

TAS FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Professionals

1. What is the Team Around the School (TAS) approach?

Team Around the School (TAS) is a collaborative, early intervention model that brings together education staff and Multi-Agency professionals to identify, discuss, and respond to emerging needs affecting children, young people, and families.

The aim is to provide support at the earliest opportunity — preventing escalation into higher levels of need or statutory intervention.

2. What is the purpose of TAS?

The TAS approach aims to:

- Improve communication and joint working between schools and services
 - Ensure timely support for children, young people, and families
 - Reduce duplication and improve coordination of interventions
 - Build the school's capacity to manage lower-level needs in partnership with agencies
 - Support early help and inclusion priorities
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3. Who is involved in TAS?

A typical TAS group may include:

- School staff: Headteacher, SENCO, safeguarding lead, pastoral staff
 - Local authority representatives: Early Help, Attendance, Domestic Abuse advisor
 - Health services: School nurse, CAMHS, mental health support teams, Health visiting
 - Lewisham Youth Services
 - Police or youth offending teams (as appropriate)
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4. How does the TAS process work?

1. Regular Multi-Agency meetings are held on set days each term and held on Mondays.
2. The school identifies children, young people, or families needing additional support and brings them to the meeting (with appropriate consent) Please note -: Families do not attend these meetings but do receive minutes back.
3. Relevant professionals share information, discuss concerns, and agree an action plan.
4. Actions are allocated to appropriate services or individuals.

5. What types of concerns can be discussed at TAS?

Please refer to criteria page however overarching support heading below are not exhaustive-
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- Emerging or low-level safeguarding issues
 - Attendance and punctuality concerns
 - Emotional wellbeing or mental health needs
 - Family or parenting difficulties
 - Behavioural issues or risk of exclusion
 - Social or environmental factors impacting learning
- The focus is on early help, not crisis intervention.

6. How does TAS link to Early Help and other processes?

- TAS supports the Universal Early Help framework by identifying when an assessment or plan may be needed.
- It ensures the right level of support is provided without delay.
- TAS complements — rather than replaces — existing safeguarding, SEN, or referral pathways and any information collated can be taken by attending partner to complete referrals to in house services where appropriate.

7. What are the benefits of TAS for professionals and families?

For professionals:

- Better understanding of roles and services
- More coordinated and efficient responses
- Shared responsibility for outcomes
- Reduced duplication and clearer communication

For families:

- Earlier, joined-up support
- Clearer pathways to help
- Improved trust between school and agencies
- More positive, sustainable outcomes

8. What is expected of professionals attending TAS meetings?

Professionals should:

- Come prepared to share relevant information (in line with GDPR and consent)
 - Contribute ideas and actions to support identified pupils/families
 - Follow through on agreed actions promptly
 - Feedback outcomes at subsequent meetings (where agreed)
 - Maintain a solution-focused, collaborative approach
 - Ensure the referral form was completed with the family and consented to. If consent has not been obtained, then ensuring the referral does not make any persons within the family identifiable.
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9. How is consent managed?

- Parental consent (or the young person's, where appropriate) should be obtained before a case is discussed at TAS.
 - Schools and professionals explain the purpose of the meeting and how information will be used. This referral form should be completed with the family so they can clearly support in the information shared, and any discussion held at the TAS will be minuted and provided back to the family.
 - Information sharing follows local safeguarding partnership and GDPR guidance.
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10. How can schools or professionals get involved?

- Contact EHCFamilyThrive or Family Hubs website to find TAS schedule and book in.
 - Contact your Early Help Coordinator (EHC) to discuss joining or referring where you are unsure whether the family meets criteria.
 - Schools can request support from EHC if they want to establish or strengthen TAS processes.
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11. How does TAS differ from Team Around the Family (TAF)?

TAS (Team Around the School)

Focuses on multiple pupils or families via the school setting

Strategic and preventative

Identifies and allocates support

Family are not in attendance

TAF (Team Around the Family)

Focuses on one family's plan

Case-specific and intensive

Coordinates interventions under a single plan

Family (and children where appropriate) are in attendance

Both approaches can work together also to ensure the right support at the right time.

12. Who coordinates TAS meetings?

Typically, TAS meetings are:

- Hosted virtually therefore no one school is required to Host.
- Facilitated by the Early Help Coordinator (EHC)
- Supported by agreed minute-taking and action-tracking systems to monitor progress – on most cases the EHC will take minutes unless otherwise agreed.

1 For more information please contact:

 EHCFamilyThrive@lewisham.gov.uk

Further FAQs regularly asked by Partner agencies-:

1. We already offer many other types of support how does this differ?

- TAS is designed to offer early help and support before more serious or complex needs arise avoiding having to access FFCP (MASH) and remove barriers or worries around the idea of speaking with SW's first.
- It's a more collaborative and coordinated approach than a single agency working in isolation.

2. The form is long, and we don't always have time to complete it?

- The TAS form duplicates all key questions required for most services that accept referrals and the Signs of Safety model when chairing TAFs therefore not only does it allow us to have a holistic picture and reduce the need for families to consistently repeat their stories but If the family consents to an onward referral, partners/lead professionals can just pull the information, also if the TAS doesn't resolve the issues and there are still outstanding grey areas we can use the current information to build on a TAF or if there are other worries and consent is gained then the case may be referred to Children's Social Care for a more in-depth assessment which we then can use all the information from the referral.

3. What if I have concerns about a child's well-being?

- If the situation is more complex, you should consider whether a TAS meeting is appropriate. You can seek advice from the Early Help team or other relevant professionals.

4. I made a referral to Family Thrive and it was rejected because it states I need a TAS – is this true?

- There is currently transitioning and new languages being used across services – one criteria point for Family Thrive is for **school attendance/engagement, undiagnosed SEND or neurodivergent identified needs, a team around the school (TAS) has been held prior to referral**. However, if you have had a Team around the family meeting and been liaising with all professionals prior then please be very clear on your referral into FFCP – We also recognize that a TAS is held 2x a term therefore referrals cannot wait for this period. If you are finding you are having consistent difficulties, please do reach out to the EHC team and/or Family Thrive so we can try to support with any barriers.

Key points to remember:

- The TAS approach is designed to be proactive and preventative.
- It emphasizes the importance of collaboration and communication between different agencies.
- The focus is always on supporting the child and family to achieve positive outcomes.
- Every case is very different therefore before booking in for the TAS slots please contact the EHC team so we can discuss different examples and how this will look for you and your setting.