



May 2026

Welcome to the May 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 continue to support the design and implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme in Tameside. The Enabling Services Group met on the 22 May to review progress to date and agree future priorities.

Key activity over the past month includes:

- Development of a team based, flexible programme of training for Family Help
- Mapping of specialisms of Family Help Lead Practitioners

Engagement & Co-Production

Our Strategic Groups, made up of partners and practitioners, continue to play a key role in driving the design and delivery of the reforms, working towards implementation by April 2027.

This month, members of the Families First Project team (Nik Joseph, Danielle Ashworth, and Lucy Hamilton) met with families who had previously received support from children's social care. The aim was to understand what information would have been most helpful at the point of first contact, and preferred methods of communication, including written materials, digital content, and face-to-face discussion. This work represents the first stage of our co-production approach to developing the Family Help information offer, which will continue over the coming months.

This month's Children at the Heart of Improvement video podcast focuses on the SEND reforms, featuring Hilary Cook (Head of SEND) and Erica Douglas-Osborn (Principal Educational Psychologist). The episode is currently being edited—keep an eye out for its release!

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.

The Family Help test and learn phase, launched on 7 April, continues to explore key elements of the reforms. The single assessment is currently being piloted with a cohort of practitioners ahead of full implementation.

June's Family Help Strategic Group will run slightly differently, with Ian Waters (our Delivery Partner from Mutual Ventures) facilitating workshop-style sessions to explore local requirements and delivery approaches for Family Help in Tameside.

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 has completed four-week's of test and learn, generating valuable insights to support future development.

However, we would like to share that the MACPT test and learn is currently paused following the sudden and deeply sad passing of Verity Chapman. Verity was a much-loved and highly valued colleague who dedicated over five years to Tameside, most recently as Service Lead for the Conference and Review Team in Children's Services. Our thoughts are with her family, friends, and colleagues at this difficult time.

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 Department for Education's 2026/27 Families First Partnership Programme guidance sets out the expectation that all local authorities will implement Family Network Support Packages (FNSPs) to strengthen family network support and enable children to remain safely within parental care. Over the coming months, the Family Group Decision Making Strategic Group will focus on establishing the governance arrangements required to support the introduction of FNSPs.

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 SEN and CWD workstream of Families First is currently under review to determine how it aligns with the broader SEND reform workstreams.

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).

