people. The programme helps vulnerable young people by assessing their needs as soon as possible and develops tailored interventions to prevent their problems escalating. This often means working with young people who may not meet traditional thresholds for statutory or specialist services, but who are at risk of escalating and entering the youth justice system or the care of the local authority without our help.

This work includes young people who reside in deprived neighbourhoods and live in poverty. Issues supported include :

- Continuously missing from home
- Children on Child Protection Plans
- Teenage pregnancy and sexual health
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Mental health issues
- Persistent absence from school
- NEET
- Low self esteem
- Behavioural problems
- Poor support network
- Reducing vulnerabilities
- Risk of homelessness
- Children in Troubled Families
- Substance and alcohol misuse
- Poor emotional, social & coping skills
- Children in need
- Youth offending and re-offending
- Learning difficulties & SEND
- Chaotic family lives
- Health related issues
- Poor aspiration
- Child Criminal Exploitation
- Poor family support
- Grooming/CSE

TARGETED YOUTH SUPPORT (TYS)

Targeted Youth Support (TYS) is a voluntary participation service designed to address the needs of vulnerable children and young people aged 8-19 in Blackburn with Darwen by offering them tailored intervention and support.

The TYS service aims to improve the outcomes for each young person through:

- Developing an individual support plan that highlights the young person's issues and challenges, aspirations, the wishes of their family, and those that are concerned about their well-being, based on an assessment of the needs identified.
- Visiting them at home early on in the programme and maintaining relationships with parents and/or guardians throughout.
- Offering 1-to-1 support and focused group work activities.
- Coordinating and attending multi-agency meetings to identify and respond to concerns (TAF, CIN, CP etc.).
- Offering information, advice and guidance and positive activity to improve wellbeing, increase confidence and develop positive relationships.

Intervention Team

- Predominantly works with children and young people at CoNR 3 & 4
- Smaller caseloads to support crisis management and improve capacity to support children, young people and their families with high needs
- Works more closely with CSC/SEEDS/ENGAGE/YJS

Prevention Team

- Predominantly works with children and young people at CoNR 2
- Larger caseloads that support group engagement sessions and enable the service to support more children and young people
- Works more closely with Universal provision to support step down/up planning

FOSTERING

The Fostering service consists of two teams. The mainstream fostering team is responsible for assessing, recruiting, supervising and supporting foster carers, whereas the permanence team focuses on the assessment of connected carers and Special Guardians, and Regulation 24 assessments.

In addition, the mainstream team also undertake a family finding role in order to achieve permanence for children and young people who are in need of stability and consistency of care within a foster family, whereas the permanence team also support planning while working closely with our Assessment and Safeguarding Teams.

What will we do?

- Focus upon the recruitment of more foster carer households in order to place more children in our care in local, foster family placements.
- Offer a support package to foster carers that enables them to meet the needs of children and young people in our care, and equip them with new skills, training and therapeutic support from our Revive Team.
- Have permanence for children and young people as their focus; from long term foster placements, Special Guardianship Orders and connected carers.
- Work collaboratively with our Assessment and Safeguarding Social Work colleagues to ensure that the needs of children and young people in Blackburn with Darwen are met, and that short breaks fostering is provided to support placements and for those on the edge of care.

Why will we do this?

- To ensure that children and young people are placed within, or in close proximity to Blackburn with Darwen, where possible and achievable.
- To ensure that children and young people grow up in a supportive fostering family, or that they are placed with connected carers to promote their identity and stability.
- To ensure that Blackburn with Darwen foster carers have relevant training, skills and expertise along with a robust support network to enable them to meet the long term needs of children and young people in their care.

ADOPTION

The Adoption Service for Blackburn with Darwen is provided by the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), Adoption Now. The RAA is a partnership with five other North West local authorities - Oldham, Tameside, Bury, Bolton and Rochdale.

Adoption Now undertake recruitment, assessment, pre and post Adoption support for children in our care with a Care Plan of Adoption and their prospective adoptive families.

The function of Adoption Panels for all six local authorities is coordinated by the RAA.

What will they do?

- Guide prospective adopters through the assessment process, offer training and pre and post adoption advice and support.
- Support adopters through the approval panel and matching journey.
- Provide therapeutic support before during and after the adoption process, and provide post adoption involvement.

Why will they do this?

- To enable children to leave care and achieve their Care Plan of adoption and permanence.
- To ensure that children are carefully matched with adoptive families and that preparation training is robust and supportive.
- To ensure that adoption support does not end at the point of placement; post adoption support is crucial to achieve positive, long term outcomes.

REVIVE

The Revive Team consists of two Psychologists, Mental Health Practitioners and a Play Therapist offering therapeutic and emotional well being support for children in our care, parents, carers and placements.

The focus of the team is largely around children and young people in our care, however children on the edge of care are also supported and Play Therapy is a core offer. The team work closely with foster carers, parents, our own residential home, Adolescent Support Unit (more commonly known as The SEEDS), and professionals.

What will we do?

- Undertake Consultations led by Psychologists and Mental Health Practitioners, offering advice support and clinical expertise.
- Undertake assessments of children and young people to provide clinical recommendations and therapeutic input.
- Provide direct sessions with children and young people to support their emotional well being and mental health needs.
- Work closely with other professionals, and foster carers to support placements and establish a plan of intervention.
- Provide therapeutic advice and support to residential staff around issues such as self-harm and children's mental health

Why will we do this?

- To provide crucial direct work and therapies for children in our care and on the edge of care, to promote their emotional and mental health.
- To assist with placement stability; offering advice, strategies and interventions for foster carers and residential staff.
- To ensure a timely and swift response for those children, young people and their parents/carers where therapeutic and psychological assessment and input is required.
- To provide an easy to access support package for Blackburn with Darwen foster carers and to respond at times of crisis and placement disruption.

LEAVING CARE

Ensuring that we are ambitious Corporate Parents for our care leavers is one of our key priorities. The Leaving Care team works with our care-experienced young people to provide them with the support needed to make a successful transition into adulthood encompassing accommodation, finances and more.

All care leavers are assigned a Personal Advisor when they turn 16 and have an allocated care worker post 18. Personal advisors review Pathway Plans (PWP) with young people to ensure that they make a successful transition into adulthood, particularly in relation to financial entitlements, accommodation, health, wellbeing and emotional resilience.

What will we do?

- Include care leavers in decisions about you and planning for their future
- Ensure that all care leavers live in suitable accommodation
- Support care leavers to apply for apprenticeships within the council
- Provide a one-off 'Setting up Home' allowance of up to £2,000
- Provide additional support when required e.g. cold weather payments
- Introduce the 'Moving On, Moving Up' programme with care leavers to support their preparation for adulthood.
- Regularly review the finances of Care Leavers

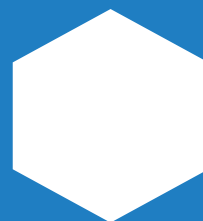
Why will we do this?

- To help care leavers develop belonging and a sense of purpose
- To encourage care leavers to look after their physical and emotional health
- To support engagement in work, study or training and learning new skills
- So care leavers can access safe housing or extension of foster placements etc.
- So care leavers are able to leave care when they are ready to
- To encourage care leavers to nurture positive relationships and build links to their communities, thereby building their confidence and support networks.

SECTION SIX

PARTNERSHIP

WORKING



GO2 DRUG & ALCOHOL SERVICE

Go2 are a confidential service that supports young people, up to the age of 25, with drug and alcohol use. This support is delivered on a one to one basis, in groups or in the form of education and information sessions in schools, colleges, youth clubs and other young people's services.

Referrals can be made by others or the young person can refer themselves via telephone, Facebook, Instagram, email or our website. The Go2 team work flexibly and can arrange the sessions to be delivered digitally or face-to-face using educational settings and community buildings. Home visits are available and are assessed on need and risk prior to the visit.

An assessment is completed with each young person and a care plan and risk assessment is formulated from this and shared with the young person. The content of the sessions can include education and information on drugs and alcohol, staying safe, reducing harm and risk caused, reduction plans and building resilience.

We pride ourselves in working in a trauma informed way and work closely with partner agencies to ensure the best package of care is provided to the young person. Safeguarding issues are reviewed weekly with the Team Leader. There is no maximum time that Go2 can support someone for. Opportunities to volunteer and be a peer mentor are also available.

What will they do?

- Work with young people, up to age of 25, around drug and alcohol use.
- Deliver educational sessions to young people in a variety of different sessions.
- Deliver training to professionals in the Blackburn with Darwen area.

Why will they do this?

- So that families can come together to work with professionals to take ownership of concerns for children and make solution focused plans to address them, including tapping in to the assets of their wider network of support.

THE WISH CENTRE

DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE

The Wish Centre is a specialist domestic abuse service offering support to victims, perpetrators, and children. We offer a crisis intervention service consisting of safe refuge accommodation as well as a helpline that is able to support practitioners with advice and can also offer support to victims.

Victims can self-refer by contacting us on 01254 260 465 or info@thewishcentre.org or be referred by an agency. Every referral is triaged and allocated to a specialist worker who will offer advice and support, if an incident has taken place then a risk assessment is completed.

Safety and support planning is done with the victim once the level of risk and need has been established. If the level of risk is high then a referral is done to Marac. Our practitioners work in partnership where ever possible and take part in strategy discussions, attend conferences and core groups and provide an input if domestic abuse is present in a family that is living in the area we are delivering services in, including Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire.

The interventions offered also include therapeutic programmes for victims, perpetrators and children/young people. The programmes offered include: AIM 7 Recovery Toolkit for victims, Make the Change for perpetrators, Parachute programme for adolescent to parent violence, Young Recovery Toolkit, Expect Respect and Helping hands for children and young people.

What will they do?

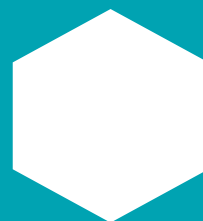
- Work with victims, perpetrators and children. Where possible offer a whole family intervention to reduce risk.
- Offer refuge accommodation - we have 14 units consisting of flats and houses.
- Support practitioners to work with families where domestic abuse is taking place

Why will they do this?

- We want to ensure that people in our communities live their lives free from abuse

SECTION SEVEN

PARTICIPATION



PARTICIPATION

All children and young people have the right to have their views, wishes and feelings taken into account when decisions are made about their lives. This right is protected under Article 12 in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and all agencies have a duty to comply with this right.

In Blackburn with Darwen, we acknowledge the role children and young people can play in shaping service delivery and design and we empower them to use their voice to influence decision-making and bring about change. To this end, we have split our participation efforts into two streams - a participation strategy for our vulnerable children and young people such as children in care and care leavers, and a generic participation strategy for the population.

“Participation enables us to come together and make decisions that have a positive influence, by using our energy and passion we can influence decision makers”.

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN VOICE GROUP NOVEMBER 2024

“It’s important we get involved because adults don’t know how we feel or what we need, they just think they do!”

YOUNG PERSON, BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN

Blackburn with Darwen employs a Participation Officer and a Participation worker who work both with universal and targeted youth voice and participation projects, both of which have clear links to democratic services and youth participation to ensure the same opportunities are available to all. Participation is also facilitated through the Youth Forum and other events/channels.

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What will we do?

- Ensure children and young people are given opportunities to have a voice on issues that matter and that these voices are championed by all adults.
- Ensure that Looked After Children, Care Leavers and care-experienced young people have the opportunity to have their voices heard through participating in age-appropriate VOICE groups facilitated by the Participation Officer.
- Ensure that VOICE groups have the opportunity to inform their corporate parents of what is working well and what we need to do better, as well as involvement in the development of key services.
- Enable children and young people to engage effectively with key decision makers ensuring that their voice is being listened to by inviting a representative from our Looked After community being represented on the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group and Corporate Parenting Executive Board.
- Ensure all our children and young people have an equal opportunity to be involved in Youth forums in order to influence the council's democratic decision-making process and influence local decisions and shape and design services.
- Ensure all our children and young people have the opportunity to be involved in the assessment of services in order for the service to be inspected by the Young Inspectors.
- Ensure the local authority continues to support and develop opportunities to improve participation of children and young people e.g. training in interview skills and the Young Inspectors programme.
- Support children and young people to participate in a range of age-appropriate activities which will allow them to become active citizens.
- Encourage children and young people to develop projects and campaigns on issues that matter to them and their local communities.

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Why will we do this?

As a result of developing and delivering a borough-wide participation strategy and programme:

- Children and young people will become much more engaged in their communities through volunteering and civic engagement.
- Children and young people will be able to take part in a range of activities at a local, regional, national and sometimes international level.
- Children and young people will be provided with opportunities to develop themselves personally both now and for life.
- Children and young people will be supported to become critical thinkers.
- Children and young people will develop key transferable life skills.
- Children and young people will be involved in key decision-making processes including service design and delivery and recruitment of key personnel.
- Children and young people will understand that their voice does matter and that they can bring about change even in the smallest of ways.
- Children and young people will be able to meet their peers (who are also looked after) in a safe space and share experiences.
- Children and young people will be able to make informed life choices and decisions both in the short and long term.
- Children and young people will use their lived experiences to raise awareness of the issues that they are passionate about.

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Voice Groups & Care Leaver Forum

Care-experienced children and young people are encouraged to share their views through groups which are facilitated by our Participation Officer. The 3 groups that currently run are Junior Voice (8-12 years), Senior Voice (13-18 years) and a Care Leaver Forum (18-25 years).

Each group provides this group of young people with a space to develop their voice and an opportunity to inform the council of what is working well, what we could do better, and how they, as service users, would like to be involved in the development of our key services.

“We have the chance to give a voice to the young people throughout the borough and allow them to shape their surroundings. Being in this position allows me to take on feedback from other young people and make a positive difference for a better future”

Zainab Shah BwD Youth MP 2024 - 2026

Participation & Youth Voice

Young People’s Services deliver a number of weekly sessions through which young people can express their views and concerns including the Youth Forum, an initiative that enables young people to take part in the council’s democratic decision-making process to influence local decisions and shape and design services. A Youth MP and two Deputy MPs are at the helm of the Youth Forum. Every young person aged between 11 and 18 is eligible to vote in the annual Youth elections with voting taking place in secondary schools and colleges etc.

Members of the Youth Forum meet on a weekly basis and these sessions are facilitated by our Participation Officer. Each year, members also attend six regional Youthforia events where they meet with other Youth Councils from across the North West to discuss and debate issues

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Committees & Boards

A care-experienced young person sits on the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board. Participating in this decision-making body enables the representative to ensure that the council is supporting our looked after children and care leavers as much as we possibly can. Youth Forum representatives also attend and participate in the quarterly Children and young People's Scrutiny Committee, and the monthly Executive Board. Taking part in such meetings allows the representatives to inform and influence the decisions that affect them and their peers across the borough.

Make Your Mark Campaign

The Make Your Mark campaign is the largest democratic process for children and young people aged 11-18 in Europe. Young People's Services facilitate this each year in all of our high schools, colleges and youth organisations. Young people vote on ten different issues and the top five nationally are then debated in the House of Commons by Youth MPs from across the UK to decide the top two issues. These then influence the strategy of the UK Youth Parliament.

Annual Takeover Challenge

The BwD Youth Forum also facilitate the Annual Takeover Challenge event, which attracts around 100 young people each year from across Blackburn with Darwen. The event is led by young people for young people. Young people decide on the topic each year and enlist key professionals to support, including guest speakers and facilitators on their chosen topic.

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Consultations

Youth Forum members participate in consultation work for various organisations to gather the views and opinions of young people in the borough to improve and shape local services.

Young Inspectors

The Young Inspectors project in Blackburn with Darwen has been developed to enable young people to have a voice and is focused on giving young people the opportunity to inspect services they use and give critical and constructive feedback to services, projects, funders, organisations, or bodies that provide services to young people in the borough. Furthermore, youth inspections will also enable those involved in forming policies affecting young people, with relevant and up to date information on how to improve their services.

Involvement in Staff Recruitment

All key personnel recruited into Children's Services must undergo a youth panel as part of the recruitment process. This is to enable young people to be involved in the decisions that will ultimately impact them. Young people are provided with training on conducting interviews and are supported through the process by the council's Participation Officer.