



December 2025

Hello,

Welcome to the first Families First Newsletter for Tameside! As we move forward in delivering these reforms, our team will be continuing to provide updates to you through this Newsletter.

Within our newsletters you will receive updates on progress that we have made so far, and the next steps we will be taking. These will be split into each of the workstreams within the programme.

For the Families First Partnership Programme in Tameside, Elaine Bentley, Assistant Director for Early Help, Family Help Transformation & Youth Partnerships, has been appointed as the Senior Responsible Officer.

In Tameside we are welcoming these reforms as an opportunity to build on and develop our existing improvement journey.

What is the Families First Partnership Programme?

The Families First Partnership (FFP) is a national programme launched by the Department for Education (DfE) to ensure the delivering of key reforms to children's social care.

The aim of the FFP programme is to transform the whole system of help, support and protection, to ensure that every family can access the right help and support when they need it, with a strong emphasis on early intervention to prevent crisis.

This will create a more connected, family-focused system. It will deliver the right support at the right time, ensuring that children are safe and families are strengthened.

FFP is part of the wider Stable Homes, Built on Love reform strategy.

It consists of three key reform strands:

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

Enabling Service Delivery

We held our first Families First Oversight Programme Board on Tuesday 18th November, which was well attended by representatives across the partnership. This included representatives from Health services, the Police, Probation, Schools and teams across Children's Services and wider enabling services.



During this first session, we focused on understanding the programme and we had a presentation from Ian Waters, who is providing support from the programmes Delivery Partner, Mutual Ventures.

Our next meeting has been scheduled to take place in March, and we are now contacting families to enquire if they would like to join our group and help to shape our reforms.

We have had positive feedback from partners following this first meeting, and we are looking forward to working alongside one another to progress through these reforms.

"I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the Oversight Board meeting this week, the level of clarity, professionalism, and commitment displayed during the meeting was highly commendable and makes me feel positive that, under your continued guidance, collectively we are exceptionally well placed to progress the FFPP in Tameside."

Nicola Mitchell, Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children (Tameside)

"On a personal note, the change in energy and communication this academic year has been transformational compared to previous years at Tameside - thank you for your leadership and open communication!"

Claire Cronin, Headteacher Westhill School

Following the first Families First Programme Oversight Board, we are establishing steering groups for each of the workstreams to plan out the activities and requirements in more detail.

As part of our programme delivery, we are required to complete submissions of our local Delivery Plan and Data Returns to the DfE. We are now in the process of submitting our second Delivery Plan, and this will be completed and submitted by Friday 19th December.

Engagement & Co-design

As we have started our journey in Tameside, a number of briefings have been delivered locally for colleagues across the partnership, by Elaine Bentley. These have provided an opportunity for colleagues to hear an overview of the programme and its requirements, as well as the next steps for Tameside. These briefings have also complemented the broader programme updates and briefings that the DfE have provided to system leaders.

The local briefings have been delivered to:

- Early Help Teams
- Tameside Secondary Heads
- West Family Help Pilot Team (Targeted Early Help Team and Duty & Assessment Team)
- Designated Safeguarding Leads Network in Education
- Tameside Youth Justice Service
- Families First Programme Oversight Board members

The feedback from these briefings has been positive, and they have also allowed for valuable discussion and reflections.

Following the briefing for the Designated Safeguarding Lead's, from across Tameside's schools, many attendees shared that they saw the reforms as a positive step to improving outcomes for children and families:

"The reforms and changes that have been discussed will be beneficial for everyone moving forward and give consistency for both schools and parents."

"Excellent delivery from Elaine. Clear and realistic about priorities and challenges. Excited to see families better supported and hopeful education will be embedded in the process and help to lead change."

"It feels like a positive step forward to improve outcomes for children."

We have also been engaging with partners to co-design Tameside's Family Help approach. At the Families First Programme Oversight Board, we completed a workshop exercise focused on the three key reform strands. As a partnership we split into three groups, to discuss our current position and the next steps that we need to take in order to deliver the reforms. These discussions have informed the second part of our Delivery Plan, and the development of our local programme plan.

Family Help

This is a system of Family Help that brings together early help and statutory support.

Family Help brings together Early Help and Child in Need services into one system, with the ambition to remove the traditional separation between these services.

To date we have commenced a pilot for the Family Help approach within our West locality. At this stage, the pilot has involved co-locating our Targeted Early Help and Duty & Assessment Teams. These teams are now working closely together, regularly discussing families they are working with, and getting to know their locality. A review has also been undertaken of the open caseloads, to develop a shared understanding of thresholds, and this is informing the development of a single assessment which will be used within Family Help.

There is further activity ongoing to develop the single assessment, and to scope the Family Help Lead Practitioner roles.

The Estates Team have identified working spaces for the remaining locality teams, and the model applied to the West team will be replicated across the borough.

A needs assessment is also being completed for the localities, to ensure that this will inform our understanding of needs across the borough.

Front door arrangements (MASH)

There has been a focus on the MASH to strengthen the partnership approach. This has included increased representation from partner agencies, including colleagues from Health, the Police, Probation, Education Welfare, Adults, Domestic Abuse and Victim Liaison. Each of these agencies have colleagues working from the MASH for part of each week, and there are agreements in place to enable information sharing and a fast response when they are unable to work from the MASH.

Integrated working for these services continues to be developed, and this will provide a model that can be built on and replicated for the Family Help teams. It will also ensure that the MASH as a front door will have a role as a support function, and link effectively to all other services.

To date, feedback has been positive, and it has allowed for relationships to be built and good integrated working.

This workstream is being led by: Nik Joseph

Multi-agency Child Protection

Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs) will enable faster, more coordinated responses to significant harm.

The first steering group for this workstream has been scheduled to take place on the 17th of December, and this will be focused on setting our strategic vision for Multi-Agency Child Protection.

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