



Welcome to the March 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.

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.

Our Families First Partnership Programme Oversight Board convened for its second meeting on the 3 March, bringing together senior leaders, partners, practitioners and enabling services. In addition to receiving progress updates from each workstream, the Board heard invaluable insights from a Family Help Senior Practitioner, reflecting on the impact of the reforms to date, and a domestic abuse victim and survivor, highlighting how the social care system can better support those affected by domestic abuse.

- Consultations with staff regarding the proposed changes to job roles
- Implementation of system changes ahead of the new reporting year, and the planning of subsequent system demo's & training
- Roll out of the initial training package to support the reforms. Practitioners can book onto training via the [Children's Services Training](#) webpage.

Engagement & Co-Production

Partners continue to play an active role across all areas of the programme, contributing through the workstream groups, Oversight Board and task and finish groups. In addition, briefings and updates continue to be shared with partners through existing forums such as the Designated Safeguarding Leads Group.

We are also currently preparing engagement events to launch our Family Help test and learn.

- Internal launches will take place on the 8 April, in which the Families First Partnership Programme Leads will be visiting the Family Help teams to present on the reforms, consult with practitioners and most importantly celebrate the new way of working with some cake!
- An external launch to communicate the new Family Help approach with families, provide free activities where families can come together informally with professionals, and consult on what good looks like in the Family Help space is also in planning.

This month's episode of our video podcast 'Children at the Heart of Improvement' spotlighted our Practice Approach, with guests Jill Colbert and Kayleigh Treanor. [To watch the episode, click here!](#)

We have recorded a bonus podcast episode this month with guest Andy Lloyd, exploring the training offer available from the Social Work Academy, including the specific training opportunities developed to support the Families First reforms. [To watch the bonus 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.

In March, the Family Help workstream has focused on preparing for the launch of our test and learn, which will start in April 2026. A key milestone has been the co-production of the new Single Assessment, designed to reduce duplication, adapt as needs change and make it easier for families to navigate services. Tameside's single assessment has been co-produced by Family Help Team Manager's and the Family Help Strategic Group, which

includes partners from education, health, police and Bridges. The Single Assessment will be trialled as part of the Family Help test and learn from April 2026.

Moving forwards, the workstream will turn its attention to determining the agencies, services and practitioners that should make up our multi-disciplinary Family Help teams. This work will be guided by the demand data gathered by the Family Help Strategic Group, ensuring teams are shaped around local need.

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.

The third MACPT Strategic Group met on the 6 March and focused on confirming the agenda for strategy discussion meetings and outlining the test and learn approach and initial governance for the MACPT.

The MACPT test and learn will begin on the 13 April, introducing a new way of working in which Child Protection Conference Chairs - who will become our future Lead Child Protection Practitioners - will begin chairing strategy discussions and having oversight of Section 47's, working closely with Family Help and Safeguarding teams. The new model aims to reduce delays, improve information sharing, and ensure children at risk receive coordinated, effective protection at the right time.

To support practitioners involved in the MACPT test and learn, a dedicated briefing session was held on the 25 March. Additional briefings for staff and partners, outlining what the MACPT test and learn means for them, are currently in planning and will be shared in due course.

Over the coming months, activity will focus on refining our MACPT model based on insights from the test and learn, and confirming the core membership of the MACPT beyond our Lead Child Protection Practitioners, ready for roll out in phase 2 of the test and learn.

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.

Tameside's Edge of Care offer has been reviewed, leading to a proposal for a new 'Families Valued' team. This proposal has been presented to the Employee Consultation Group, and is currently progressing through staff consultation.

Over the upcoming months, activity will focus on developing the operational frameworks for Family Group Decision Making. This includes establishing consistent expectations for

planning and delivering both Family Network Meetings and Family Group Conferences, ensuring a clear and reliable approach for practitioners, families, and partners.

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 took place on the 11 March and focused on establishing a vision for this workstream, and understanding how the SEND and Families First reforms overlap.

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

Diversity Month

April is Diversity Month, a time to recognise and honour the richness of our identities and experiences including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, faith, sexual orientation, disability, and neurodiversity.

It encourages us to foster understanding, respect and inclusion, and to make space for diverse voices in our thinking, practice, and decision-making. Our expectation is that all Children's Services colleagues participate in this month's learning and development offer.

You're invited to join us on Wednesday 1 April, from 9am arrival time with a 9.30am start and 1pm finish, Hyde Town Hall, Newton Suite for breakfast and the launch of Diversity Month with our Director of Children's Services, Jill Colbert OBE, and Assistant Director for Early Help, Family Help Transformation & Youth Partnerships, Elaine Bentley. This will be followed by a workshop delivered by Afruca. You don't want to miss it, [book your place here](#). Password is CATHOT#1

We have a special edition programme for Diversity Month, [you can view that here](#).



Diversity Month



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).

