

Families First for Children Programme Reforms in Practice

CCIN Member Insights from Warrington & Lewisham

Webinar | CCIN Event



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Implementing the FFC Programme



Areas of focus for today's session

Jordan Binedell Mutual Ventures

Highlights learning from MV's role, including the key enablers and blockers to reform delivery, and the importance of situating FFP within the wider children's services landscape and concurrent sector initiatives.

Sharon Cooper Warrington

Illustrates how the Families First for Children reforms have been implemented locally, showing how changes to family help, child protection and multi-agency working are influencing day-to-day practice and outcomes.

Sara Taylor Lewisham

Sets out the authority's end-to-end model, demonstrating how Families First for Children has been designed and embedded through clear pathways, multi-agency structures and a strong focus on practice impact.

What role has MV played in the implementation?



Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme

June 2023- February 2024

February 2024- April 2025

Wave 1 Pathfinders:

- Dorset
- Wolverhampton
- Lincolnshire

Wave 2 Pathfinders:

- Warrington
- Lewisham
- Warwickshire
- Wirral
- Luton
- Redbridge
- Walsall

In FFCP, MV worked with ten Pathfinder areas through the co-design and implementation phases, focusing on developing a delivery model that reflected the learning and requirements set out in the Independent Care Review. This work was carried out in close partnership with key local and national partners. Alongside implementation, MV placed a strong emphasis on codifying learning and creating structured learning spaces to support shared understanding and continuous improvement across the programme.

Throughout both phases MV led the learning programme which focused on capturing insights from Pathfinder local authorities and sharing this information in a structured learning loop with other local authorities, key partners and the Department for Education.

Families First Partnership Programme

April 2025- Current

National rollout to all remaining local authorities.

Key Reforms Pillars:

- Multi-agency Child Protection Teams
- Family Help
- Family Group Decision Making

As FFCP moved beyond the Pathfinders, MV supported the structured national rollout of the reforms to all remaining local authorities. This included providing tailored, intensive support to a smaller cohort of areas, alongside running a national learning programme that shared insights, tools and practical learning from the Pathfinder areas with local authorities in the early stages of implementation.



What is enabling implementation?

Enablers:

1

Strong pre-existing multi-agency relationships

2

Relational Practice

3

Experienced, stable workforce

4

Clear senior leadership and governance

5

Local data and co-design

Impact:

This has led to faster engagement around reform design and greater willingness from partners to explore new ways of working.

This foundation made the principles of the reforms feel aligned with existing practice and ensure the design choices protect existing relational practice.

This stability supported continuity during change and allowed areas to build their new model of practice around existing expertise.

This gave partners confidence that the reforms were a strategic priority, providing a clear route for escalation and decision-making.

Where this worked well, areas reported stronger buy-in and shared ownership of the designed models, with greater confidence that they reflected local need, demand and system context.

What is blocking implementation?

Blockers:

1

Capacity and resource pressure

2

Funding uncertainty and long-term sustainability

3

Cross-system structural complexity

4

Workforce confidence and role clarity

5

Clear senior leadership and governance

5

Competing reforms and priorities

Impact:

Capacity pressures constrained the pace of implementation and limited how quickly new arrangements could be embedded in practice.

Funding uncertainty made it difficult to plan confidently and reduced partners' willingness to commit staff on a sustained basis.

Structural differences made it challenging to establish multi-agency representation and slowed progress in embedding partner roles within ways of working.

This uncertainty affected workforce confidence and required careful change management to maintain trust and engagement.

This uncertainty reduced confidence at key transition points, making it harder for professionals to hold risk collectively and use MACPTs as intended for shared, proportionate decision-making.

The scale, pace and overlap of concurrent reforms made it harder to prioritise implementation of the reforms and to align it coherently with wider system change.

Other considerations:

FFP should be approached with an awareness of the wider landscape of children's services reform and concurrent national and local initiatives. Understanding what else is in play helps avoid duplication, manage overlap, and ensure FFP is designed and delivered in a way that complements, not competes with, other priorities.

FFP and SEND



Understanding Cohort Overlap



Early Intervention: A Shared Priority



Aligning Pathways



Data and Information Sharing

FFP and LGR



Opportunity to do things differently



Integration of support.



Don't lose sight of practice