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This booklet will tell you more about how the service works, as well as describing how a key worker can support families and carers. However, if you would like more information about the Norfolk Key Worker Service please do not hesitate to contact us. We would also welcome any comments or suggestions you might have.

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**SEND Local Offer [www.norfolk.gov.uk/send](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/send)**  
**A one stop shop for all the information you need about special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Norfolk**

You can receive help with queries about NHS services from

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service**

Telephone: **0800 088 4449**

Email: **pals@nchc.nhs.uk**

(Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)



If you would like this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact **01603 697320**

Author: This document was produced by Norfolk Key Worker Service, part of Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust.

Date of recent review: May 2017

## Introduction To The Norfolk Key Worker Service

Families of disabled children and young people often need to see a whole range of different health and care professionals, for a variety of reasons, at different stages and times of the child's life. Some families and carers can feel overwhelmed by the many different agencies, organisations or people they may have to deal with; others may not be aware of all the services and support on offer to them.

The main aim of the **Norfolk Key Worker Service** is to work together with families, to ensure that they can access all the support and services they need by providing a single point of contact and continuity through key working. Key working is included in one of the 10 principles of the **Early Support** way of working, which aims to improve the delivery of services for disabled children, young people and their families. **The Norfolk Key Worker Service** has been developed in line with the Early Support approach, which has informed the Section 19 Principles of **The Children and Families Act 2014**.

More information about **The Children and Families Act 2014**, as well as practical information and Early Support resources, can be found on: [www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/earllysupport](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/earllysupport)

The key worker service works closely with all of the organisations families may need to deal with, including children's services, charities, hospitals, providers of short break care, schools and GPs, to ensure that they are working together to meet the needs of the child and family.

Families can ask any of these professionals to refer them into the Norfolk Key Worker Service for further advice and support, or they can contact the service directly and 'self refer'.

\* Note: When a young person is transferred into adult health or care services the Key Worker service comes to an end.

### Who is the service for?

The Norfolk Key Worker Service is offered to disabled children and young people, from birth to age 18 (19 if in a complex needs school), who:

#### **Are registered with a GP within greater Norfolk**

#### **Have complex health needs**

These children/young people have severe health conditions requiring ongoing health intervention and need support to carry out activities of daily living

#### **and/or who have a high level of need**

These children/young people have a severe learning and/or physical disability and need support to carry out activities of daily living

#### **AND**

#### **Already see at least three specialist health or care professionals from at least two different agencies (organisations)**

These professionals may include a therapist, social worker or a home visitor from organisations such as Norfolk County Council Children's Services (Education or Social Care), NHS children's services, housing services or voluntary services.

# The Key Worker

## A rewarding role

Many people recognise that being a **Key Worker** is extremely rewarding. The Key Worker Service provides ongoing support and information about training for people who wish to become Key Workers, and professionals see it as an important part of their day to day work with families as well as being part of their professional development.

Key Workers receive:

- ◆ Regular information about training opportunities, supervision and feedback to further develop their role
- ◆ Administrative support, in particular with multiagency reviews
- ◆ Help in sourcing information about services and resources

## What does a Key Worker do?

The real experts about a child or young person's care needs are their parents/carers. A Key Worker does not take over that role; they are there to work in partnership with families, as part of a trusting relationship; to identify the strengths and needs of family members and to enable and empower.

Key working can be thought of as a set of **functions**. The key worker is the central point of contact for a family but these functions will also, at times, be undertaken by other professionals or members of the family. How a Key Worker works will change to suit the needs of the child and family, and that is discussed and agreed between the family, the service and the Key Worker

## Key working functions

The key worker may:

- ◆ Have regular contact with all members of the family / carers to establish a trusting relationship and provide **emotional support**; enabling and empowering the child, young person and their family to make decisions by helping families to build their confidence and be in control of the choices open to them.
- ◆ Offer **practical support**; for example working together to make the best use of the Early Support Resources, or acting on behalf of the family (advocating) when asked to whenever possible, and supporting by mediating, or breaking down any barriers that may form between families / carers and organisations
- ◆ **Provide information and specialist support** to ensure parents/carers have the information they need about a child's disability and/or conditions, treatments and available services, in a format which they find useful. Help families understand how the health, care, education and voluntary organisations work for them, and to access the services their child/young person needs. The key worker may assist with making referrals into new services; helping to set up first contacts between a family and a service, sharing information with professionals.
- ◆ Help with **coordination** and **planning and assessment** by promoting good communication between organisations and the family, and by supporting a joint planning and assessment process. Be a single point of regular and consistent contact for the child, young person and family. The key worker may help organise multiagency meetings, coproducing a Family Service Plan (with family/professionals), with ways forward for the child and family.

## Who are Key Workers?

A Key Worker can be...

### **A health or care professional already working with the family**

The most common way a person becomes a Key Worker is by the family suggesting one of the health or care professionals they already see to become their Key Worker.

With the help of the Key Worker Service, if that person agrees, they will receive regular support and information to ensure that they can do the very best job that they can for the family and carers, with everyone agreeing what is expected.

### **Another health or care professional**

The Key Worker Service can also help a family to 'find' a health or care professional to be the key worker. Again, everyone must be in agreement and support is given.

### **A parent / a carer or someone close to the family**

As experts on the needs of the child / young adult, many parents, family members or carers may choose to take on the role of Key Worker themselves and they are equally offered support by the service.

## How it all comes together

After being referred to the Norfolk Key Worker Service, the **Key Worker Coordinator** will meet with the parent / carers at a place to suit them - often at their home - so that together they can:

- ◆ Discuss key working and how the service works and what the family's priorities and expectations are.
- ◆ Discuss who might be the family's Key Worker and decide whether a **Multiagency Key Worker Planning Meeting** is needed and which health and care professionals should be invited
- ◆ Discuss whether the child / young person will come to meetings and how their views can be included. This might include using videos, photos and artwork

The Coordinator will contact the suggested Key Worker to discuss the functions, to check whether they can fulfil these, and to outline the support and training available to them. If they feel they can't become the key worker, the Coordinator will discuss other options or suggested Key Workers with the family / carers.

Once a key worker is in place:

- ◆ The Key Worker and family / carers will complete the **Key Worker Service Agreement** together so that everyone is very clear of what can be expected
- ◆ The Key Worker Service lets all health and care professionals who work with the family know who the Key Worker is and gives them the Key Worker's contact details
- ◆ All Key Workers will receive ongoing training and support meetings with the Coordinator

## Reviewing The Key Worker Arrangement

To make sure everything is working well, the Key Worker arrangement is routinely reviewed as part of a multiagency key worker meeting. But at any time the family / carers or the Key Worker can also ask for a review.

If at any time the family / carers decide that they no longer need the support of the service, they can either let the Key Worker know directly, or they can contact Key Worker Service Coordinator.

The Coordinator will also liaise with families / carers during times of long term absence by the Key Worker, due to sickness, maternity leave, etc. The Coordinator will work with the family to find a replacement Key Worker if needed.

When a young person leaves children's services to use adult services, the key worker service will come to an end.

It is important that families and key workers are able to give feedback and are involved in the ongoing development of the Key Worker Service, so questionnaires are sent out from time to time. The questionnaires are anonymous and it is up to families to choose whether or not they want to fill them out. Families and key workers can also contact the coordinator at any time if there is anything they want to raise or discuss.

## Multiagency Key Worker Meetings

Sometimes the professionals involved with a child / young person, along with the family, are called 'The Team Around The Child' (TAC).

Having a meeting – a **Multiagency Key Worker Meeting** - involving everyone in that team, can be a good way to share information, make sure that everyone understands what everyone else's role is and to ensure a coordinated plan is agreed. Families don't have to have a meeting if they don't feel this would help. If the family would like a meeting, this is organised according to the wishes of the family.

It is a chance to discuss what the most important issues are and to think about possible solutions to any problems and can be a regular opportunity to ensure that the child's complex needs are being met and to look ahead to plan for the next steps for the child. This might include planning for school or nursery, planning for that young person moving into adult services or looking at short breaks choices.

The discussion and decisions made at the meeting are written up into a **Family Service Plan**, so that everyone knows what the next steps are, what needs to be done, who will do this and, where possible, how long it will take.

There may already be meetings concerning the child / young adult, for example to review short breaks services. And so to limit the number of meetings families and professionals have to go to, the Key Worker Service will invite all the professionals to use the Key Worker Meeting to carry out these reviews where possible.

The Key Worker Service supports Key Workers with the meeting planning, the administration involved and chairing meetings.

See **Multiagency Meetings** leaflet for more information.

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Date of recent review: May 2017