
Lead director: Damian Elcock
Lead Member Briefing
Families First Partnership Programme

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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1. Summary

- 1.1. The Families First Partnership (FFP) programme is a national initiative introduced by the Department for Education (DfE) in March 2025. It aims to transform children's social care by promoting early, coordinated and family centred support.
- 1.2. The FFP programme will support safeguarding partners to bring together targeted early help, child in need and multi-agency child protection into a seamless system of help, support and protection. This includes services and workforces, such as family support workers, social workers and other specialist and alternatively qualified practitioners, coming together to support families.
- 1.3. The aims of the Families First Programme are:
 - Strengthened family resilience with greater stability and reduced escalation of need
 - Effective prevention and early intervention as proactive support reduces the need for statutory services
 - Whole family approach improving family networks and community connections, considering wider drivers of need (housing, health, work)
 - Better integration and coordination of services to support this, and to strengthen evidence-led decision-making
- 1.4. Leicester City Council has been making progress towards the delivery of the Families First Programme, driving towards the piloting of the Family Help model in one cluster from November 2025. The pilot aims to understand what works well and what needs improvement, in order to inform wider system changes, support the roll-out of Family Help and capture learning to inform the development of other roles. This pilot will inform a wider roll out in April next year.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1. To note the details shared in the cover report and supporting presentation.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1. A Young People's Shadow Board has been established to ensure that young people's voices are central in the co-design of Families First services. Young people have shaped the vision statement for the programme – "We put families first to support thriving communities in Leicester".
- 3.2. The governance for the delivery of the Families First programme ensures that staff are given opportunity to shape delivery (including both through workstreams and membership of the practitioners' forum). Divisional briefings have been carried out

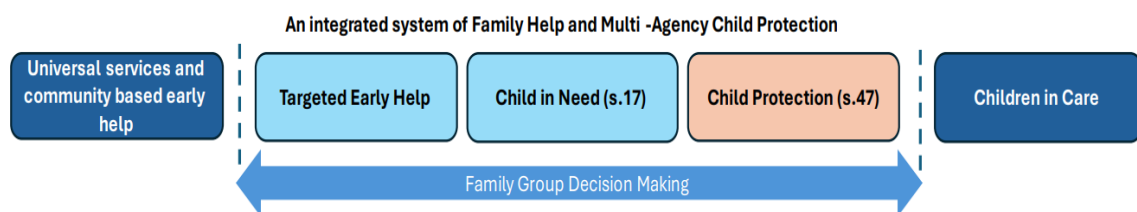
with the wider workforce to communicate key updates and offer the opportunity to feed back.

- 3.3. The IMPOWER team has taken the lead on engagement with partners, building on foundations of partnership work established in the multi-agency IMPACT Board and through seconded health and police roles.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

4.1. Families First Partnership Programme Overview

- 4.1.1. The Families First Partnership Programme is focused on shaping a system in which practitioners from social work, police, health, education and beyond work together to promote the wellbeing of children and keep them safe from harm.
- 4.1.2. The programme places a strong emphasis on early intervention to prevention crisis as well as utilising a whole family approach to ensure the needs of the adults in the household are also important.
- 4.1.3. The vision for an integrated system of Family Help and Multi-Agency Child Protection is summarised in the diagram below:

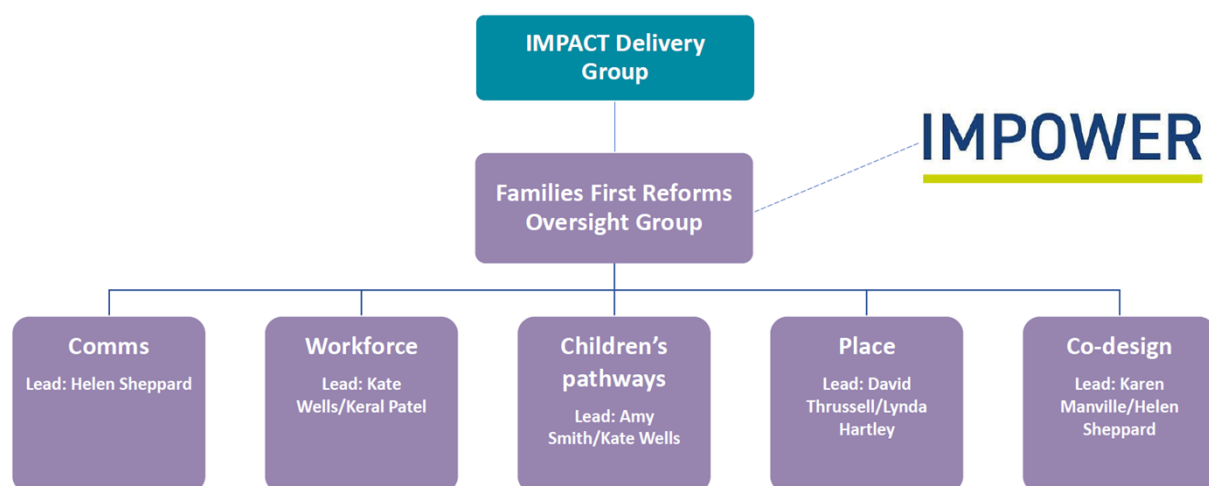


- 4.1.4. There are three key components of the Families First Partnership model: Family Help, Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT) and Family Group Decision Making which can be understood as follows:
- 4.1.4.1. **Family Help:** Combines targeted early help and child-in-need services into single, multidisciplinary Family Help teams that utilise a proactive, early intervention approach. The locality-based teams will bring together professionals from different services to support families before problems escalate.
- 4.1.4.2. **Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams:** Co-located teams of professionals across services (including police, health, education and social services) working together to protect children at risk. The teams will ensure consistent oversight through a lead child protection practitioner and tailor responses to local needs, including support for parents and carers.
- 4.1.4.3. **Family Group Decision Making:** Ensures that family networks are actively involved, with support provided to enable family networks to help children stay safe and thrive at home. The approach empowers families to be part of the decision-making around their child's care. It is embedded across the system and used especially before legal proceedings, with clear guidelines on when it should or should not be used.

- 4.1.5. The Department for Education has laid out the following key aims for delivering the Families First Partnership Programme in 2025-26:
- 4.1.5.1. Setting up multi-agency governance and strong programme management structures to effectively deliver reforms
 - 4.1.5.2. Carrying out local design so that services and systems are tailored to local needs and contexts in order to be effective
 - 4.1.5.3. Co-designing with partners to share knowledge and design joined up and effective services that use resource effectively and improve outcomes
 - 4.1.5.4. Co-design with children, young people, families and the community to ensure services are accessible and meet their needs
 - 4.1.5.5. Using evidence effectively so that services are using evidence-based approaches that respond to local population needs assessments
 - 4.1.5.6. Designing end-to-end reform that support changes in systems, culture and practice
- 4.1.6. In Leicester, Early Help teams currently operate in each local area, based across multiple community hubs while Child in Need (CiN) teams are located centrally, separate from the Early Help teams.
- 4.1.7. In the new approach, aligned to the Families First Partnership Programme, Early Help and CiN teams will merge into a single Family Help Team within each locality. These teams will work side by side and include both qualified social workers and early-help practitioners, with a blended management structure.

4.2. Progressing and piloting the Families First approach

- 4.2.1. Governance has been established to drive forward the Families First approach, as captured in the diagram below:



- 4.2.2. Together with support from consultants from IMPOWER, aiding in ensuring the appropriate changes are made at pace, the workstream leads have been shaping thinking to inform a pilot of the Family Help model.
- 4.2.3. The pilot is being designed to trial how locality-based Family Help works and feels for staff, families, communities and partners.

- 4.2.4. The pilot aims to understand what works well and what needs improvement, in order to:
- Inform wider system changes
 - Support the roll out of Family Help
 - Capture learning to inform the development of other roles
- 4.2.5. A workflow has been shaped to test in the pilot. It is not yet decided whether the Single Assessment Team will remain centrally located or be based in the clusters. The pilot will help us determine how this works.
- 4.2.6. Based on capacity and demand analysis, it has been determined that the approach will be piloted in the South cluster (where Saffron Lane and Eyres Monsell Children's Centres are located).

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Signed: Mohammed Irfan, Head of Finance

Dated: 15 October 2025

5.2 Legal implications

The contents of this report are noted as is the action plan. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Signed: Susan Holmes, Head of Law

Dated: 08 October 2025

5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This statutory duty requires them, when carrying out their functions, to pay due regard to three key needs:

The Families First Partnership (FFP) program aims to improve children's social care by promoting a more integrated, family-focused approach to early help and child protection. It emphasises early intervention, multi-agency collaboration, and ensuring that children and

families access the right support when they need it, with the goal of keeping children within their family networks whenever possible. The development of services in Leicester, in response to these government reforms, is expected to lead to positive impacts for people across many protected characteristics. The current pilot is designed to trial how locality-based Family Help works and feels for staff, families, communities, and partners. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation will be important to assessing its impacts on people.

Important that we understand and account for the diverse backgrounds of families when providing support. Families with children in need are often those experiencing poverty, poor health, and unstable housing. Some groups face greater challenges, the FFP program aims to address inequalities by providing targeted support. These initiatives should, collectively, lead to positive impacts for people from across a range of protected characteristics.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 6 October 2025

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated with this report. As service delivery by the council and partners generally contributes to the council's carbon footprint, any impacts could be considered within delivery of related projects, such as encouraging the use of sustainable travel options, using buildings and materials efficiently and following the council's sustainable procurement guidance, as appropriate and relevant.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

Dated: 01 October 2025

6. Background information and other papers:

n/a

7. Summary of appendices:

- a. Map of clusters
- b. Families First presentation

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a "key decision"? If so, why?

No