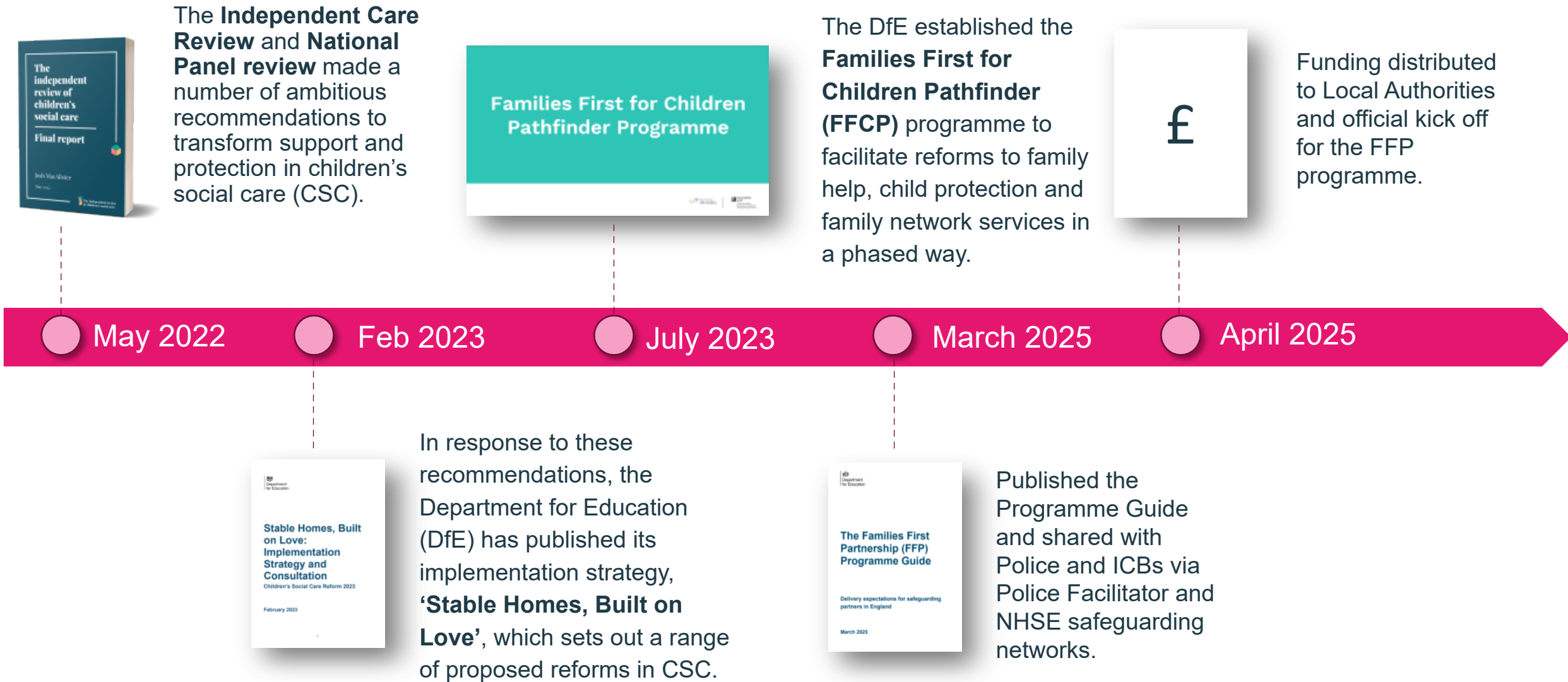


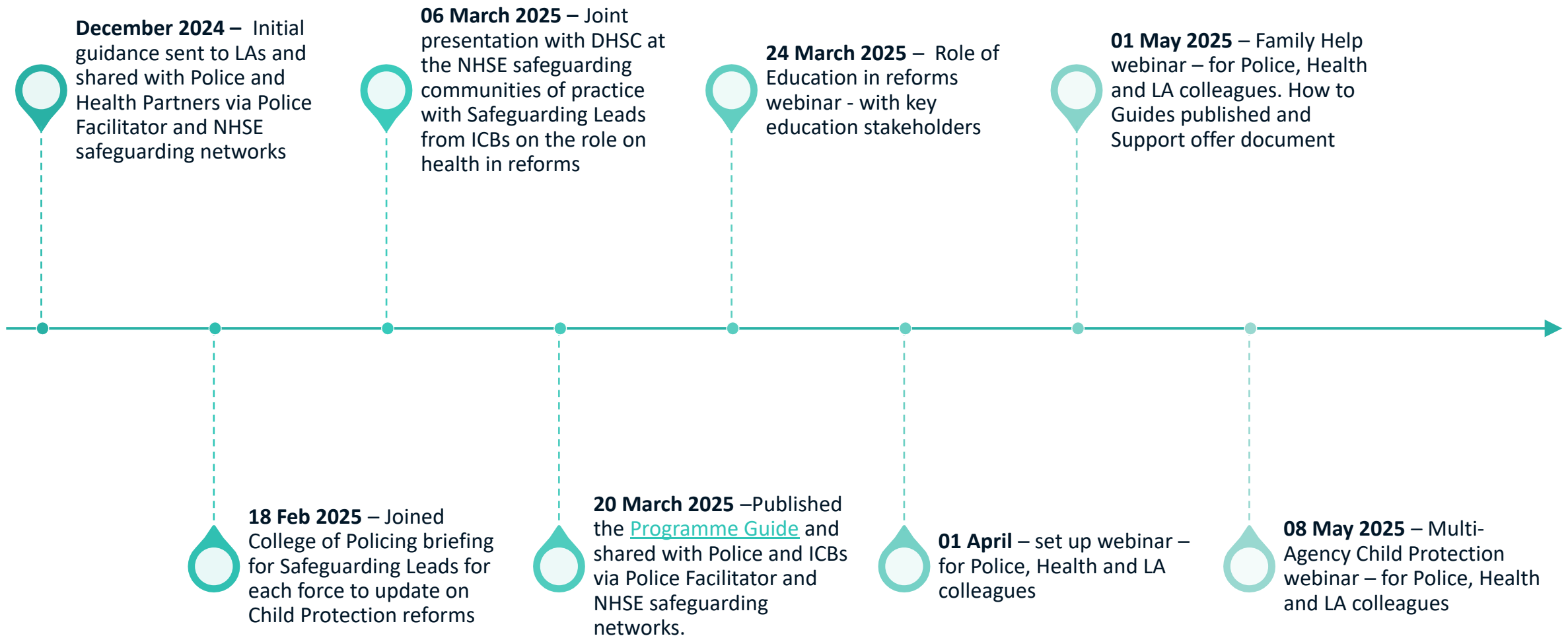
# Families First Partnership Reforms

## Scrutiny Update

# FFP journey to date



# How partners have been engaged to date:



# Guidance overview

The Families First Partnership (FFP) programme comprises of 3 key reform strands - implementing Family Help, Multi-agency Child Protection Teams and Family Group Decision Making.

## FFP Reforms



### Family Help

- Family Help will take place at the heart of communities, bringing together local services under a combined, multi-disciplinary practice.
- It will wrap support around the whole-family at the earliest opportunity – using the expertise of multi-disciplinary practitioners.
- Family Help will ensure consistency of relationships between children, families and their lead practitioner;
- One plan will be adopted for children and families, but adapt as needs change.



### Multi Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs)

- Multi-agency child protection is a system where the right decisions are made at the right time for children, bringing experts together across agencies.
- MACPTs should seek to protect all children from actual or likely significant harm, inside and outside of the home, including online.
- MACP should also engage and empower parents, family networks and others in a transparent and compassionate way to care safely for their children, wherever this is possible.



### Family Group Decision Making

- Family group decision-making (FGDM) is a voluntary process that enables a family network to come together and make a family-led plan.
- The plan will include offering practical support to parents and carers, whilst prioritising the safety and wellbeing of the child.
- FGDM helps to ensure a family network is engaged and empowered to participate in decision-making while a child and their family is receiving help, support or protection.

# Family Help Overview

Bringing together family support workers (or equivalent) and social workers into a **single service**. This covers a **broad continuum of need** – from targeted early help through to child protection - that responds more flexibly to a range of contexts, needs and harms. Safeguarding partnerships should work together to publish a **refreshed threshold document**, and update local protocols to enable this.

Multi-disciplinary Family Help Teams	Family Help Lead Practitioners (FHLP)	Family Help Assessment and Plans	Front Door Arrangements
<p>Local partnerships should set up, or <b>build on existing multi-disciplinary teams</b>, to include co-working between a <b>wide range of practitioners</b>.</p> <p>Local partnerships should refer to <b>population needs</b> assessments to determine the different agencies, services and practitioners involved.</p> <p>Safeguarding partners should consider how to effectively join up Family Help with existing SEND services.</p>	<p>Safeguarding partners should establish the <b>FHLP role</b>.</p> <p>A clear process should identify the most suitable lead practitioner in Family Help, with high quality supervision.</p> <p>There should be a <b>shared practice framework</b> across agencies.</p> <p><b>Publish local protocols</b> for assessments and support, including clarifying who can act as an FHLP.</p> <p>This will include developing a multi-agency workforce development plan.</p>	<p><b>Develop family help assessments and plans</b> in line with Working Together.</p> <p>Ensure practitioners consider the needs of the <b>whole-family and that the child’s voice</b>.</p> <p>Coordinate with other assessments that are ongoing and develop family help plans that <b>provide clear, measurable outcomes for the child</b>.</p> <p>Plans should specify the agencies and practitioners involved, with robust oversight arrangements.</p>	<p>Move towards an <b>integrated front door</b>, where contacts and referrals can be triaged to the right level of service.</p> <p>Local partnerships operating Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) should review/explore how their functions might align more strongly with other places where families might come into contact with services.</p> <p>Consider the range of practitioners and agencies that could be brought into the integrated front door.</p>

# Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs)

## Principles of MACPTs:

- 1** Effective multi-agency child protection is a system where the right decisions are made at the right time to keep children safe.
- 2** Establishing MACPTs will bring a clear focus where there are child protection concerns, bringing experts together to identify actual or likely significant harm.
- 3** Multi-agency child protection should also engage and empower parents, family networks and others in a transparent and compassionate way.
- 4** Social workers with child protection expertise are critical within Family Help for children.

## Functions of a MACPT

- chairing strategy meetings and CP conferences;
- leading section 47 enquiries;
- leading or overseeing multi-agency and single investigations (as required);
- gathering information about whether a child is suffering significant harm, to support decision making;
- build in family group decision making and family network engagement into child protection processes;
- overseeing the development, review and closure of plans;
- input to onward planning for children and families (including continued support from Family Help or supporting reunification);
- initiating emergency action (Emergency Protection Orders, Police Protection Orders);
- deciding whether to move into pre-proceedings and the Public Law Outline (PLO) process;
- providing relevant evidence to subsequent court proceedings;
- providing advice and consultation for practitioners who need multi-agency child protection expertise;
- maintaining an understanding of local patterns of significant harm and agency responses;
- oversight of all children who are the subject of section 47 enquiries or on a child protection plan and a clear line of sight to and from the local safeguarding partnership

# Family Group Decision Making

FGDM enables the family network to come together to establish a family led plan in response to a child's safety and wellbeing. FGDM should be offered at every decision point, from Family Help, into support, through multi-agency child protection, pre-proceedings and reunification. The FHLP and MACPT are vital in the process, using their expertise and knowledge of the child and the family to support FGDM. The FHLP will be crucial in identifying the family network and bringing them into the process

## The Process

### 1. Appointing a dedicated FGDM facilitator

A designated Family Group Decision Making facilitator should be identified to coordinate and lead the FGDM process.

### 2. Preparation

An Initial meeting with professionals;  
Pre-meetings with the parents and child;  
Co-designing and setting up the meeting with partners;  
a Facilitator's preparation meeting.

### 3. The FGDM meeting

A carefully facilitated meeting, giving the family the time and space to come up with their own plan to address concerns for the child.

### 4. Reviewing the plan

The facilitator should make arrangements for the family network to review their plan within a reasonable and agreed time frame.

Throughout the FGDM, the FHLP and MACPT will support and may in some cases determine that FGDM is not appropriate if it not in the child's best interest. FGDM should be offered for pre-proceeding (in the letter before proceedings) but only where appropriate in and the child's best interests.

# Integrated Front Door

The Integrated Front Door is the main way for people to raise concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing. It's the first place to go if someone is worried about a child and needs help or advice. The team behind the IFD responds to any identified needs of the children and families, consider what's going on and makes sure the child and family get the right kind of support as quickly as possible. This could mean connecting them with social workers, health professionals, or other services that can help.

## The Process

- Within one working day of a referral being made, a decision is required regarding next steps, which may include:
- The child requires immediate protection and urgent action is required.
- There is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and whether enquiries must be made, and the child assessed under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- The child is in need and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
- Any immediate services are required urgently by the child and family and what type of services.
- Further specialist assessments are required to help the local authority to decide what further action to take.
- To see the child as soon as possible if the decision is taken that the referral requires further assessment.
- Early Help Support.
- No further action (Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG))



# DFE Core Principles of an Integrated Front Door

1

***Right help, right time, first time*** - not just a faster route but a better one

2

***Shared responsibility***, not-handoff –multiple agencies working together, not referring on

3

**Opportunity for conversations, not just referrals** – prioritising listening, not filtering

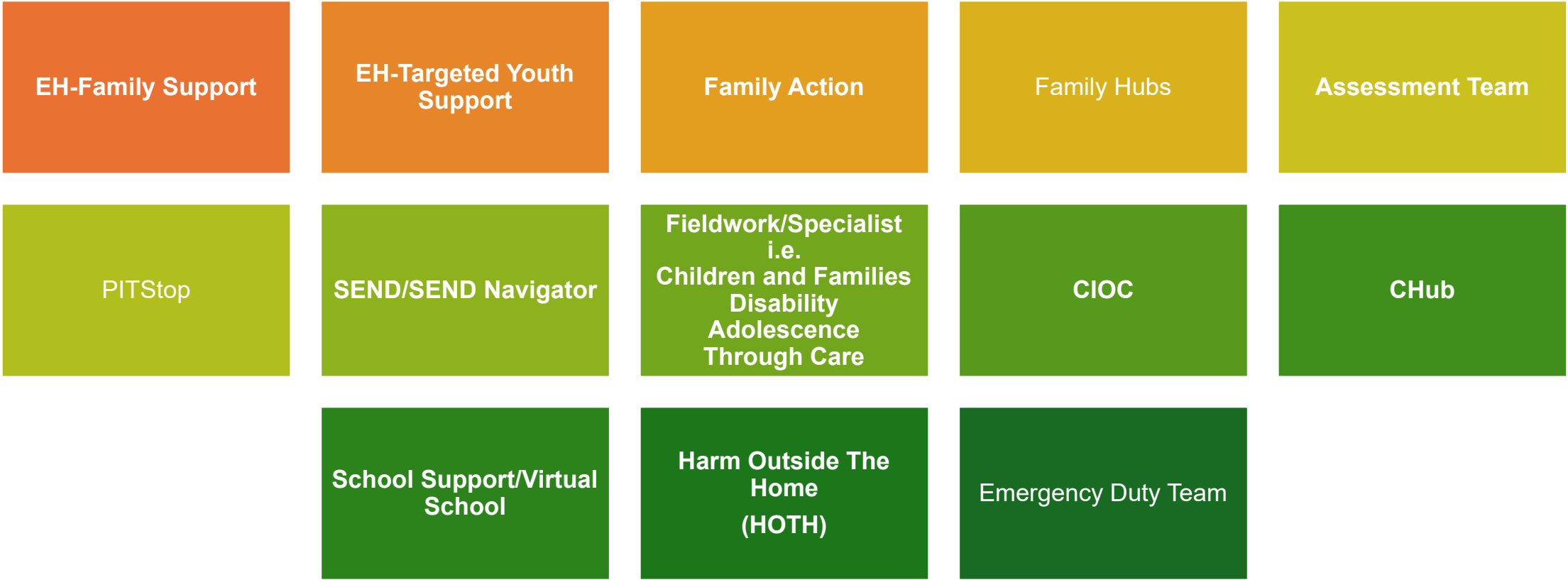
4

**One system, one story** – enabling continuity for families across services

# Guiding Principles

- Local authority children's social care has the responsibility for clarifying the process for referrals in their area.
- Have a clear point of contact for professionals and families, if they wish to seek advice, support or make a referral.
- Co-produced 'Threshold Document'.
- Multi-agency collaboration and information sharing from Statutory Safeguarding Partners including, Local Authorities, Police and Integrated Health Board. Children's Act 2004 – Section 16E. Now Education!
- Timely Response.
- Child centered and family focused.
- Maintain clear records and data.
- Underpinned by Children's Act 1989, Children's Act 2004 and Working Together Guidance.

# Routes of entry into Children's Services



# Learning

## Challenges

- Significant demand coming into the CHub
- Significant amount of administration required in relation to quality of referrals, telephone queries and updates
- Challenges around gathering consent
- Challenges in relation to proportion of referrals that could be supported through Early Help
- Time required to administer strategy meetings

## Opportunities

- Clearer processes and understanding of decision making
- Clearer navigation through a complicated system
- Partners would like better feedback/updates to understand if the referral was accepted or the outcome
- A single point of entry

Decision Groups

Place Leadership Board

Families First Partnership Programme Board

Information Shared With

HSSCP

SBC CMT

TSAB

SBC PoF

HWB board

Action Groups

Families First Partnership Delivery Team

(Comprised of FFP Pillar Leads, Health, Education and Police Leads, and Project Management staff)

FFP Pillar: Family Help Working Group

Lead Officer:  
Kellie Wigley

Head of Service Early Help, Youth Justice and Youth Support

FFP Pillar: Integrated Front Door Working Group

Lead Officer:  
Emma Champley

Assistant Director Transformation

FFP Pillar: Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams Working Group

Lead Officer:  
Jan Edwards

Head of Service Quality and Improvement

FFP Pillar: Family Group Decision Making Working Group

Lead Officer:  
Kellie Wigley

Head of Service Early Help, Youth Justice and Youth Support

Cross-Cutting Themes

Coproduction and Comms: led by Jane Smith, FFP Lead

Workforce including Recruitment, Retention and Practice Development : Led by Lynn Stoneley, Head of Service Practice Development and PSW

Systems, Data and Performance: Lead to be confirmed

# Setting a Vision for Stockton-on-Tees FFP

## Child and family centred

- Relationship based
- Coproduced
- Child and Family voice

## Prevention and Early Intervention

- Shift from crisis-led to proactive early support
- Builds on family strengths
- Uses data and community insight to target need

## Supported Workforce

- Continuous learning and development
- Culture of high support, high challenge

## Integrated Partnership Working

- Common practice model and approach
- Shared goals, data and accountability
- Professions are valued and respected equally

## Reduced Demand

- Supporting families to stay safely together
- Long term reduction in statutory intervention
- Decreasing number of children coming into care

# What will this look like?



## For Children

- Children are safe at home and in their community
- Children have stable and supportive relationships
- Children's views shape the support they receive
- Fewer children need statutory intervention or come into care

## For Families

- Families are supported to stay safely together
- Families receive help and support early
- Families feel listened to, respected and will lead their own plans
- Family and community strengths are valued and built upon

## For Workforce

- Practitioners have time and space to build relationships with children and families
- Staff feel supported, trusted and valued
- Practice is supported by evidence, reflection and the lived experience of children and families

## For System

- More children and families receive effective early help
- Resources are used more effectively across the system
- Data and insight are shared to improve decision and learning

# Work to date

- 1

Financial allocation for LAs confirmed through grant funding streams. Proportion of this is to fund transformation
- 2

Stockton-on-Tees selected by DfE to receive support to implement the reforms through their delivery partner, Mutual Ventures
- 3

Programme set up established and governance in place. Stage one delivery plan submitted to DfE
- 4

Needs assessment completed to understand current and future needs of children, young people and families to inform all aspects of service design and reshaping

## Next Steps for completion by December 2025

Design of delivery model for Integrated Front Door, staffing model and partner agencies resource commitment confirmed

Design of delivery model for Multi Agency Child Protection team, staffing model and partner agencies resource commitment confirmed

Detailed stage two delivery plan to be submitted to DfE which outlines implementation of reforms and spend

Benchmarking data returns to be submitted to DfE from Q2 onwards to support the development of future statutory data returns

## Linking the reforms to Early Help scrutiny

- Right support at the right time
- Shared responsibility and effective partnerships
- High-demand into the current CHub in the front door which potentially could be better supported with an Early Help focus
- Clarity for families and professionals about the support available in terms of Early Help
- Ensuring effectively and timely information sharing

## Linking the reforms to Early Help Strategy Development

- Opportunities to improve family engagement, prioritising improving relationship between members and officers, improved communication systems and meaningful community voice
- Assessment tools which can be used by a range of services to improve the approach to 'one assessment' across the partnership
- Improved data sharing and plan sharing to support the idea of 'One team' around the family
- Improving data sharing from all parts of the partnership, to understand pressures, priorities and how to use and deploy resource effectively
- Leadership which promotes early help as a system and not a single service, understanding shared accountability and decision making
- Leadership which drives a shared culture, principles and practice and clarity on the impact of our collective action