

## **Multi-Agency Thresholds Document (MATD)**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To provide an update on progress on the implementation of the Multi-Agency Thresholds Document (MATD) - Link for document:  
[http://www.wiltshirepathways.org/UploadedFiles/Multi-Agency\\_Thresholds\\_v6.pdf](http://www.wiltshirepathways.org/UploadedFiles/Multi-Agency_Thresholds_v6.pdf)

### **Background**

2. The Multi-Agency thresholds Document (MATD) was distributed to schools and other partner agencies in July 2011 to provide a framework for integrated working within Children's Services and to provide guidance on whether children and young people's needs should be met in universal, targeted or specialist services. The implementation of the MATD is overseen by the Integrated Processes Group – a subgroup of Wiltshire's Children's Trust Commissioning Executive. The MATD covers early support within universal settings, the role of Multi-Agency Forums (MAFs), completion of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the role of the Gateway Panel. It also includes a protocol covering the interface between Social Care and the CAF to ensure that there is effective step-up/step-down between targeted and specialist services.

### **Main Considerations for the Council**

3. A Single Agency Referral Form (SARF) was introduced when the MATD was published in July 2011. A range of educational support services, integrated youth services and community health services such as Speech and Language Therapy can be accessed through the SARF when a single service is required to meet a child or young person's needs.
4. Multi Agency Forums (MAFs) bring together practitioners who work with children and young people in a locality to discuss how best to work together to support individual young people identified as needing additional help. When the MATD was published, there were MAFs operating in 16 community areas. This academic year, with the development of a new MAF in Tidworth and plans to launch one in Warminster plus discussions underway in Mere and Tisbury, there will

be MAFs in every community area of the county (although it is currently unclear whether a formal MAF is still operating in Melksham).

5. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a national tool to support early identification of a child/family's needs that cannot be met within universal services. The form is completed when a child/young person's needs are not well understood or the help of more than one service is required and always with the consent of the parent (or young person if appropriate). A coordinated response in the form of a Team around the Child (TAC) is organised by a Lead Professional. This brings the relevant professionals and parent and child together to agree what needs to change and how that progress will be measured. All CAFs are registered and tracked via the centrally coordinated CAF Register. Appendix 1 provides an example of the data report that is produced on a monthly basis to look at CAF activity and also the number of Single Agency Referral Forms (SARFs) sent to the central coordination team. This data is considered by the Integrated Processes Group at its quarterly meetings. The number of CAFs opened per month is relatively steady.
6. The CAF Team provide support to the CAF/TAC process, including working with localities via the MAFs, providing support and quality assurance to lead professionals and practitioners via a duty service, providing training on CAF and effective integrated working, and chairing complex TAC meetings. The CAF Team are currently undergoing a service review which will extend the scope of the support they provide and increase their capacity from 1.8 ftes to 4ftes with a post supporting each of the 4 hubs in Wiltshire: north, south, east and west.
7. Integrated working peer reviews, which look at the quality of engagement of services in individual CAFs/TAC and the impact on outcomes for children and young people, are now taking place in partnership with each local MAF. This involves the review of anonymised paperwork associated with local cases against a set of agreed standards. Each review brings together local colleagues from schools, health and early years to work together. By the end of this academic year 17 peer review exercises will have taken place in community areas across Wiltshire. The results of the peer reviews are fed back into the CAF/integrated working training. To date, the key findings are that there should be more focus on outcomes rather than actions to be undertaken and that the voice of the child/young person and parent(s) needs to be strengthened in developing action plans.
8. The Gateway Panel was put in place to progress 'stuck' CAFs, i.e. where the lead professional is having difficulty in meeting the needs of a child either through not being able to identify appropriate services or lack of progress following local TAC reviews. The Gateway panel currently operates fortnightly. Its scope is being reviewed to include access to a range of family and parenting support services, including the recently commissioned Action for Children intensive family and parenting support service. The Gateway Panel will help Wiltshire to track the support

provided to Wiltshire's children and families in line with the Government's Troubled Families Agenda.

9. The MATD includes a protocol setting out how Children's Social Care should work with the CAF team to ensure that support is provided at the most appropriate level and families do not slip through the net between targeted services and Children's Social Care. The implementation of the protocol is being monitored and we are aware that more work is needed to ensure that there is a consistent 'step down' process from Children's Social Care to the CAF Team and that this is properly recorded on CareFirst. It is expected that 'step down' will improve when the CAF coordinators move to be line managed within the Referral and Assessment Team in a few months' time.
10. As part of our Ofsted Safeguarding Improvement Plan, we are working on the consistent application of thresholds and will be reviewing the MATD in the next couple of months so that we can be confident that it supports good decision-making for all children and young people, including in cases of potential neglect.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

11. A key purpose of the MATD is to support and strengthen consistency of practice and use of referral pathways across all partner services represented on the Children's Trust so that children, young people and families have equality of access to services.

### **Risk Assessment**

12. No immediate risks have been identified in this assessment of progress on implementing the MATD. The recent Ofsted inspection stated that the use of the CAF was well-embedded in Wiltshire.

### **Legal Implications**

13. There are no legal implications.

**Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director**

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### **Background Papers**

Wiltshire's Children's Trust/Local Safeguarding Children's Board Multi-Agency  
Thresholds Document

**Appendices**

CAF Report March 2012.xlsx

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