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Autumn 2024

Welcome

...to our Autumn 2024 'Early Help in County Durham - a Newsletter for Education.'

This newsletter has helpful information and useful contacts, a what's going on and know your teams section, as well as important dates to remember.

If you would like to contribute or comment on the content of this newsletter, please see our 'Have Your Say' section below.

What is 'Early Help'?

- Early Help is not a service but a way of working.
- Early Help is early in the life of a child or early in the life of an emerging problem.
- Early Help is about getting the right support for a child, young person and their family at the earliest opportunity.



Summer Fun & Food 2024 - see page 5 for more details



Do you have any questions or comments about this newsletter? What can we do better? What are your suggestions?

Email: StrongerFamilies@durham.gov.uk







A message from Gail Earl

New Strategic Manager for Early Help

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Strategic Manager for Early Help at Durham Council. I have previously been working in Middlesbrough Council as Head of Service for Early Help and I started in Durham during September, to replace Karen Davison who has recently retired.

My role includes the oversight of a range of different Early Help services which includes the One Point Service and the Intensive Family Support Teams, Family Hubs and Start for Life Offer, Supporting Families and Reducing Parental Conflict Programmes along with Social Inclusion Teams and the Holiday Activity Fund (Fun and Food). I also have oversight of the SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). I have received a really warm welcome in Durham, and I am looking forward to working with you all.

Locality Early Help Conversation Feedback

Six years on, Durham's Locality Early Help Conversations continue to be of huge value. Thanks to all the partners who come together fortnightly to help their peers in providing the best support possible to our families to best meet their needs.

If you aren't familiar with what a Locality Early Help Conversation is then please see the demonstration video





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Having only started working in Durham this school year, it is important for me to say how useful I found this morning's Early Help Conversation. To have access to so much experience and advice in such a short space of time (since the referral) is incredibly valuable. As a school leader, you can often feel the weight of concern on your shoulders, but I left the conversation feeling buoyed and optimistic for this young person and their family - thank you.



Early Help Assessment Re-Launch

Your new Early Help Assessment was launched in July 2024 and what a response! The feedback we have had from partners has been fantastic and gives hope that we have created an easy tool for you to use to record your worries for families.

Remember you can attach any other information you may have to accompany your assessment such as CPOMS Chronology, EHCP etc!

Since going live in October 2022

3679 Early Help Assessments have been completed by partners!



County Durham's Early Help Strategy



County Durham's Early Help Strategy 2024-2026 was ratified and launched during the summer.

The strategy has been co-produced with partners, parents, carers and children and young people and is short, snappy and to the point!

To get an overview about what the strategy is about this lovely two minute video sums it up nicely!

Next steps are for us as an Early Help System to deliver on it and we are working with colleagues to make sure we report on the progress we are making.





Early Help Assessment and Child and Family Plan Learning Review

Our second round of partnership Learning Reviews took place in September with some willing volunteers. Thanks to Durham's Maternity, Education, Attendance, One Point and Harbour colleagues for being our Reviewers!

Out of the 49 Early Help Assessments, which were anonymised, 19 had accompanying Child and Family Plans which were also reviewed to inform our learning. Please don't forget to submit your Child and Family Plan Reviews and let us know when you are closing a Team Around a Family in your closure Child and Family Plan!

What strengths were identified?



- The Early Help Assessment reflects that it has been written 'with' the child and family.
- There is evidence that the Family Support
 Network (those people most important to the family) have been explored in the Assessment.
- There are Wellbeing Goals and Scaling Questions clearly linked to the Worries.
- The Child and Family Plan is 'child focussed' including, where applicable an unborn child.
- Actions are identified for all Team Around the Family (TAF) members including family members.
- The Child and Family Plan is not service heavy and clearly puts onus on the family to create positive change.
- The Child and Family Plan is written in a way that is clearly understood by all.
- There is evidence of how progress is being made.
- Parents/Carers tell us how things are getting better.

Please continue with this great work!

What are the areas for improvement?



- The voice of the child and significant family members is clearly recorded in the Assessment.
- Next Steps are SMART.
- There is demonstration of involvement of a sustainable support network for the family once services are no longer required e.g. Family Network, VCS.
- Children and Young People tell us how things are getting better.

Please share these findings with your colleagues and have this in your mind when you next complete an Early Help Assessment and Child and Family Plan with a family.

Any support you may need is available through your Early Help Advisor Team - just drop EarlyHelpAdvisorSupport@durham.gov.uk a message and they'd be happy to support you! If you would like to be part of the next Learning Review which will take place in March 2025 please contact fiona.smith@durham.gov.uk



Early Help Assessment completed by school in relation to seven year olds emotional wellbeing impacting on attendance at school



School had shared clear information about current worries, what was working well and what they had tried already to support the child and family.





Information reviewed by Early Help Triage and agreement with School to attend Locality Early Help Conversation.





School attended Locality Early Help Conversation where there were recommendations from SEND and Inclusion, Family Hub offer and voluntary community sector organisations that could offer support.





Family are now attending programmes at Family Hub to support and school have referred to EWEL team.



Having only started working in Durham this school year, it is important for me to say how useful I found this morning's Early Help Conversation. To have access to so much experience and advice in such a short space of time (since the referral) is incredibly valuable. As a school leader, you can often feel the weight of concern on your shoulders, but I left the conversation feeling buoyed and optimistic for this young person and their family - thank vou.

Feedback from School following attending the Locality Early Help Conversation



The Fun & Food Programme

The Fun & Food programme runs during the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays across County Durham.

All sessions are free and include breakfast/ lunch/tea and snack. Children taking part in the programme can enjoy a wide range of sessions including things like: sport, dance, art and crafts, outdoor adventures, fun with animals, circus skills, seaside trips and much more.

A video snapshot of summer activities with the Fun & Food programme

If a child receives benefits-related free school meals, then families will receive a Fun and Food Ticket through their school with details of how to find out about what's on in their area and how to book their child a place.

All children from reception to year two receive a free school meal through the Universal Infant Free School Meal scheme. The Fun and Food programme is aimed at children whose parents apply for free school meals based on their income and any benefits they receive. To find out more about benefit-related free school meals visit Apply for free school meals.

Extra sessions for more children

This year the Fun & Food programme received

£600,000 in extra funding from the government's household support fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This money was given this out to local groups so that they can open up their sessions to more children. This means that children who do not get a benefits-related free school meal, but do meet criteria can now also

Families can also contact local groups directly to see if they have extra places available. More information about lots of the local groups across the county can be found by following Fun and Food County Durham on Facebook.

attend sessions.



Multi Agency problem solving Community engagement

Community engagement - Update from Sherburn Neighbourhood team

Sherburn Neighbourhood Team have hosted successful Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings, where members of our communities have attended to discuss local issues. Partner agencies are also in attendance to offer a multi-agency approach to problemsolving.



We've had good turnouts for 'Cop a Bike', where officers get the chance to engage with

local young people and their families whilst assisting with bike and scooter repairs. Our team are taking the initiative to the Problem Orientated Policing awards later this year.

School visits are underway, today was a successful trip to Coxhoe Primary, educating Year 5 and Year 6 pupils around standards of behaviour outside of school, Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) and consequences of crime.



Neighbourhood officers are also working with the Durham East Primary Care Network Social Prescribing Service (NHS) who offer a holistic approach to wellbeing to our communities.

A lot of the vulnerable individuals we come across day-to-day can massively benefit from this service as they provide a person-centred service and promote independence. People could be struggling financially, with housing, employment, they may be socially isolated, they may want to lose weight or become physically active. They may use drugs/alcohol or have been a victim of domestic/sexual abuse. They may care for someone or be bereaved – the service support with all things aside of medical issues that can have an impact on day to day life. The service host events that are attended by the local community and partner agencies.



Stronger Families Fund

The Stronger Families Fun accepts applications from Lead Workers supporting families (living in Durham, with children 0-19) who require support to gain financial stability or support with unmanageable debt.

Partner services must confirm:

- Family needs have identified 3 x headline outcomes as set out in the <u>County Durham</u> <u>Family Outcome Framework</u> (including Headline Outcome 10.2).
- The service has completed a "Health Needs Assessment / Whole Family Assessment" and are prepared to provide evidence
- Where possible, items requested should be based on need identified, following completion of a <u>Home Environment</u>
 <u>Assessment Tool (HEAT)</u> this is a mandatory requirement for DCC Staff and HDFT applications.

What can we fund:

- Essential Household Items (cooker/washing machine etc.), furniture, carpet/vinyl flooring, small home electrical goods and basic homeware.
- Home Safety Equipment safety gates, fireguard, home safety packs, bath & room thermometer, blind cleats, pushchair, bed guard, Moses basket, Cot, high-chair, car seat, breast pump and clothing.
- Bulky Waste Removal or Skip Hire up to two bulky waste collections or a skip hire (dependent on location).
- Home Removal Service providing support to help families move home (downsize / upsize / upgrade to a more energy efficient home / change in relationship / bereavement).

How do I apply for funding?

New online Application Forms are available through the following link Stronger Family Grants or alternatively scan the QR code to the right.



Guidance information is available through <u>Stronger Families Fund</u> (scroll down to stronger Families Grants and Services).



Contact details

For further information relating to the Stronger Families Fund please contact:







Relationships Matter

New north-east regional branding and website

Durham have been working with several other neighbouring local authorities and partners to develop a brand new Northeast Relationships Matter website and logo.



When you click on to <u>Durham County</u>
<u>Council's logo</u>, this will take you to Durham's specific offer to families to support healthy relationships and reduce parental conflict.

CDDARS News UpdateNew Charity



Humankind and Richmond Fellowship legally merged in the summer and on 1 October 2024, we launched Waythrough with Aquarius as our subsidiary.

Waythrough combines the expertise of our two charities in mental health, alcohol and substance use, gambling and housing.

Our vision is simple: To break down the barriers that stop people getting the support they need to live a life they value. We aim to do this by bringing together services so people can access the support they need in one place.

This is the start of a new chapter for us; we have a new name, website and email addresses but changes to our services will be gradual. As always, the people we support remain our priority and our focus continues to be on delivering high quality services.

We will share updates on our plans for completing the integration of our teams, infrastructure, and resource. You can follow our progress and see what's happening during launch week and beyond by signing up to our newsletter, taking a look at our new website www.waythrough.org.uk or following us on social media.



County Durham YouthPrint

How Youth Services are working collaboratively to improve opportunities for young people

Durham YouthPrint was initially set up in 2021 to provide support for youth work partners across the

County during Covid. It was established initially to give a safe space for colleagues to share their frustrations, challenges, ideas and develop partnership work.

By 2022, led by a number of local youth organisations, the partnership was developed further to create a model for working across County Durham and source funding to progress and formalise the arrangement.



Over the past 12 months since National Lottery Funding was secured a Coordinator and lead organisations have been appointed to operate the YouthPrint.

The County has been spilt into five areas with lead organisations operating a local network in their area.

Over 50 youth organisations are involved currently and have been working together to identify services and gaps for young people in areas, explore ways of working together

and sharing resources such as transport and venues to save costs.



Some key achievements to date

- Introduction to Youth Work courses delivered across the County training 66 staff, volunteers and young people to receive the entry step into their youth work journey with accredited training.
- Creative Youth Opportunities one of YouthPrints lead organisations was commissioned by Durham County Council to create an educational video on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) for young people.
- Young people's involvement to include their voice in the development of YouthPrint firstly to create the branding in a workshop attended by 9 organisations and secondly to create their own tools for volunteer exchanges for young people between YouthPrint members which will enable them to influence good practice by completing youth led reviews whilst on exchange.

Who should be involved in YouthPrint

Durham YouthPrint welcomes members of staff from organisations delivering direct face to face youth work to be part of the network. The core group must be direct providers of youth work, and/or organisations that carry out regular face to face work with young people using principles and aims of youth delivery to support young people's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development.



DASH Tackles the Gap

Improving School-Partner Communication

Article by Paul Marsden, Headteacher, Belmont Community School

In recent discussions among members of the Durham Association of Secondary
Headteachers (DASH), a recurring theme emerged: the misunderstanding of
external partners regarding individual schools' capacities and resources. These partners often suggest
services that are beyond the scope of schools' resources or capabilities, leading to confusion and
disappointment for parents.

To address this issue, DASH members have identified a clear need for enhanced communication and collaboration between schools and external agencies. By fostering a more joined-up approach, schools can work together with partners to develop realistic and achievable solutions that meet the needs of students and their families. Key areas for improvement include:

Clearer expectations

Schools and partners should establish open dialogue, in the first instance, to ensure that everyone understands their respective roles and responsibilities. A phone call with the right school staff member will help facilitate this.

Shared goals

By working towards common objectives, schools and partners can align their efforts and avoid misunderstandings.

Effective communication channels

Regular communication and feedback mechanisms can help to maintain transparency and build trust.

By prioritising these areas, DASH hopes to create a more supportive and collaborative environment for schools and their partners. This will ultimately benefit students and their families by ensuring that they receive the highest quality support and services.

To further help with this, we have created a school protocol template, which will be available for all partners. As each school is different, we would encourage all schools to create their own protocol, ready to forward to any partners at the first point of contact and share with Early Help Advisors, who can also share them with partners. An example of a completed protocol is also available from Belmont Community School, as a Secondary example and a blank template to be amended and tailored to an individual school's details.

Clickon each image to open the attachments panel for editable word document (newsletter to be opened with adobe acrobat reader for full functionality)



Supporting Families Impacted by Poverty

Up-to-date information on the support available to help families mitigate the impact of poverty and increases to the cost of living

With rises in levels of child poverty and further cost-of-living increases we know many families across County Durham find it difficult to manage the cost of everyday living. For many, they are facing one of the costliest times of year with the additional costs associated with the winter months coming up. The information below provides information on where to go for financial advice and support.



Durham Constabulary launch 'Right Care, Right Person' initative

In England and Wales, the Right Care, Right Person approach assesses if the police are the most appropriate service to respond. While some mental health related incidents may need the police, other services may be more appropriate. Health and social care staff have the experience and training to provide the relevant physical and mental health support.



The aim of the approach is:

- to get the person or people involved the right help as soon as possible
- to prevent further distress to the person
- to allow the police to focus resources on preventing crime, protecting life and property and keeping public order.

Police forces using this approach have already benefited by being able to provide more appropriate responses.

In England, police and partner agencies have signed a National Partnership Agreement. They will work together to ensure people get the right support. Their regular meetings allow knowledge sharing and improved services.

When the police can help

If we are the most appropriate service, we will attend when there is:

- an immediate risk to life of a person
- an immediate risk of serious harm to a person.

We'll still respond to reports of crime in the usual way.

We will always attend when we are the right service to respond.

We assess every request against things like threat, harm, risk, and vulnerability.

The Right Care, Right Person approach becomes part of this process.

This agreement is between:

- Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- Home Office
- NHS England
- National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
- Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC)
- College of Policing

Working together to help get people the right support.

Want to report a crime?



Remember if you're in an emergency always dial 999

support to families



Things to do for Dads and Male Carers with their little ones!

Family Hubs offer a range of supportive programs tailored for Dads and Male Carers. This term we have various activities designed specifically for Dads and Male Carers to engage with their children and get support. One key initiative is 'Dad's Stay and Play', a series of informal drop-in sessions held fortnightly across Newton Aycliffe, Stanley and Peterlee.

These sessions provide an opportunity for Dads, Uncles, and Grandads to bond with their little ones through fun activities while connecting with other Dads and seeking advice from Family Hub staff. Refreshments are provided, and the sessions are flexible, running from 3:30 to 5:00pm.

Durham Dads Together

- provides essential support for Dads during the perinatal period (0-2 years), helping Fathers-To-Be and new Dads navigate the challenges of early parenthood.

This group focuses on creating a supportive environment where Dads can connect with each other, share experiences, and seek advice about their new roles as fathers.

For more information on all our dads and Male Carers support please contact:

Craig Williams

Dads and Male Carers Coordinator

Infant Massage & Triple P Baby

Alongside these amazing activities, we are delighted to offer dedicated Dads and Male Carers programmes to help support parenting through Infant Massage and Triple P Baby. These programmes will be running in the north of the County this term. Triple P Baby helps from before baby is born and up until a child is one year old. Each week Dads will gain knowledge about becoming a parent and develop the skills needed to fulfil their family role. Infant massage can be a wonderful way for parents/carers to bond with their new baby. It's also a great skill to learn to help with things like colic, wind, constipation, as well as the physical development of their brain and flexibility. Many babies find the series of gentle movements across their skin very relaxing so it can also help with healthy sleep routines.







Engaging Dadsand Male Carers in Schools

Would you like to improve parental engagement in your school?

Have you thought about why you mainly get mums coming to events like parents' evenings, fairs or meetings?

If the answer is yes, then this **free** course is for you

All courses are free to Stronger Families partner services and voluntary organisations working with families living in County Durham

30 January 2025 5 June 2025

2pm - 4pm, Education Development Centre

To request a place please e-mail your name, job title and details of your organisation to:

StrongerFamilies@durham.gov.uk

We would like to invite, ideally, your Headteacher and/or a pastoral lead to come together to learn how to engage male carers better in your school.

The aims of this course are to:

- help your school change the culture of parental engagement with male carers
- provide resources to help you understand your male carers thoughts about your school
- learn about why dads and male carers are important in a child's life and education
- understand why male carers may not be as involved in their child's education as mums may be
- give time to think about how male carers can be an asset to your school and the education of the children in your school.

Participants will leave the training with a better understanding about the role of the father and male carer and leave with a clear action plan that will enable each school to become more dad inclusive. They will take away a training package to deliver to their whole staff, a template policy and template survey which will help school establish starting points for their future engagement with dads. Attendees will have the confidence to engage male carers and gain ideas from other schools about tried and tested ways to get more dads involved in school life.





Free Training Offer

Drug and Alcohol sessions

Drug & Alcohol Awareness training is designed to empower anyone living or working within County Durham with the essential knowledge of how to identify, respond and support those using substances, including what we offer at:

<u>County Durham Drug and Alcohol recover</u> <u>Services (CDDARS)</u>.

- Learn to identify signs of substance abuse
- Understand how to approach and support those in need by using brief interventions
- Understand the referral pathways into CDDARS and our whole package of support
- Learn about all aspects of substance use such as its links with domestic abuse, homelessness and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

Please share this information amongst your teams and colleagues.

Don't miss this opportunity to equip yourself and your team with the tools to make a difference.



CDDARS Open Access Training -Booking Form 2024/2025





Parenting When Separated Feedback

Feedback from parents who have attended the course

Parents have commented on how well their and their children's lives have change for the better, they have been able to communicate better with their ex-partners which for one family has been significant one mum spending £21 per six minutes using a solicitor!

After attending the course, mum has met with dad and arranged a better way of communicating and realising both parents could be spending the money on the children instead of legal fees.



'I've learnt no matter what to not show any animosity in front of my daughters, as they can sense it. So now at handover I 'smile and wave' at my ex-partner so the girls see that everything is ok between mam and dad, which is a big difference from before.



46 Another parent said,



The course runs for 6 weeks, and each session is for 2 hours.

We have groups running across County Durham both face to face and online.

To find out more contact Laura-Jayne on 07917 474 856 or email PWS@durham.gov.uk



my daughter has more understanding and awareness of mine and her mams communication and that I am trying to do something to communicate better with mam to benefit her.





Stronger Families training is free to Durham County Council staff and our partner services working with families in County Durham. Training is advertised through the Family Information Service where you can access further course information, available dates and detail of how to book.

An Introduction to the Durham Way (2 x 2.5 hr virtual sessions via Microsoft TEAMS)

The Durham Way Event introduces the vision and principles of 'Thinking Family'. The event aims to build positive relationships between services and promote integrated working practices.

Understanding Teenagers Training

(1 x 3 hr virtual sessions via Microsoft TEAMS)

This training will provide practitioners with an increased knowledge of the stages of adolescencee.

Working with Dads & Male Carers

(1 x 3 hr either face-to-face or virtual via Microsoft TEAMS).

To provide front line staff and managers with the confidence, knowledge and skills to engage with and work effectively with Dads and Male Carers.

Reducing Parental Conflict Training (1 day training delivered either face-to-face or virtually via TEAMS).

This training will provide practitioners with an increased ability to recognise parental conflict, to understand the causes of conflict and provide practical tools and resources to enable practitioners to support families they are working with.

Reducing Parental Conflict and Domestic Abuse Briefing

(1 x 2.5 hr delivered face to face).

This briefing will cover the differences between Parental Conflict and Domestic Abuse, the importance of professional curiosity and the types of questions practitioners can use to explore whether there is domestic abuse or parental conflict.





Hidden Sentence Awareness Training

(1 x 2.5hr delivered either face-to-face or virtually via Zoom)

This training gives practitioners an insight into the specific issues experienced by children and families of prisoners and the resources available to you to help support families. Delivered by NEPACS.

Care Leaver Training (1 x 3hr delivered face-to-face)

This training will provide practitioners with an awareness of the rights and entitlements of care leavers as well as exploring what it means to be a care leaver and potential issues experienced.

Parental Rights Awareness Training (1 x 3hr virtual session via Zoom)

To provide practitioners with knowledge of the legalities of parental rights and the challenges and barriers prisoners or estranged parents face in exercising their parental rights and remaining an active parent. Delivered by NEPACS.

Loss and Bereavement Training (1 x 3hr delivered face to face).

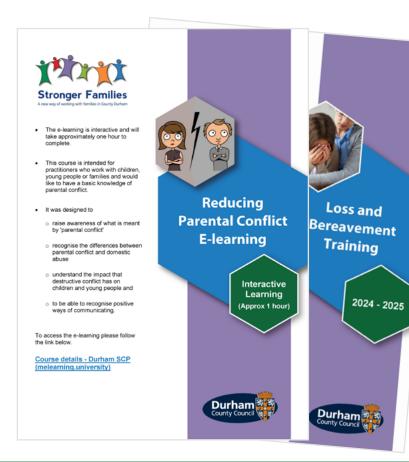
This Training provides Practitioners with an Increased knowledge of the different stages of grief and how they can affect a person.

Reducing Parental Conflict E-Learning

(Interactive and will take approximately 1 hour to complete)

This course is intended for practitioners who work with children, young people or families and would like to have a basic knowledge of parental conflict. It was designed to raise awareness of what is meant by 'parental conflict', recognise the differences between parental conflict and domestic abuse, understand the impact that conflict has on children and young people and to be able to recognise positive ways of communicating. To access the e-learning please follow the link below.

RPC DCSP e-learning link





White Ribbon Day 2024 is fast approaching which kicks off our 16 days of action and there is a fantastic line up of events!



25/11

#ITSTARTSWITHMEN - WHAT'S IT ALL

26/11

MY VOICE - A

AWARENESS

28/11

WORKPLACE

AND GREET

COUNTY HALL **EXHIBITION**

10-1

SPACE

CHAMPION MEET

12:30-1:30

CAPVA

4:30-5 **TEAMS**

HARBOUR FILM

ABOUT? 9:30-10 12:30-1

4:30-5 **TEAMS**

27/11

CONSENT2IT 10-12 DLC. NEVILLE'S HALL

#ITSTARTSWITHMEN MEN'S SESSION 2-3 **TEAMS**

29/11

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE

12-1 **TEAMS**

For more information and to book your places...

CLICK HERE OR VISIT DLDS

CAPVA AWARENESS 9:30-10 **TEAMS**

> DOMESTIC ABUSE AND THE MEDIA 1-2 **TEAMS**

CAPVA **AWARENESS** 4-4:30 **TEAMS**

6/12

#ITSTARTSWITHMEN - WHY BYSTANDERS ARE SO IMPORTANT **TEAMS**

9/12

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND THE MEDIA 10-11 **TEAMS**

MY VOICE - A HARBOUR FILM + O&A 1-3 GREEN LANE 3.13

Durham

3/12

SWAN FINDINGS 12:30-1:30 **TEAMS**

MY VOICE - A HARBOUR FILM 2-3

5/12

EVERYONE'S INVITED - WHAT ARE YOUNG **PEOPLE** EXPOSED TO ONLINE? GOOGLE MEET

10/12

DAPS 1 9:30-1 TEAMS

#ITSTARTSWITHMEN - WHY BYSTANDERS ARE SO IMPORTANT 1 - 2**TEAMS**