



January 2026

Welcome to the second edition of Tameside's Families First Partnership Programme (FFPP) Newsletter. Since our December launch, activity across the programme has gathered pace. We're pleased to share the latest progress and upcoming activity across each workstream as we continue to embed the Families First reforms.

Recap: What is the Families First Partnership Programme?

The Families First Partnership is a national programme led by the Department for Education (DfE) to improve how children's social care supports families. Its aim is to create a more joined up, family focused system, where services work together to keep children safe and support families. The reforms include the introduction of Family Help, strengthening multi-agency child protection, and improving engagement with family networks.

Enabling Programme Delivery

Strong governance arrangements are now firmly in place to support the delivery of the programme. The Families First Programme Oversight Board meets quarterly, with workstream groups meeting monthly and additional task and finish groups established as needed to drive progress.

In addition to local governance, regular reporting is provided to the DfE to demonstrate progress against the reforms. On the 19th December, Part 2 of Tameside's Delivery Plan was submitted to the DfE, setting out our baseline position, key strengths, areas for development, and agreed milestones across each workstream. This was followed by the submission of the Quarter 3 monitoring data on the 23rd January, including an expenditure breakdown and figures relevant to implementation of the three reform pillars.

A range of enabling services have been involved in supporting implementation. This includes ongoing work to identify and deliver the changes required to the Case Management System (CMS) to support new ways of working. This activity is being coordinated through system mapping workshops, ensuring the necessary system developments are made.

Alongside this, a comprehensive training offer is being developed to support practitioners and partners with the new ways of working. Our Family Help training package has been scoped, with plans to start delivering induction sessions from February.

Our Business Intelligence team and partners are also undertaking detailed neighbourhood level data mapping to improve understanding of demand. This work will ensure the local design of the reforms are informed by need.

To further strengthen local design, an interactive workshop facilitated by Ian Waters (Mutual Ventures) is scheduled for the 3rd February. This session will focus on a child's journey through the Families First system and will provide an opportunity to test and refine our local design of Family Help, Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams and Family Group Decision Making.

Engagement & Co-Production

Engaging partners, families and practitioners continues to be a priority across the Families First Partnership Programme, with a strong focus on collaboration, transparency and shared ownership of improvement.

Partners continue to be involved in workstream groups and Oversight Board and were involved in the creation of the Delivery Plan submitted to the DfE in December.

In addition, Greater Manchester Police have set out initial proposals to support more consistent safeguarding arrangements across Greater Manchester, and Tameside has signed up to the request for collective GMP investment to support delivery of the Families First reforms.

We are currently reaching out to families to be involved in the co-production of literature about our Family Help services, to understand what works best when sharing information and how we can make it clear and accessible.

We will also be launching a new video podcast series, 'Children at the Heart of Improvement', hosted by our Head of Family Help and Families First Transformation, Nik Joseph. The first episode will focus on the Families First reforms and the recent Ofsted monitoring visit, with guests Elaine Bentley (Assistant Director - Early Help, Family Help Transformation & Youth Partnerships) and Victoria Sattler (Assistant Director, Children's Social Care).

Family Help

Family Help is a central pillar of the Families First reforms, bringing together Targeted Early Help and statutory services into a single, connected system. The first Family Help Strategic Group met on the 16th January 2026, providing an opportunity to begin shaping the local approach and overseeing implementation.

Progress is being made across localities. A Family Help pilot is currently underway in the West locality, with co-located Targeted Early Help and Duty & Assessment teams working alongside one another. In addition, teams moved into the East locality on the 12th January and the North locality on the 26th January.

Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLP) job descriptions have been drafted and are now progressing through job evaluation and consultation, and early work has begun to explore what a single assessment could look like across the Family Help system.

Looking forwards, activity will focus on moving the final Family Help team into the South locality and continuing to embed Family Help ways of working across co-located teams. Work will also continue in developing the single assessment and on building a shared understanding of Family Help with children, young people and families.

This workstream is being led by: Nik Joseph (Head of Family Help and Families First Transformation)

Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs)

The Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT) workstream focuses on strengthening responses where children are at risk of significant harm through improved multi-agency collaboration. The first MACPT Strategic Group met on the 17th December.

Progress to date includes gathering learning from pathfinder MACPT models to inform local design, and Child Protection Conference Chairs beginning to observe strategy meetings. Leads and partners have also been identified to support the revision of the level of need document, and job descriptions and person specifications for Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPPs) have been drafted and are progressing through job evaluation.

Over the next few months, activity will focus on finalising the MACPT model for rollout in Tameside, working closely with safeguarding partners to publish a refreshed level of need document by March 2026, and piloting Conference Chairs having oversight at strategy meetings.

This workstream is being led by: Kayleigh Treanor (Head of Quality, Practice Assurance and Principal Social Worker)

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) remains a key mechanism for empowering families to develop solutions that help children and young people to remain safe and supported within their networks. The first FGDM Strategic Group took place on the 30th January 2026.

Over the upcoming months, activity will focus on developing a clearer understanding of the additional resources required to support the expansion of FGDM and Family Network Meetings and to ensure timely access for families.

This workstream is being led by: Nik Joseph (Head of Family Help and Families First Transformation)

Get in Touch

Families First represents a significant opportunity to strengthen outcomes for children and families in Tameside, building on our improvement journey.

If you'd like to get involved or have any questions about the programme, please contact: Lucy Hamilton, Families First Project Manager (lucy.hamilton@tameside.gov.uk).

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