

Think Family

Further Information

- CHSCP and CHSAB [Think Family Guidance](#)
- CHSCP [Training](#)
- CHSAB [Training](#)

Introduction

A 'Think Family' approach means that practitioners (working with children, young people and/or adults) are alert to and identify the wider family needs which extend beyond the individual they are supporting. Using a Think Family approach helps secure better outcomes for adults, children and families by coordinating the support and delivery of services from all organisations.

What is a Family?

The word family can mean different things to different people. Different communities and cultures will have different notions of what family means to them and this is not binary. Families can include an extended network of relatives and friends, this is often dynamic. Explore the networks of children and adult to identify sources of support as well as potential risks. Be professionally curious and think the unthinkable.

The Think Family Checklist - Practice and Supervision Tool

Use the [Think Family Checklist](#) when reflecting on a case or during supervision to make sure you've covered all you need to.

What You Can Do - Continued

- Be assertive and authoritative in identifying risk, responding to it and challenging people's behaviour.
- Engage in direct work with families to learn from them what they want to change, what are their aspirations, what are the issues that concern them, in addition to issues that may have been raised by others.
- Proactively engage with other agencies that are working with the family and ensure that everyone is clear on their roles and responsibilities.
- Work in a proactive, flexible and pragmatic way to ensure that children and adults do not fall between services and are not left at risk, particularly when agencies no longer have a role and are 'stepping down' the family's case to universal services.
- Understand how a person/family experiences their identity, rather than making assumptions around this. Explore diversity and differences with reference to race, gender, sexuality, culture, age, disability and class.
- It is always better to report concerns than do nothing, so if you are worried that someone is being abused, neglected or harmed, please contact local services using the details provided [HERE](#).



Who should be Thinking Family and When?

Whatever your role and whichever client group you engage, you should always be thinking about the needs of all family members and significant others (and the potential risks they might pose). It is especially important to consider the context of risk and potential harm when working with families who have children and there are additional needs in the family. Examples of additional needs can be found [HERE](#).

What You Can Do

- Work with the individual to understand who their family is, and which family members or significant others should be included as part of any assessment and planning. Explore the role played by [fathers or male carers](#) and identify whether there is anyone else in the family dynamic that requires support, including carers.
- Understand legal duties in responding to children in need and adults at risk. This means that any concerns about children are acted on and referred in line with the London Child Protection Procedures and any adults safeguarding concerns are referred in line with the Pan London Adult safeguarding procedures.
- Exercise professional curiosity - question and explore the information provided by families, rather than just accepting this at face value.
- Effectively communicate and engage with families.