

***MULTI-AGENCY PLANNING (MAP) MEETINGS  
IN SCHOOLS***

***Guidance on using MAPs as a way of meeting  
additional needs and promoting inclusion in  
Extended Schools through collaborative and  
partnership working***

# ***MULTI-AGENCY PLANNING (MAP) MEETINGS IN SCHOOLS***

## **Context**

This paper puts the current good practice within many of Wandsworth schools into the context of the Every Child Matters agenda and the Children's Act 2004 and suggests ways of developing existing processes further to promote effective multi agency working in schools.

The 'five outcomes' of the Every Child Matters agenda are more likely to be achieved if processes are in place that enable the efficient, coordinated, targeted and effective use of teachers and other professional and practitioner groups that work with children and young people and their families. The following guidance is intended to provide a simple, yet adaptable model of working applicable to all types of school and educational institution. It proposes a framework for bringing together relevant staff within a school as well as appropriate staff from support services working with the school. The process outlined incorporates both in-school referral panels which are now used in many Wandsworth secondary schools and in-school multi-agency reviews which have been trialled in some primary and secondary schools. The process could be a logical extension and enhancement of the referral panels existing in some schools adding to this process on a once or twice termly basis to promote further multi-agency working.

The model of working outlined here is referred to as a Multi-Agency Planning (MAP) meeting and is based on a solution focused approach.

## **The aims of MAPs are to:**

1. Provide a forum to consider the most appropriate action for pupils for whom the class teachers need additional help.
2. Provide a forum for resolving problems and concerns and for planning strategies in relation to meeting the additional needs of individual and groups of pupils.
3. Provide a forum to ensure effective communication between the professionals within the school who are involved with meeting pupils additional needs e.g. SENCo, Inclusion Co-ordinator, Lead Behaviour Professional, Child Protection and Children Looked After Co-ordinators, Extended Schools Co-ordinator and Learning Mentors;
4. Provide a forum to plan using cross service expertise (within and outside the school) in relation to children who need support in addition to that available in school i.e. those for whom use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) might be appropriate and those whose needs have already been assessed within the CAF;

5. Identify when more than one additional service needs to be involved and therefore when a lead professional needs to be identified and to confirm who the lead professional should be.
6. Provide a forum to plan for the transition of vulnerable children for whom special support has been in place in the early years to ensure effective continuity of support as the child settles into school and planning of support across early years and school services;
7. Provide a forum to plan for the transition of vulnerable young people for whom special support has been in place in the school to ensure effective continuity of support as the young person leaves school.
8. In addition MAP meetings should;
  - Increase the capacity of schools to manage the needs of pupils in collaboration with other professionals;
  - Develop the use of solution focused approaches to tackle issues being raised and promote a process model;
  - Develop collaborative problem solving approaches to delivering School Self Evaluation process and to achieve Every Child Matters and Common Assessment Framework outcomes;
  - Ensure training and modelling for new staff;
  - Build the confidence of staff in schools;
  - Increase collaboration between integrated multi agency Programme in the early years and schools.

### **Solution Focused approach:**

Solution focused models have been extensively developed over the past twenty years and all attempt to prevent professionals and those they work with from becoming preoccupied (and sometimes overwhelmed) by presenting problems. Instead, far greater attention is paid towards identifying what is working successfully and how further desired outcomes (solutions) can be achieved using, wherever possible, the strengths and resiliences of those involved. This approach lends itself particularly well to working with children and young people and can be applied equally to a wide variety of professional and client consultations. Solution focused approaches are already used in a number of Wandsworth schools at various levels of meetings and work with children.

### **Strategic and school system level consultations**

There is now substantial evidence that many pupil needs can be most effectively met through group or whole school interventions, rather than individual approaches. Such interventions could range from generating a project to counter bullying, introducing Circle time, the supervision of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), setting up parents groups, Curriculum and Professional Development (CPD) and training for staff and many others. Commissioning and/or coordinating external agencies to work with the school on issues such as those outlined above can be

undertaken as a MAP Meeting and may also stimulate new and fruitful partnerships between agencies.

### **Organisation of MAP meetings**

MAPs are run and planned by the school and time-tabled on a regular basis over the school year as described above. In almost all instances meetings would take place at the school. Agendas should be sent out in advance by the school to those expected to participate. Meetings work best if chaired by a member of school staff, and with effective time management procedures in place. Consultation outcomes may be minuted in the form of agreed action points, noting also if any work from external professionals has been commissioned, and circulated to those who attended.

The earlier that planning takes place for the admission, settling in and transition of pre-school children receiving targeted support through Sure Start, Children's Centres of Family Assessment Centres, the more effective that transition will be and the likelihood of problems will be reduced. Therefore MAP meetings focusing on younger siblings of children in school and on families that have indicated the school will be their preferred choice, should take place involving their 'early years' lead professional, other professionals and practitioners at the earliest practical point. This will help to clarify and prioritise...

- When the child will start school
- What sort of place will be needed and offered (e.g. full time)
- Their support requirements during transition
- How early years support will operate around a child in school
- How school resources will be used.
- The relevant details from the CAF (if one is in place) and family care plans already in place.

These steps will also ensure there is no likelihood of a child identified as having additional needs becomes subjected to permanent, fixed term or informal exclusion arrangements.

### Who may be invited to the meeting?

Anyone who can make a contribution professionally at a casework or consultative level e.g. Classteacher, BEST BIP, EP, EWS, SW, ISS, Connexions, Paediatrician, CAMHS, Learning Mentors etc.

However as a guideline only professionals relevant to a specific meeting need to be invited.

Anyone invited can raise pupil or school issues at a multi-agency planning meeting.

### How is the meeting run?

- Prepared agenda (sent out in advance)
- Chaired and minuted by school
- Agreed outcomes
- Held termly or more frequently depending on school circumstances as negotiated within school and with external professionals.

### What might happen in the meetings?

- Problem solving / generating solutions in complex cases
- Strategic planning (individual / whole school)
- Feedback from previous interventions
- Highlighting of training needs
- Consideration of pre assessment CAF checklist
- Consideration of completed CAFs prior to submission
- Review of existing CAF work
- Agreeing in which cases a lead professional is needed and whom is most appropriate

## MAP Multi Agency Planning Meetings

### What could be the outcomes for the child, the school and the community?

- School based project work
- Promotion of inclusion and inclusive practice
- Whole school / community interventions
- Increasing schools' confidence to meet needs
- Increased capacity of schools to manage the needs of pupils in collaboration with other professionals
- Ensure training and modelling for new staff
- Build the confidence of staff in schools
- Develop the use of solution focused approaches to tackle issues being raised and promote a process model
- Develop collaborative problem solving approaches to delivering SEF, ECM and CAF outcomes.
- Agree most effective use of external agencies (working separately or collaboratively) in relation to particular cases and issues prior to next MAP meeting
- Commissioning external agency involvement (Linked to CAF completion)
- Further multi agency work

## **Questions about MAP meetings.**

### **1. *How often is it best to have these meetings?***

This will depend on the schools needs but some examples are provided below:

Some schools may have internal meetings to look at individuals and systems and these may be extended to include MAP meetings on a regular basis (e.g. ½ termly).

Some schools may just implement MAP meetings on a term basis

### **2. *Who should come?***

Anyone who can make a contribution professionally at a casework or consultative level (however professionals only relevant to the specific meeting – need to be invited.) The following list is not exclusive or exhaustive.

E.g. Classteacher, BEST-BIP team, EP, EWS, SW, ISS, Connexions, Paediatrician, CAMHS, Learning Mentors etc.

Some people are likely to be core members e.g. EPs, BEST-BIP team, EWS. Other professionals, i.e. school nurse, CAMHS, SS are likely to be invited only to relevant meetings.

### **3. *Should governors attend these meetings?***

Generally this would not be appropriate unless the SEN or Safeguarding governors wished to attend occasionally as part of their responsibilities. .

### **4. *Can parents come?***

Parents should be informed regarding concerns the school have and that the school may wish to seek advice of other professionals. It is not appropriate for parents to attend these meetings but an outcome may be a CAF process is initiated (which involves parents) or a network meeting called.

In all cases, parental / carer discussion should proceed in parallel with any professional consultations that are taking place – increasingly this may link to the completion of the Common Assessment Framework.