

Families First for Children Programme Reforms in Practice

CCIN Member Insights from Warrington & Lewisham

Webinar CCIN Event



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**Families First for
children**



'It takes a village to raise a child'

- *'Our children's social care system must get alongside and strengthen the families and communities that children grow up in, and that are often the source of love and belonging. This is a simple idea that has proved notoriously difficult to realise.'*

Care review: Joshua MacAllister





The Four Pillars



- Family Help
- Child Protection
- Family Networks
- Safeguarding Partners



FAMILY HELP

‘Establishing local multidisciplinary family help services, bringing together early help and child in need provision, to ensure families with multiple needs receive earlier, seamless support so that they can overcome challenges, stay together and thrive’



- From ‘Child in Need’ service to ‘Family Help and Protection’.
- A move to more community-based practice, having stronger links to locality family hubs and schools. Opportunity for a more consistent feedback loop.
- Family Help practitioners now based within the Family Help teams, able to act as lead professionals for families at CIN level.
- A single assessment has been devised to ensure all practitioners are working to the same template.
- Children with Disabilities team now sit under our Early Help service, alongside our support workers, ensuring appropriate support is received from the appropriate people.



Case Study 1 – Role of the Family Help Practitioner

J is a 16-year-old male who has had sporadic involvement with Social Care over a long period, with the most recent period spanning approximately three years. Concerns have centred around J's care at home, his mother's mental health, and the influence of his peers and associates. J spent a significant amount of time out of education until he was allocated a Family Help Practitioner (FHP), L.

- **School Feedback Following the FHP's Intervention**

Following three months of intensive input from the FHP, J's school provided the following feedback. J's case is due to close to Family Help at the next Child in Need meeting due to the progress made:

'Within a very short time, we have seen significant improvement in both J and his mother's engagement in school. The FHP has visited the home, brought J into school for tuition sessions, and supported him in attending exams. She has also contacted Warrington Vale Royal regarding a potential college visit to help J re-engage in education. Her proactive approach—especially in consistently visiting the home—has been something the family has needed for a long time.'

Her hard work, professionalism and impact in such a short space of time is refreshing, and we believe it will make a real difference in J's life.'

How the FHP Increased School Attendance

'The FHP took a proactive, outreach-based approach, ensuring consistent home visits, transport support to school, and coordination with education providers and post-16 options. Alongside attendance work, the FHP also addressed broader concerns including maternal mental health and J's peer associations. Interventions included motivational work with J, advocacy with schools and colleges, and building routines to support long-term educational engagement.'



CHILD PROTECTION

‘A child protection system which protects all children from significant harm – inside and outside of the home – led by new, expert-led, dedicated multi-agency child protection teams including social worker lead child protection practitioners, alongside an information and support offer for all parents in child protection.’



- Established Multi-Agency Child protection team
- Having broader conversations about how our multi-agency partners can form part of the MACPT. Links with police, health, education, CYMPHS, BABS and Probation within this team.
- A move from ‘child protection case conferences’ to ‘child protection decision making meetings.’
- A commitment to more reflexive strategy meetings and information to be shared/interventions to take place outside of child protection where this is safe and achievable.



Case Study 2 - MACPT

The authority has recently been involved with a family following a tragic incident in which an infant died. As the circumstances were under investigation, careful consideration was required regarding the safety and welfare of the other children in the household. Although information was limited and there was no clear evidence that the parents were responsible for the infant's death, a robust intervention plan was implemented to support the family while enquiries continued.

The incident heightened anxiety among health partners working with the family, with some expressing the view that the children should be made subject to child protection plans due to the seriousness of the event.

The MACPT health partner actively participated in all meetings regarding the case and provided informed guidance on the appropriate next steps. She also arranged discussions with the child's health visitor and other health professionals involved with the family to clarify safeguarding thresholds, gather their perspectives, and share her professional view from both a health and safeguarding standpoint. As a result, health colleagues felt clearer about the decision-making process, and the family continued to receive support under Child in Need arrangements with a clear and robust plan in place.



FAMILY NETWORKS

‘Greater use of family networks, involving the wider family in decision-making at an earlier stage throughout the system, and providing practical and financial support via family network support packages to help them keep children safe and well at home.’



- Family Time, Family Group conference coordinators, Family Network workers.
- Offer of Family Group Conference for families at CIN level and above
- Programmes with a focus on parenting and homelessness.
- The introduction of Family Network Support packages (FNSP). Available resource to unlock the support of wider family members to keep children at home.



SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS

‘Stronger and clearer multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, in line with working together 2023 and including an increased role for education, improved information sharing and engagement with children and families in designing and delivering reforms.’



- Lead safeguarding partners been identified .
- Designated Safeguarding Partner’s also identified from Early Years and Education sector.
- Partner discussions take place with DSP’s leading on a rota basis.
- We have linked with existing, well- established forums; Warrington Association of Primary Heads (WAPH) and Warrington Association of Secondary & College Leads (WASCL), and Early Years Strategic Group to seek a representative from each group to join the WSP Strategic Group (DSPs). We have confirmed a Secondary Head, Primary Head, College Lead and maintained nursery lead to attend Strategic.



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