



April 2026

Welcome to the April 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

Our enabling services have been crucial in the design and implementation of the reforms in Tameside. The Enabling Services Group met on the 17 April to review progress to date and agree the next phase of activity from our supporting services. Key activity over the past month includes:

- Submission of the Q4 Monitoring Return to the DfE
- Implementation of system changes to enable the Family Help and Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) test and learn's
- Job evaluation and consultations with staff regarding the new Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCPP) role and Families Valued Service
- The design of future training and development opportunities to support practitioners with the roll out of the reforms

Practitioners can book onto training via [Eventbrite](#).

Engagement & Co-Production

After a short pause over the Easter holidays, our Strategic Groups are back up and running, with partners and practitioners leading the local design and implementation of the reform pillars.

April also marked our Family Help internal launch events. Elaine Bentley (Assistant Director – Early Help, Family Help Transformation and Youth Partnerships) and Nik Joseph (Head of Family Help and Families First Transformation) visited Family Help teams to share information and answer any questions about the test and learn. The sessions were also a great opportunity to celebrate the progress made to date with some cake!

At these sessions, we received feedback suggesting drop-in sessions for practitioners and partners to meet the Family Help teams. We agree this would be valuable and will look to arrange sessions with Team Managers for later in the year.

This month's Children at the Heart of Improvement video podcast spotlighted experiences of the Family Help test and learn, featuring Family Help Lead Practitioner's Stacy Waters and Leanne Hancock. [Click here to watch!](#)



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 Family Help test and learn launched on the 7 April, removing the hand-off between Targeted Early Help and Duty and Assessment services. In this first phase of implementation, alternatively qualified Family Help Lead Practitioners are beginning to case-hold Child in Need work, and two practitioners from each team are piloting the new single assessment.

The Family Help Strategic Group met on the 20 April, focusing on how teams can develop into a multi-agency model. Plans are being made to test partner co-location within the Family Help bases and ensure the buildings are fit for purpose.

The next priority for the Family Help workstream is to finalise the single assessment based on pilot feedback, before rolling it out to all Family Help Lead Practitioners and replacing the Early Help and Child and Family Assessments.

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 MACPT Test and Learn launched on the 13 April. As part of this, Child Protection Conference Chairs – our future Lead Child Protection Practitioners – are chairing strategy discussions referred directly from the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Early feedback highlights stronger joint working between the MASH, Conference Chairs and Family Help teams. It was also clear that further communication of the changes with partners is needed, so dedicated partner briefings have been developed for the 13 May.

Over the coming months, we will refine the MACPT model using learning from phase one of testing and confirm the wider core membership ahead of phase two rollout.

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.

Implementation of this reform pillar has progressed at a slightly slower pace whilst work has taken place to review Tameside's Edge of Care offer. This has led to the proposal of a new Families Valued service, which is currently progressing through staff consultation. The service will provide early intervention and therapeutic support to children and families at risk of entering care. Recruitment is underway for a Families Valued Service Lead and a Family Group Conferencing Team Manager.

Over the coming months, work will focus on developing the operational framework for Family Group Decision Making, including clear and consistent expectations for Family Network Meetings and Family Group Conferences 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 and CWD)

At Tameside we have decided to add a fourth pillar to our reform programme, SEN and 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 and CWD workstream, we are hoping to ensure greater co-ordination between the two services.

The next meeting our SEN and CWD Strategic Group will take place on the 29 May, and will focus on scoping the aspirations and activity for this workstream.

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).

