

Our Families First Values

A system that never gives up on a child
 We treat everyone with kindness, dignity & care
 We have a collective commitment to be families led
 We promote partnerships and respectful relationships
 Real honesty to get through professional disagreements

Welcome to our third edition of York's Families First newsletter. There are national reforms shaped by feedback from children, families and professionals.

The reforms aim to delivery

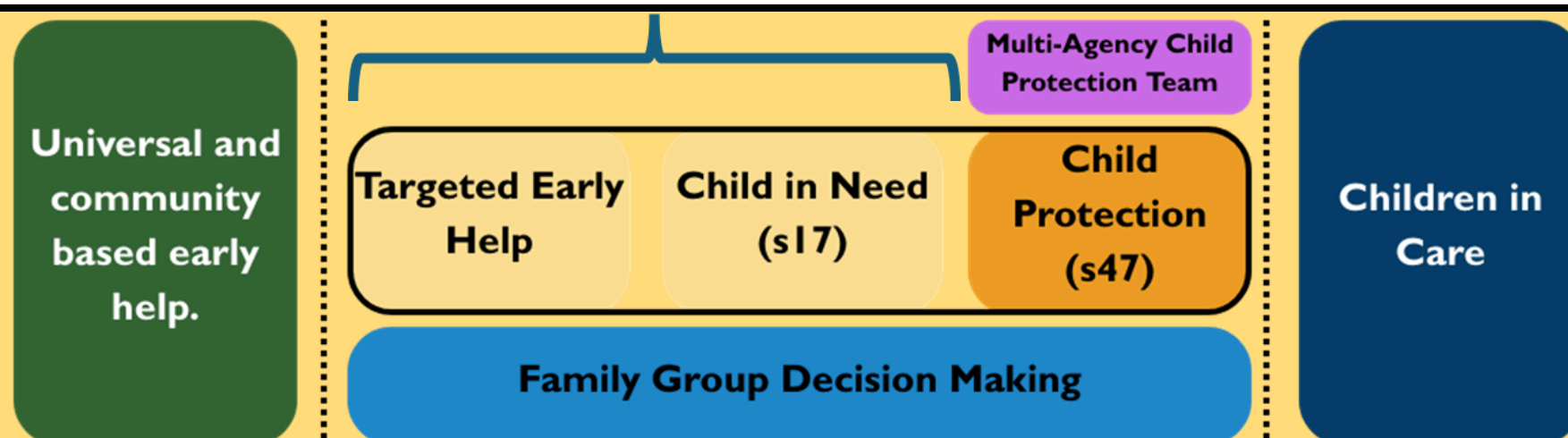
- Family help
- Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams
- Family Group Decision Making

This edition will focus on how the Family Help Support Workers respond to the reforms. **Please reflect on your role and how you can adapt your support to meet the Families First aims.** We'll continue to update you on progress over the coming months. If you would like to get in touch please email: families.first@york.gov.uk

WHY FAMILY HELP SUPPORT WORKERS?

The new Working Together (2023) and Families First reforms indicate that Child In Need cases do not have to be held by social workers but by the most appropriate lead professional. Given these changes the council have taken the opportunity to recruit into 'Family Help Support Worker' roles within the Safeguarding service in York, so they are co-located with Social Workers. Such roles have been within the Safeguarding, Exploitation and Disabled Children's Services. Newly appointed positions are nearing the 12th month mark, whereby some practitioners who have moved into these roles have worked for the council for over 10 years. The aim is:

Early identification of support, seamless support, removing transitions wherever possible to allow for meaningful and impactful relationships. The **Family Help Support Worker** builds strong and trusted relationship with the family and remain their main point of contact for as long as they need support



Martin Kelly, Corporate Director of Children and Education and Beth Hudson, Principal Social Worker have been undertaking learning conversation with Family Help Workers, as well as mapping sessions with Practice Supervisors. **What's worked well?**

- The title of a Family Help Support Worker has provided many positive benefits for children and families who are fearful, frustrated or unhappy with the stigma/label of having a social worker. We often found examples of families re-investing and building effective relationships with the Family Help Support Worker.
- Joint working between the Family Help Support Worker and Practice Supervisors provides higher levels of informal and formal supervision, and reflective conversations about the right help at the right time.
- Family Help Support Workers co-work and have joint supervision to support all levels of need and provide consistency for families.
- The role is flexible so whatever the family needs e.g. practice support with applications, referrals and appointments and you are able to build those relationship

What we will need to work on?

- Developing a single assessment and plan to remove duplication and ensure families only tell their stories once
- Ensuring Family Help Support Workers are linked in the community, have tailored support and do not feel isolated. There is careful consideration around families that are allocated and continued oversight.
- Agree who is best placed to chair children in need meetings and complete assessments

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CHLOE - A FAMILY HELP SUPPORT WORKER

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:30- 9:15	Planning – I start with admin at Hob Moor Children’s Centre. I spend this first part of the day checking emails, printing what I need for my meetings and visits. I make a plan for a 10-week parenting programme I need to deliver the next day.
9:15- 9:45	Team brief- see my team with a wellbeing check in, review performance and plans for visits.
10:30 -11:30	Child in need meeting - for a family who I’ve been working with for around 10 months. Mum is currently in Hospital after self-admission due to suicidal thoughts and thoughts to harm others. Grandma attends the meeting as the carer for the children during this time. The plan is discussed on how to support Grandma and children. A supermarket voucher was requested and this is text over to Grandma later in the day.
12:30-1:30	Child in need visit - to two young people and mum in place of social worker due to annual leave. Advice given and I signpost mum to Citizen’s Advice to support her around Universal Credit.
1:30- 2:00	Travel and pick up a mum - ahead of her Mental Health Assessment. I offer her reassurance and talk about her hopes from taking this step to get help.
2:00- 3:00	Attend Mental Health Assessment - Support mum within this, rephrasing questions, contribute own knowledge of mum’s needs and advocate for her. I then drop her home.
3:30-17:00	Joint visit with Student Social worker - to be introduced to family I will be allocated. I chat to the family about my background and how this aligns with what the needs of the family are. I discuss what they have found helpful in the previous workers approach and how I can pick up in a similar way. I make plans for the following visit to address the worries: home conditions, parental health, 4 members of the family have Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and mum is awaiting an assessment. Then it is home time.

FEEDBACK FROM A LEARNING CONVERSATION WITH A FAMILY

“Chloe has so many skills and experiences bringing her knowledge she is using within this role. Having Chloe in this role has enabled mum to build a trusting relationship and in turn the children have then invested. Just a couple of months of weekly visits got the family to this place and we reflected if Chloe was the first worker, how much time this may have saved. Whilst this is no criticism of social workers previous, we reflected on how much the system provides handover points which are unhelpful to the family. The family have also reflected that Chloe has been the most helpful practitioner.”

Where can I go for more information?

The [Families First Partnership programme guide](#) describes in more detail the national programme’s vision and objectives and provides information to support all safeguarding partners with the implementation of the reforms. It builds on the learning from Families First Partnership [pathfinder areas](#). The [Community Care Inform](#) article on Children’s Social Care Reforms provides a helpful summary and the wider context.

The Knowledge Hub has key documents <https://khub.net/group/families-first-partnership/group-home>

Find out about local services at RAISE – Your Family Hub Network and Family Information Service <https://www.raiseyork.co.uk/> Family Information Services tel: 01904 554444 & email fis@york.gov.uk

Any queries or suggestions please contact families.first@york.gov.uk