



February 2026

Welcome to the February edition of Tameside's Families First Partnership Programme (FFPP) Newsletter. In this issue you'll find the latest progress and upcoming activity across each of our workstreams as we continue to embed the reforms and strengthen the support available to children, young people and families across Tameside.

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

The strategic groups for each workstream are now well underway in planning the local design of the reforms. To support this work, Ian Waters (Mutual Ventures) facilitated a Child's Journey Workshop at the beginning of February, bringing members of Oversight Board together to map what a child and family's journey through the reformed system could look like. The session was really beneficial, highlighting key questions and areas that need deeper consideration from the strategic groups. Visuals of the journeys mapped in this session have now been drafted and will continue to evolve as our local vision of the reforms takes shape.

Our next Families First Oversight Board will take place on the 3 March. Since the Board first met in November 2025, we've seen real progress across all workstreams, and this meeting will be an opportunity to bring everyone together and sharpen our collective vision for the end-to-end system.

The work of our enabling services is helping to build the infrastructure and insight needed to deliver the reforms. The Enabling Services Group came together on the 18 February to

review progress and agree the next phase of activity from our supporting services. Key activity thus far includes:

- Demand data collection from our Business Intelligence team and partners to inform the composition of multi-agency Family Help teams
- Ongoing systems testing to ensure the changes do not impact reporting or statutory returns
- Development of the training offer for Family Help teams, including the 5Cs and values sessions which will run throughout March 2026
- The launch of our Children at the Heart of Improvement video podcast



Engagement & Co-Production

We continue to prioritise collaboration, transparency, and shared ownership as we shape and deliver the reforms. Partners are actively involved across all areas of the programme, contributing through the workstream groups, Oversight Board, and recent activities such as the Child's Journey workshop.

We also have dedicated sessions scheduled with children and families to coproduce information about our Family Help services, ensuring materials are clear, accessible, and reflect what works best for the people who will use them.

February saw the launch of Children at the Heart of Improvement, our video podcast series. The next episode will be recorded and released in March, focusing on our Practice Approach and exploring insights gathered from the Child's Journey workshop. [To watch the first episode, click here!](#)

Family Help

Family Help sits at the heart of the Families First reforms, bringing together Targeted Early Help and statutory services into one connected, multiagency system designed to provide timely, consistent support for children and families.

Our second Family Help Strategic Group met on the 25 February, and focused on shaping the composition of the multiagency Family Help teams based on data gathered from partners. The group also explored what the new single assessment should look like. A first draft of this assessment has been developed, and the group's feedback will ensure it is practical and effective for partners and families.

Three of our four Family Help locality teams are co-located in the community, early feedback of which has been positive—particularly around the strengthened relationships developing between the former Targeted Early Help teams and Duty and Assessment teams.

Consultation on the new Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLP) role began on the 16 February, marking a key step to establishing our Family Help teams.

Moving forwards, our priority is to complete the move of the final Family Help team into the South locality and to begin working in a Family Help way from April 2026. This transition will include bringing Targeted Early Help and Duty and Assessment together as one unified service and introducing the single assessment—reducing duplication and ensuring families no longer have to repeat their story.

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) play a crucial role in strengthening our collective response to children at risk of significant harm.

Our second MACPT Strategic Group met on the 4 February and focused on establishing a draft Terms of Reference for the MACPT and creating a draft agenda for strategy discussions.

As chairing strategy discussions will be part of Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPP's) responsibilities, two Child Protection Conference Chairs (CP Chairs) spent time observing strategy discussions within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). These observations identified examples of strong practice, as well as opportunities for refinement. The insights have since been shared with the wider group of CP Chairs and training will take place throughout March, including mock strategy discussions and additional observations where needed, to ensure readiness for the transition.

Work is also underway to map existing partner presence within the MASH and to understand how these resources will align with the developing MACPT model.

Over the coming months, activity will focus on preparing CP Chairs to begin chairing strategy discussions and overseeing Section 47 enquiries from April 2026, as well as finalising which partners will form part of the MACPT and defining their roles within the team.

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.

Our Family Group Decision Making Strategic Groups take place bi-monthly. At the last session, we held a mock Family Network Meeting and created a pledge of how practitioners will champion Family Group Decision Making in their roles and services.

A business case for our Family Group Decision Making service has been created including Edge of Care service and EDT to support a more strengthened joined up approach.

Over the upcoming months, activity will focus on clarifying and communicating the distinction between Family Network Meetings and Family Group Decision Making.

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

Special Educational Needs & Children with Disabilities (SEN & CWD)

At Tameside we have decided to add a fourth pillar to our reform programme, SEN & CWD. A significant number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) also access early help and social care services. By creating a SEN & CWD workstream, we are hoping to ensure greater co-ordination between the two services.

The first meeting of our SEN & CWD Strategic Group will take place on the 11 March and focus on establishing a vision for this workstream.

Ahead of this, the workstream leads have met with Ian Waters and Trevor Doughty who work with Mutual Ventures, the delivery partner for Families First, to learn what other local authorities are doing in this area.

This workstream is being led by: Hilary Cook (Head of SEND) and Philip Wilkinson (Head of Family Help & Neighbourhood Social Work)

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).

