



One minute guide

Therapeutic Social Work Team

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What is the Therapeutic Social Work Team and who is it for?

The Therapeutic Social Work Team (TSWT) is Leeds Children's Services' innovative response to promote the emotional well-being of children and young people who are looked after ([guide](#)), living in kinship care ([guide](#)), subject to child protection plans ([guide](#)) or subject to a [supervision order](#).

The team works with children and young people up to the age of 18, or to 25 if the young person is a care leaver ([guide](#)).

The TSWT does not work with children subject to Child in Need plans (unless children are placed with kinship carers and would otherwise be in care). Support for these children and young people should be sought within localised cluster ([guide](#)) services or directly from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (assuming their threshold is met) through the [Leeds MindMate Single Point of Access](#).

The TSWT is staffed by experienced social workers many of whom hold additional therapeutic qualifications. The team also benefits from clinical psychology input.

Why are children and young people referred?

Children and young people may be referred if their difficult, early life experiences are significantly impacting on their emotional well-being.

This might include:

- Severe abusive or neglectful experiences (physical, emotional or sexual harm);
- Abandonment and loss;
- Parental substance or alcohol misuse;
- Domestic Violence; and / or
- Multiple placement breakdowns

The kind of symptomatic behaviour which might be routinely seen includes:

- Extreme dysregulation – children struggling to manage their emotions;
- Acting out (aggression) or internalising (withdrawal) behaviours;
- Regulatory difficulties (eating, toileting or sleep disturbance);
- Self-harmful behaviour ([guide](#));
- Sexualised or harmful sexual behaviour ([guide](#)); and / or
- Problems with attention, concentration and impulsivity.

What do they do?

The team offers therapeutic interventions to help children, young people and their carers overcome the impact of abuse, trauma and/or neglect. The TSWT is a city wide service, located in their east Leeds base and easily accessible by public transport from the city centre, although much of their work takes place in the community. A range of services are offered including:

Direct therapeutic work with children, young people and their families and carers (including others in their network). This includes: play therapy, family therapy, art psychotherapy, attachment therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy;

Fostering Surgery for all carers of Leeds children and Special Guardians (carers ring direct to make the appointment) to discuss any behavioural concerns they have;

Life Story Clinic to support social workers undertaking life story work with children and young people (social worker rings direct to make the appointment). Life Story work is about helping looked after children understand their life experiences;

Consultation to local authority Children's Homes;

Two group parenting programmes for carers of Leeds children and [Special Guardians](#); the evidence based [KEEP programme](#) and [Nurtured Heart Approach](#) group; and

Training and consultation to professionals, including social work practitioners and schools.

How are referrals made?

The child's social worker or personal advisor (for care leavers) is welcome to ring one of the TSWT team managers to discuss whether the service is appropriate. A referral form needs to be completed (via Frameworki) - [guide](#), with the consent of the child, young person or family. The social worker must also seek agreement from their team manager and service delivery manager.

When a referral is received, it is screened by one of the TSWT team managers, and if accepted, the social worker is invited for an initial consultation to discuss the case in more detail and begin to plan an offer of the work, where indicated. Where the referral is not accepted this is explained and advice and information offered about more relevant services.

Want to know more?

The Team Managers are Jan Hext and Katie Wrench
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The team can be contacted on 0113 3781800 for more information