



Functional Map Troubled Families practitioners

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Using this guide

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1. What is a functional map, and who is it for?

What is a functional map, and who is it for?

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What is a functional map?

A functional map is a description of the significant functions of a role. The map consists of a set of statements describing the functions of the role. It begins with a key purpose statement, and then breaks down into a series of strands describing the various functions in increasing detail.

What is a Troubled Families practitioner?

‘Troubled Families practitioner’ covers roles involved in supporting families under the government’s Troubled Families programme.

Troubled Families key workers are usually family support workers who take on a lead role for the family. Their role is to manage or grip the family’s problems, coordinate the delivery of services, and use a combination of support and challenge in helping families to change their behaviour.

What is a Troubled Families practitioner?

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‘Troubled Families practitioner’ covers roles involved in supporting families under the government’s Troubled Families programme. This refers to the expanded Troubled Families programme, from April 2015.

In April 2012, the Troubled Families Unit at DCLG launched the Phase One Troubled Families Programme, with the aim of ‘turning around’ the lives of 120,000 families with multiple and complex needs in England. At its core was the desire to achieve an overall shift in public expenditure from reactive service provision, based around responding to accumulated acute needs, towards earlier intervention via targeted interventions, where problems can be addressed before they escalate.

The Troubled Families programme was expanded from April 2015 to enable local authorities to work with up to 400,000 more families. Families are eligible for the expanded programme if they have two of the following six headline problems:

- Parents or children involved in crime or antisocial behaviour
- Children who have not been attending school regularly
- Children in Need or subject to a child protection plan
- Adults out of work/at risk of financial exclusion, or young people at risk of worklessness
- Families affected by domestic violence or abuse
- Parents or children with a range of health problems.

What is a functional map, and who is it for?

What is a functional map?

What is a Troubled Families practitioner?

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The key worker approach which has developed encompasses a range of functions, many shared across the country, which are currently being mainstreamed into family support services, and the work of other statutory and voluntary support agencies.

The functional map captures and presents these functions, with recognition that it cannot be wholly comprehensive, and that regional and individual variances will exist.

What is a functional map, and who is it for?

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Functional maps are used to inform training, standards and qualification development. In addition, they can be used as a tool to support the following:

- Job design and evaluation
- Recruitment and selection
- Skills audits and training needs analysis
- Structuring learning programmes
- Performance reviews
- Comparing and contrasting functions of similar roles with different titles
- Mainstream, embed and sustain relatively new roles
- Provide a detailed understanding of the function of a role.

What is a Troubled Families practitioner?

How was this functional map developed?

What is a functional map?

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Where a role is relatively new or not fully understood, a functional map can also be helpful in supporting service planners, managers, human resources staff and practitioners to:

- Understand and establish roles
- Construct staff support and development processes, including induction and supervision
- Performance reviews and continuous professional development
- Guide personal reflection on practice.

What is a Troubled Families practitioner?

How was this functional map developed?

How was this functional map developed?

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The Troubled Families Practitioner Functional Map provides a detailed breakdown of the features of the role. It has been drawn from desktop research and detailed analytical activity with practitioners and practice leaders across England, and with policy leads through:

- **Expert reference group:** involving seven practitioners, lead support staff and policy leads in face-to-face meetings and a wider e-communication group of 15 participants from six areas.
- **Practitioner focus group activity:** 85 participants from 41 areas, with a further six areas engaged through the expert reference group.
- Six colleagues from the **DCLG Troubled Families policy team** and **EIF representatives**, who have engaged in the process either through attendance at a focus group or as part of the expert reference group.

The map reflects practice captured through the above and was constructed by Chris Davison Associates and PMW Consulting under commission from the Early Intervention Foundation.

Glossary of terms

Throughout this functional map and the associated principles and values, the terms below have been used to mean the following:

- **Advocacy and advocate** has been used to mean a combination of elements of representation, support, empowerment and protection of rights. Advocacy may involve speaking up on behalf of family members or agencies or putting their views across. Advocacy also means ensuring that the person, persons or agency being advocated for is actively listened to, considered in decision making, and has access to needed services and support.
- **Agencies** has been used to mean any services, teams or staff that are working to meet the needs of parents and children.
- **Diversity** has been used to mean recognising and valuing difference. Difference includes age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and religion. It also includes different shapes and structures of families.
- **Early intervention approach** has been used to mean taking action as soon as possible to tackle problems for children and families before they become more difficult to reverse.
- **Equality** has been used to mean recognising peoples different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be.
- **Evidence-based practice** has been used to mean a combination of practitioner expertise and knowledge of the best external research, and evaluation-based evidence. It involves a careful, clear and thoughtful use of up-to-date evidence when making decisions about how to work with individual parents and families. It recognises the importance of practitioner expertise and case understanding in applying evidence based approaches.

Glossary of terms

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- **Families** has been used to mean the unit that exists around the child(ren) where an adult assumes a parental role and extended relations contribute to the dynamics and functioning of the unit, whether biological or co-habiting, or not.
- **Family relationships** has been used to mean dynamic relationships between individuals which exist in self-defined family group or identified network at any point in time and who may co-habit or not.
- **Initial referral** has been used to mean the mechanism by which the family has been referred to Troubled Families practitioner support, pertaining to local and variable approaches.
- **Integrated working** has been used to mean when everyone supporting the family works together effectively to put the family at the centre, meet their needs and improve their lives. This includes effective information sharing, referral mechanisms, training and inter-agency/professional support.
- **Key worker** has been used to mean a single dedicated worker who is the family's main point of contact. The key worker supports the family as part of a small caseload of families which they work with intensively over a period of time. Their role is to manage or grip the family's problems, co-ordinate the delivery of services, and use a combination of support and challenge in helping families to change their behaviour and develop capacity and resilience.
- **Local needs** has been used to mean needs relating to the context of the family within the community and area.
- **Parental capacity** and **parenting** has been used to mean the ability of parents or caregivers to ensure or contribute to a child's developmental needs being appropriately and adequately responded to, and to [be able to] adapt to [the child's] changing needs over time. This includes providing for the child's basic physical needs ensuring their safety; ensuring the child's emotional needs are met and giving the child a sense of being specially valued; promoting the child's intellectual development through encouragement and stimulation; demonstrating and modelling behaviour and control of emotions; and providing a sufficiently stable family environment.

How was this functional map developed?

Principles & values

Glossary of terms

- **Parents** has been used to mean mothers, fathers, carers and other adults with responsibility for caring for a child.
- **Partner agencies** is used to incorporate all agencies working with the family, including those in the voluntary and community sector.
- **Partnership working with other agencies** has been used in reference to the key worker working with a range of organisations and professionals to support families.
- **Partnership working with the family** has been used to mean a collaborative, respectful and empowering alliance between the Key Worker and the family. Partnership working is a strength based model of helping which recognises that families have a unique knowledge and information about their own family.
- **Professional competence** has been used to mean the application of skills, knowledge and practice to work with families, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity.
- **Sanctions** has been used to mean consequences or penalties that families may be facing due to, for example, anti-social or offending behaviour, non-attendance of appointments eg at the Jobcentre, with social services or housing providers and related 'non-compliance' activity.
- **SMART** has been used as an abbreviation for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound, in the context of plans and targets also being challenging and evidence-based.
- **Whole Family Plan** has been used to mean the agreement between the worker and the family which includes the nature and sequencing of the support provided; the behaviours goals and actions family members have committed to achieving and the nature of any sanctions and risks facing a family. This is summarised within an accessible and transparent written agreement or support plan signed by the parties involved.

Troubled Families practitioner principles & values

The underpinning principles and values emerged through functional map development and consultation activity, reflect the views of practitioners and leaders, and draw on the experiences of families who have been supported.

As a Troubled Families worker, I will:–

1. Work within statutory and legal requirements, placing the interests of children, young people and their families at the heart of my work.
2. Ensure that my support for families is practical, purposeful and useful
3. Use a persistent, open, honest, non-judgemental and straight talking approach in supporting families.
4. Be realistic with families and do what I say I am going to do.
5. Advocate on behalf of families, individuals and agencies in supporting families.
6. Respect diversity and different needs, promote equality, and act to overcome threatening, offensive or discriminatory behaviour and attitudes.
7. Ensure that a tailored whole family and early intervention approach is used when planning and delivering support with families.
8. Engage all family members in identifying goals, assessing options, making decisions and reviewing outcomes.
9. Ensure that support and intervention builds on the existing strengths, knowledge and experience of the families, valuing the voice of everyone involved.

Troubled Families practitioner principles & values



- 10.** Work respectfully and in partnership with families, encouraging independence and self-reliance.
- 11.** Work in partnership with agencies and individuals in providing support to families.
- 12.** Use evidence-based approaches and data-driven planning in family support.
- 13.** Use innovative and creative approaches to address emerging local needs and build self-regulating and supportive community networks.
- 14.** Recognise and acknowledge that those in a parenting role have unique knowledge and information about their children, and are their primary educators.
- 15.** Offer a range of appropriate support according to both child and parent level of need, and in relation to what is already available in the family and community, using strong and up-to-date local knowledge.
- 16.** Ensure that my practice is safe, reflective, effective and competent, to the best of my endeavours.

See the whole of the map

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Key purpose statement

Using a key worker approach to empower families with complex needs to achieve positive, measurable and sustainable outcomes through high challenge and intensive support as part of tailored, coordinated and integrated multi-agency whole family partnership activity.

Strand 1

Incoming referral, assessment and planning for positive outcomes

[CLICK TO GO HERE](#)

1.1 Range of approaches

1.2 Family consent

1.3 A whole family plan

Strand 2

Accessing, coordinating and scheduling multi-agency support

[CLICK TO GO HERE](#)

2.1 Engaging services

2.2 Working with the family

Strand 3

Delivering tailored family intervention and support

[CLICK TO GO HERE](#)

3.1 Roles & responsibilities

3.2 Communication

3.3 Other relationships

3.4 Advocacy & mediation

3.5 Empowering families

3.6 Removing barriers

3.7 Family relationships

Strand 4

Recording, reviewing and evaluating progress and producing exit assessment

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4.1 Recording

4.2 Other reviews

4.3 Exit assessments

4.4 Evaluating outcomes

Strand 5

Developing and maintaining safe, effective and competent professional practice

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5.1 Practice boundaries

5.2 Skills & knowledge

5.3 Sharing development

5.4 A reflective approach

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Key purpose statement

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“Using a key worker approach to empower families with complex needs to achieve positive, measurable and sustainable outcomes through high challenge and intensive support as part of tailored, coordinated and integrated multi-agency whole family partnership activity.”

[See the whole map](#)

[Strand 1. Referral, assessment & planning](#)

1. Incoming referral, assessment and planning for positive outcomes

OBJECTIVE & ACTIVITY

Establish initial contact and relationship with the family using persistent, open and creative engagement strategies.

FUNCTIONAL MAP

1.1 Develop and use a range of approaches to engage and build an effective working relationship with parents and families

1.1.1 Identify and deploy creative and inventive/innovative engagement strategies, being persistent and assertive

1.1.2 Work in a way which empowers families

1.1.3 Identify and plan to mitigate any health and safety risks when engaging with family

1.1.4 Communicate with families in an open, clear and honest way (plain speaking)

1.1.4.1 Ensure families feel listened to, and that their individual circumstances are considered

1. Incoming referral, assessment and planning for positive outcomes

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1.1.5 Clarify and communicate the boundaries of the relationship and establish with the family that it will involve high levels of challenge and support

1.1.6 Use a persistent, open, respectful and non-judgmental manner to encourage the continued engagement of parents and family members

1.1.7 Agree ways of maintaining contact with the family, identifying any limits of contact

1.1.8 Maintain appropriate practice boundaries in the relationships and interactions with families

1.2 Operate with family consent to required referral and assessment processes and agree with the family how information will be used, recorded and shared

1.2.1 Enable the building of trust through establishing family consent

1.2.2 Agree with individual family members how personal information will be used, recorded, shared and stored with others within confidentiality policies

1.2.3 Analyse the nature and level of any risks facing the family as well as identifying protective factors

1.2.4 Explain the assessment process to the family and be clear about how all family members will be included

1.2.5 Compile intelligence from a wide range of sources to inform plans which are realistic, relevant, outcomes-based and family-focused

1. Incoming referral, assessment and planning for positive outcomes

1.3 Co-construct a whole family focused plan which is SMART, challenging and informed by evidence, reflecting the initial reasons for referral

1.3.1 Identify the immediate, urgent priorities of each family member as part of the planning process

1.3.2 Identify aims and desired outcomes which reflect the initial reasons for referral and so reflect local strategic priorities

1.3.3 Identify family strengths and additional knowledge, strategies or practical resources to help the family achieve their goals for themselves and their children

1.3.4 Ensure differentiated approaches which consider the differing needs of family members (eg age-related, ability-related)

1.3.5 Work with families to develop practical and organisational skills to engage with their planned actions and related services

1.3.6 Implement the plan identifying the role of the family and partner agencies and the method of review and reporting

1.3.7 Monitor, review and adjust plans in line with stepped progress towards outcomes

1.3.8 Identify exit strategies and communicate these to the family

2. Accessing, coordinating and scheduling multi-agency support

OBJECTIVE & ACTIVITY

Engage with and work to shape the wider system around the family, so that the family tell their story once and services are provided at the right time and place.

FUNCTIONAL MAP

2.1 Engage services across a range of organisations and coordinate the focus on the family

2.1.1 Operate a collaborative, partnership approach both alongside the family and with services

2.1.2 Develop effective working relationships with partner agencies through greater understanding and mutual professional respect for individuals, roles, skills and expertise

2.1.3 Identify and plan to mitigate any health and safety risks when engaging with family

2.1.4 Share information appropriately with other agencies, supported by a joint information sharing protocol

2.1.5 Advocate and mediate on behalf of partner agencies to ensure families better understand and engage with support that is needed

2. Accessing, coordinating and scheduling multi-agency support

2.2 Work with the family and agencies to agree shared ownership, responsibilities, and the sequencing and coordination of the support available to deliver time-limited objectives

2.2.1 Access and coordinate specialist services at the right time and place for the family

2.2.2 Facilitate regular multi agency review meetings to hold partners and families to account and work proactively to remove barriers

2.2.3 Identify single lead agency to monitor sustainment of progress when family exits intensive support

3. Delivering tailored family intervention and support

OBJECTIVE & ACTIVITY

Working with the family to identify, agree and provide development and support.

FUNCTIONAL MAP

3.1 Identify and agree with the family the roles, responsibilities and expectations within the plan

3.1.1 Identify, analyse and address current urgent and important issues which are undermining family stability

3.1.2 Identify, analyse and address current urgent practical issues and have a phased approach to support

3.1.3 Provide direct and hands-on support as part of the intervention – for example, practical tasks such as cleaning, cooking, decorating, clearing gardens, accompanying child to school, supporting on going improving school attendance, taking adults to appointments

3.1.4 Identify incentives and motivational factors to facilitate progress

3. Delivering tailored family intervention and support

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3.2 Proactively use phone, messaging and other forms of electronic communication to maintain contact with families between face-to-face visits and check progress

3.2.1 Maintain an informal style of engagement while retaining sight of objectives agreed with family members

3.2.2 Ensure that structured interventions with clear objectives are closely monitored and presented in an informal and accessible way

3.2.3 Be contactable and respond quickly when needed, for example when the family is experiencing a crisis during the intervention

3.3 Help families to understand the system and the institutional sanctions frameworks and their potential impact

3.3.1 Work alongside the family to identify, understand and address urgent issues and active/impending sanctions

3.3.2 Work with the family to identify and plan to respond to predictable system related sanctions

3.3.3 Work across agency boundaries to provide effective integrated whole family support

3.3.4 Work with and encourage families and agencies to take responsibility in managing and prioritising appointments and actions

3. Delivering tailored family intervention and support

3.4 Advocate and mediate on behalf of the family, individuals and partner agencies

3.4.1 Model positive behaviours and strategies to achieve positive actions which are focused on solutions and outcomes

3.4.2 Advocate on behalf of the family, or family members in engaging positively with, and shaping the services and responses of, agencies, organisations and other professionals who have a role in meeting the family's needs

3.4.3 Advocate on behalf of an individual within the family context

3.4.4 Advocate on behalf of agencies in their relationship with families or family members

3.4.5 Advocate on behalf of agencies and other professionals to facilitate mutual role appreciation and understanding and to promote integrated working

3. Delivering tailored family intervention and support

3.5 Work in a way which empowers families and improves social competence, capacity and confidence

3.5.1 Use a positive whole-family approach to build on parent, child and family strengths and develop resilience, self-reliance and independent action

3.5.2 Differentiate support considering the differing needs of family members (eg, age-related, ability-related)

3.5.3 Support and educate parents and families to positively engage with their community and other agencies

3.5.4 Work with parents and families to identify services and other support which will meet family needs

3.5.5 Enable parents and families to develop confidence to engage with services and other support

3.5.6 Work with parents and families to reduce or plan to reduce their dependence on specialist services

3.5.7 Work with parents and families to develop practical and organisational skills to engage with services

3. Delivering tailored family intervention and support

3.6 Use strategies and approaches to address barriers to learning, training and employment within families

3.6.1 Work with families to raise their ambition towards achieving employment

3.6.2 Support families to become more ready to access education, learning, training and employment

3.6.3 Work with partner agencies to identify relevant appropriate opportunities

3.6.4 Signpost, support and work with members of the family to access the range of opportunities for learning, training and employment available in the community and broader area

3. Delivering tailored family intervention and support

3.7 Provide support to improve relationships within the family, the family network and the local community

3.7.1 Address the impact of complex and multiple needs on family dynamics and social/community relationships

3.7.1.1 Enable parents and families to develop ways of handling relationships and behaviour that contribute positively to everyday life

3.7.1.2 Identify and deal with the earliest signs of abuse, stop violence before it happens, prevent abusive behaviour, understand the effects of trauma, and refer to appropriate evidence-based support as required

3.7.1.3 Support an increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of respect and consent in relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong, including abuse taking place online

3.7.1.4 Work with families to address threatening, offensive, racist and homophobic behaviour

3. Delivering tailored family intervention and support

3.7.2 Identify and support the family to recognise their strengths and potential to bring about positive change

3.7.2.1 Use the positive dynamics within the family and networks around the family to support progress towards positive outcomes

3.7.2.2 Educate, inform and challenge families about good physical and mental health and healthy relationships

3.7.2.3 Build family and family network resilience, self-reliance and promote independent action

3.7.2.4 Work with family members to build resilience to manage key life transition points

3.7.3 Support parents to increase parenting capacity, for example, through positive parenting skills, improved parenting confidence, setting boundaries and routines

3.7.4 Work with families to reduce and prevent persistent offending behaviour and the subsequent consequences

3.7.5 Work with families to increase pro-social behaviour and reduce and prevent antisocial behaviour

3.7.6 Work with families to build budgeting and financial management skills and capacity

4. Recording, reviewing and evaluating progress and producing exit assessment

OBJECTIVE & ACTIVITY

Working to agreed processes and criteria.

FUNCTIONAL MAP

4.1 Ensure recording is evidence-based and to agreed standards

4.1.1 Recording is accurate, objective and to an agreed, standardised, quality-assured approach within confidentiality protocols

4.1.2 Recording is conducted to agreed timescales and deadlines, within statutory frameworks

4.2 Contribute to local, regional and national reporting frameworks in reviewing progress

4.2.1 Complete plans, notes and reviews to the agreed standard

4.2.2 Involve the family in the review of the plan and identify future achievable targets

4. Recording, reviewing and evaluating progress and producing exit assessment

4.3 Undertake exit assessments to the agreed standard

4.3.1 Exit intensive support for the family through a structured, planned and time-bound approach

4.3.2 Complete a final review/closing assessment which highlights outcomes/achievements and changes that still need to be made, and identifies who the family should contact if further support is required

4.3.3 Enable families to identify and celebrate the positives changes they have made

4.3.4 Support access to and promotion of universal partner provision, as well as ongoing support from the wider family or local community as appropriate

4.3.5 Communicate the disengagement and exit from intensive support and identify/signpost to the single agency/named worker for ongoing support/monitoring

4. Recording, reviewing and evaluating progress and producing exit assessment

4.4 Evaluate outcomes, with family consent

4.4.1 Evaluate the progress measures and outcomes, and ensure that they are evidenced in line with local, regional and national standards, with the consent of the family

4.4.2 Understand the evidence to be collected and how this should be recorded

4.4.3 Work with the family to help them understand and appreciate their achievements and progress

4.4.4 Use the evidence to identify gaps in service provision and influence the commissioning process to meet future needs

5. Developing and maintaining safe, effective and competent professional practice

OBJECTIVE & ACTIVITY

Ensuring appropriate skills, knowledge and professional competence.

FUNCTIONAL MAP

5.1 Operate within legal, ethical and practice boundaries when working with families

5.1.1 Maintain appropriate practice boundaries in the relationships and interactions with families (including electronic communication)

5.1.2 Acknowledge, respect and promote equality of opportunity and diversity

5.1.3 Effectively challenge discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour within families and agencies

5.1.4 Acknowledge, respect and promote the rights and responsibilities of families and individuals within families

5.1.5 Maintain personal and family health, safety and wellbeing throughout the family support process

5.1.6 Develop and establish a clear understanding of levels of confidentiality, particularly in relation to safeguarding

5.1.7 Seek to promote efficient and cost-effective practice and allocation of time and resources, with a view to using resources in the way most likely to achieve a positive outcome for families

5. Developing and maintaining safe, effective and competent professional practice

5.2 Develop and maintain skills, knowledge and competence

5.2.1 Follow agreed case management procedures, including recording and storage of records, reporting, and involving other agencies, colleagues and line managers operating within local and national policy and procedures frameworks

5.2.2 Work with line managers and colleagues to ensure that personal professional competence remains sufficient to provide effective support to families

5.2.3 Work with managers and colleagues to influence effective service delivery for families

5.2.4 Understand the range of local service provision and the support available to families

5.2.5 Utilise continuing professional development (CPD), practice development opportunities and research to review and develop personal practice

5.2.6 Use evidence-based approaches to personal and organisational development, with reference to evaluation and impact analysis

5.2.7 Engage in regular reflective practice and maintain relevant professional knowledge on relevant professional, organisational and policy matters likely to impact upon practice and service delivery

5. Developing and maintaining safe, effective and competent professional practice

5.3 Contribute to the development of the skills, knowledge, understanding and competence of partner agencies

5.3.1 Share evidence practice and research, within confidentiality protocols

5.3.2 Influence, develop and delivering CPD

5.3.3 Contribute to integrated multi-agency planning, service review and development

5.4 Develop and maintain a reflective professional approach that builds self-resilience and maintains a high level of knowledge and expertise

5.4.1 Be accountable for and review own practice using supervision, reflective practice and other opportunities for professional development

5.4.2 Maintain effective, efficient personal time and resource management skills

5.4.3 Be flexible and adaptable to change

5.4.4 Engage in supervision, peer supervision and practice supervision, and contribute to professional support to colleagues

5.4.5 Develop and maintain professional networks and relationships as part of integrated services provision