What do we mean by Think Family, Work Family?
To ‘Think Family’ means that all staff need to remember that people rarely live in complete isolation and therefore we need to assess the needs of the wider family when we’re working with a child or parent. To ‘Work Family’ means services putting this into practice and coordinating their work together.

Think Family, Work Family is particularly relevant when responding to the needs of families where substance misuse, learning disability or difficulty, domestic abuse or mental ill-health are evident in the parent’s life. Children are more susceptible to risk and harm where they are living with an adult(s) who has one or more of these vulnerability factors or needs.

Practitioners who are aware of a young carer when either working directly with the child or young person or with the adult must assess their needs and respond appropriately.

What do we know about parental vulnerabilities in Leeds?
Substance misuse, domestic violence and parental mental health are key factors in referrals for Children's Social Work Service in Leeds. Domestic violence is the most common referral reason; in 2012 there were 3,628 referrals to Children’s Social Work Service relating to domestic violence, which represented 31% of the total number of referrals.

A 2013 study in Leeds of babies under the age of one, who came into care, highlighted the impact of parental needs on outcomes for children. The study found that 87% of those families included adults with one or more of either: substance misuse; mental health problems; domestic violence; and learning difficulties. In 80% of these families more than one of these factors were also present.

What does it say in guidance and law?
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 states: ‘Everyone who works with children or with adults who have children in the family has a responsibility to keep them safe and to share information in a timely way.

The Care Act 2014 includes provision for where adults pose a risk to children in their care, due to their own needs for support or care. Services working with children should work together with those supporting adults to ensure that care planning and support addresses the need to parent children safely. These adults include parents of children at risk of harm, but also other adults in a household.
Who should Think Family, Work Family?
All practitioners should ‘Think Family, Work Family’. This involves all the services working with adults, those working with children and young people, and those who work with families. This includes but is not limited to health, the third sector and local authority services.

What should practitioners do?
When working with a child or an adult, practitioners should: be aware of the individuals in the household; assess any needs those household members may have; consider potential impact of any identified needs on the child or adult; and respond to needs appropriately. In all instances practitioners should discuss concerns with line managers / safeguarding leads.

Working together with the family, multi-agency assessments and visits should be used to better understand needs, identify actions, develop a joint plan and improve outcomes.

Where domestic abuse (guide), mental health problems, substance misuse and or learning disabilities are present in a family, assessment must take account of the impact on the care provided to vulnerable adults, children and young people.

Practitioners unused to undertaking assessments of children and young people can seek advice and support from their safeguarding lead or the Integrated Processes Team tel: 0113 2476830.

If a child is at risk of significant harm you should contact Children’s Services Duty and Advice (guide), tel: 0113 3760336 (out of hours 0113 240 9536).

Following discussions with line managers and safeguarding leads, concerns regarding the identified needs of an adult can be discussed with the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Advice Line: 0113 224 3511. If an adult is at risk of abuse you should contact Leeds Adult Social Care, tel: 0113 2224401 (out of hours 0113 240 9536).

For more information
Leeds Safeguarding Children’s Board

Leeds Safeguarding Adult’s Partnership

You can read more in the Think Family, Work Family protocol and practice guidance on the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board [website](#)