

Family Action Stockton-on-Tees in Strategic Partnership with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council



Family Action Mission and Vision

We all have our own family stories, some tougher than others. But the story of today doesn't have to be the story of tomorrow, for any of us. Family is a doing word. Together, we change lives. And it's what we have been doing for over 150 years.

Our mission

- Family Action supports people through change, challenge or crisis. It's what we've done for over 150 years. We protect children, support young people and adults and offer direct, practical help to families and communities.
- We see first-hand the power of family to shape lives, for better or worse, so we speak up for the importance of family in national and local policymaking, amplify family voices and represent the changing needs of families in the UK today.



Family Action Mission and Vision

Our vision and ethos:

- At Family Action, our vision is of a society that understands the importance and power of family as a foundation for individual futures and connected, resilient communities.
- Because family is the key to positive futures, for individuals and society: whether it's recognising the value of family networks and support in the present or understanding the impact of trauma from the past, understanding the power of family to shape futures at every age is vital.

Our Values:

- People focused
- Mutual respect
- Excellence
- Can do



Overview of the Strategic Partnership

The strategic was formed in 2022 as part of the Family Support commissioning process; this included two core services:

- Stockton Family Outreach and Volunteering Service
- Stockton Family Time Service



The council had a clear vision regarding the strategic partnership and the benefits an alternative approach to commissioning could achieve including:

- Creation of a coherent offer across the system.
- Service alignment.
- Provision of a broader range of support.
- Strengthening of community partnerships and assets.



The Strategic Partnership in Practice

Key Elements:

- Joint visioning sessions to align the two organisations
- Joint development of the services theory of change model
- Mutually agreed and reviewed risk register
- Focus on continuous improvement planning and implementation including joint auditing process
- Robust data impact assessment process, privacy notice and shared recording system in place
- Collaborative planning of jointly aligned initiatives
- Embedded within the Early Help system with a smoother transition for families across the system
- Focus on emerging needs and opportunities; working collaboratively to be solution focused and consider system change as required
- Social value with £72,000 of SV achieved in 2024/25



Family Outreach and Volunteering Service



Family Outreach

- The Family Outreach Service works with the whole family unit. Providing early help support to families who require additional support to achieve or maintain positive outcomes.
- The service supports families with a range of support needs including:
 - Practical & Emotional Support
 - Family Routines & Boundaries
 - Debt Management & Budgeting
 - Support with housing and benefit processes
 - Accessing Grants & Emergency Grants – food bank/baby bank
 - Building self confidence
 - Reducing social isolation
 - Support attendance at appointments
 - Encourage social interaction in the community
 - Navigate & Signpost to other services
 - Liaison with schools and other services



Family Outreach Headline Data

1ST July 2024-30th June 2025:

- 284 whole family referrals received.
- 5 re-referrals of families who had previously accessed support.
- Referred 14 families onto children's social care (step up).



Volunteering and Community Engagement

- Recruitment and support of volunteers in family focused opportunities such as Family Hub based Stay and Play sessions; Biscuit Ninja's; EPEC parenting intervention delivery; Volunteer drivers; HAF delivery; etc.
- Engagement with communities not routinely accessing universal services such as Port Clarence and Tilery to enhance opportunities and provision within communities.
- Delivery of the holiday HAF programmes for families to ensure children are able to access fun, healthy and engaging activities throughout the school holidays.
- Partnership development and opportunities such as Stockton Arc, Tees Valley Museums, Shape the Play, etc.



Family Case Study



Additionality within Stockton-on-Tees



Family Line: First line support for every family and any family issue

- If parents/adults are feeling overwhelmed, worried or upset about any aspect of their family life, whether in the present or something from their past, FamilyLine is here for them. FamilyLine offer free emotional support, information and guidance on family relationships – including siblings – conflict, parenting, caring, financial worries and more.
- Open Monday-Friday, 9am to 9pm.
- Callers must be 18+.



Established Partnerships

- The ARC
- Stockton Globe
- Tees Valley Museums
- The National Literacy Trust
- Shape the Play
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Libraries Services
- Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP)
- Healthwatch
- Stockton International Riverside Festival
- National Institute for Health Research
- The Dogs Trust
- The Festival of Thrift
- Stockton and Darlington Railways



Established Partnerships

Spotlight on The ARC: Stockton Arts Centre

Are an established Family Action Partner who have supported our services through the provision of free, low cost or enhanced opportunities for families including:

- Movie Club Cinema Tickets for Families
- Access to shows for Families attending our HAF programme
- Access to Refugee Week Events for families
- Provision of free theatre tickets to Family Action Volunteers as part of volunteer week celebrations
- Access to targeted events such as those provided for care experienced children
- Family Action Facilitation at the Pop-Up Pride Event held at the ARC which also provided supporting volunteers with access to free training



Established Partnerships

Spotlight on Tees Valley Museums

Have become a key partner of Family Action providing a range of additional activities, opportunities and structured visits for the families we support.

Examples include:

- Collections work with families in Port Clarence which included supporting families to develop collections, have a beach visit, create part of a museum exhibit and attend the Preston Park museum. For families in Port Clarence who often have limited opportunities due to lack of transport this was really impactful.
- Kirkleatham Hall regularly host HAF visits for families, ensuring family units have the opportunity to access cultural experiences alongside all of the fun activities on offer at the museum.



The Toy Appeal

- Families report they are struggling to keep the magic of Christmas alive - making impossible decisions like whether to heat their home, buy food and essentials or a present for their children.
- Parents who can't afford a present, or have to give something practical like bedding or school books, worry their children won't believe in Santa anymore or think they've done something wrong when he doesn't come.
- Every year the service facilitates the toy appeal ensuring all families receive gifts to give their children reducing the impact of any socio-economic disadvantage.



Wider Christmas Giving

Family Action also undertake the following every Christmas to support families in Stockton-on-Tees who are active to our service:

- Christmas Dinner Hampers
- Christmas Eve Boxes
- Access to Feeding Families Boxes
- Support access to Family Events



Community Opportunities

- Families are supported to take part in workshops and parades for community events such as SIRF, Stockton Sparkles, The Festival of Thrift and the Folk Festival. Often encouraging individuals to 'step outside of their comfort zone' and experience a sense of belonging within their local area.
- Facilitation at community events e.g. Pop-up Pride activities, Going for Gold events, etc.
- Development of additional opportunities in targeted areas such as Tilery and Port Clarence; creating opportunities for families via our own provision and connections with others such as employment and skills.



Families, Food and Fun

- Eligible families are identified and supported to access our Families, Food and Fun offer (DfE funding via Public Health).
- Delivered during specific school holiday periods to provide fun, healthy activities to children alongside food provision.
- Fantastic opportunities are created for role modelling to parents, informal education on a range of topics, structured play, personal development and ability to create happy memories for families with no cost to them.
- Supported by volunteers including young volunteers who regularly give their time to support delivery.



Families, Food and Fun: Feb Feedback

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- "Very good, the kids enjoyed it. People are very friendly."*
 - "Brilliant show & wonderful efforts from Family Action."*
 - "First time coming to school club and with Family Action, enjoyed both days. Activities at school, then Arc show was nice. Staff are lovely and helpful."*
 - "Good, first time coming, hope there are more sessions. We really enjoyed it, thank you Family Action for organising this"*
 - "Really enjoyed all activities, dance, craft, Arc, Thanks."*
 - "It was the first time my boys came to the holiday club. They had a great time."*



Wider Benefits

- Sharing of National Practice e.g. Small Steps offer, Family Time Hertfordshire
- Practice sharing with other organisations e.g. Social value overview provided to Eastern Ravens to support new service mobilisation.
- Access to Family Action Communities of Practice to share thematic learning for application in the Stockton-on-Tees Borough.
- Families have access to internal Family Action grants; these are often specific in nature however have been impactful.
- Charitable status therefore able to accept donations and additional grant funding opportunities.
- Staff volunteering initiatives supporting other local organisations such as Little Sprouts and Teesside Vineyard Church Baby Bank (social value).

