



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 multi-agency 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 multi-agency meetings, coproducing a Family Service Plan (with family/professionals), with ways forward for the child and family.