

A group of six diverse children of various ethnicities are smiling and hugging each other. The children are of different ages and are dressed in casual clothing. The background is a soft, out-of-focus outdoor setting.

**Families First Partnership Children's Social
Care Reforms**

**Integrated Front Door-
*Family Help Point***

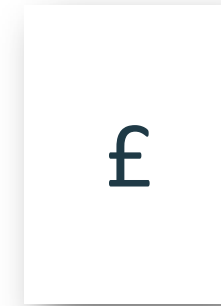
FFP journey to date



The **Independent Care Review** and **National Panel review** made a number of ambitious recommendations to transform support and protection in children's social care (CSC).



The DfE established the **Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP)** programme to facilitate reforms to family help, child protection and family network services in a phased way.



Funding distributed to Local Authorities and official kick off for the FFP programme.

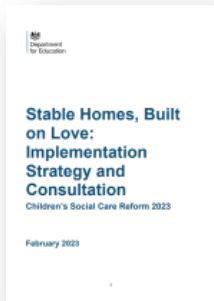
May 2022

Feb 2023

July 2023

March 2025

April 2025

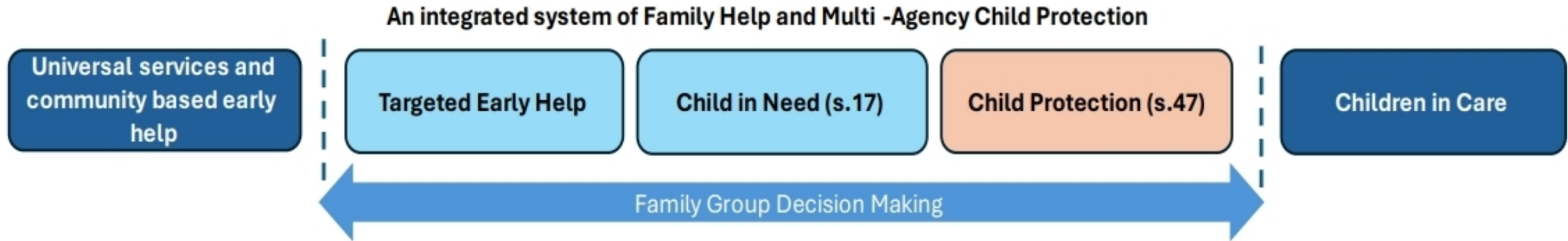


In response to these recommendations, the Department for Education (DfE) has published its implementation strategy, '**Stable Homes, Built on Love**', which sets out a range of proposed reforms in CSC.



Published the Programme Guide and shared with Police and ICBs via Police Facilitator and NHSE safeguarding networks.

Families First Partnership National Programme of Reforms



FFP Stockton-on-Tees Pillars of Reform



Front Door

- Move towards an integrated front door, where contacts and referrals can be triaged to the right level of service.
- 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, reflecting an early help approach and a single 'front door'
- Consider the range of practitioners and agencies that could be brought into the integrated front door.



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.
- MACPTs 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

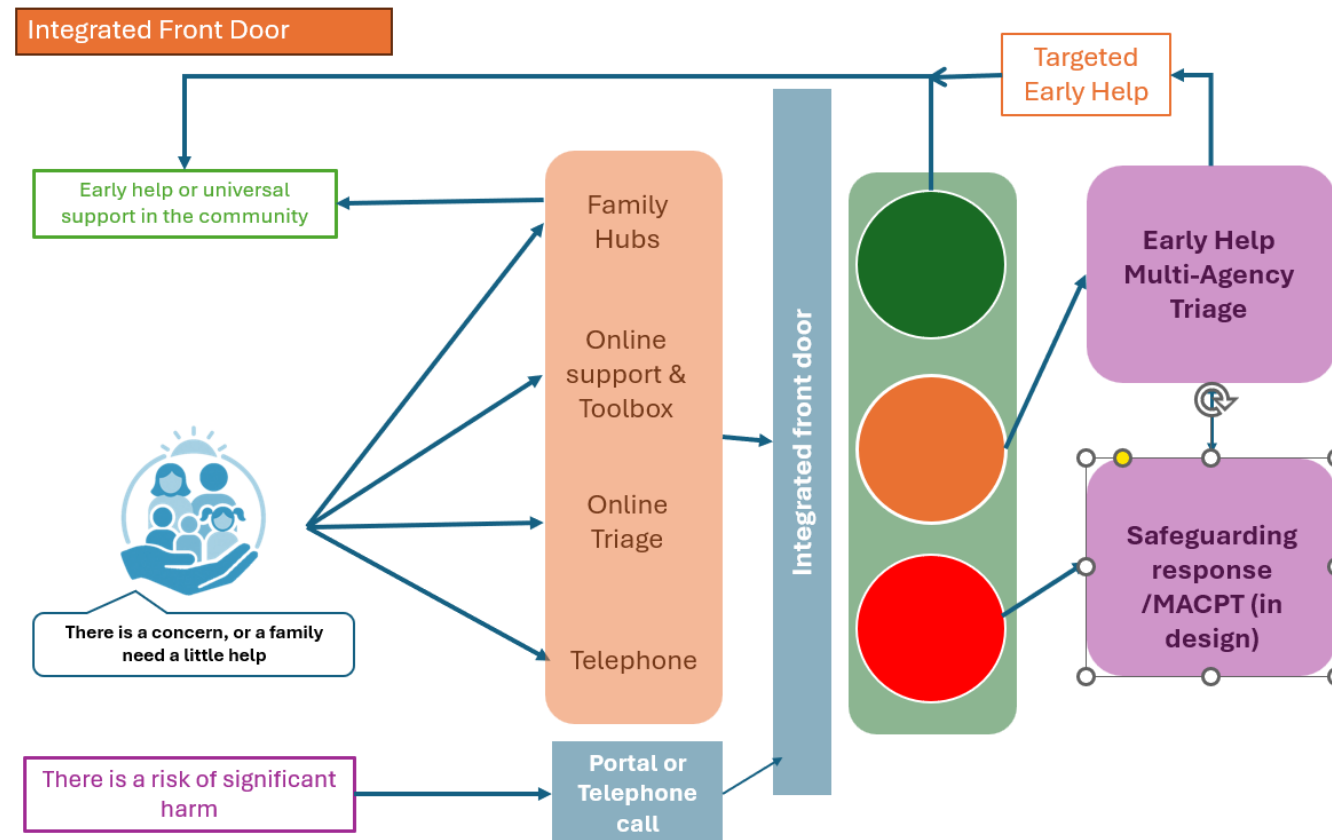
- Family group decision-making (FGDM) is a voluntary process that enables a family network to come together and make a family-led plan.
- The plan will include offering practical support to parents and carers, whilst prioritising the safety and wellbeing of the child.
- FGDM helps to ensure a family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

The Integrated Front Door –

Family Help Point

Family Help Point will operate as a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary team, co-locating expertise from Police, 0–19 Healthy Child Programme, Domestic Abuse services, SEND, Education and Substance Misuse services, and will strengthen decision-making and navigation for families.

Family Help Point will be a cornerstone of our wider transformation, enabling us to support children and families at the earliest opportunity, reduce duplication, improve timeliness and deliver a strong safeguarding response when needed.



The Integrated Front Door-

Family Help Point

Current Position

- official launch 1st April with soft launch since mid March
- communications plan for staff, partners and public being rolled out
- digital tools to support navigation to right service at the right time
- training for IFD staff in language that cares and systemic practice

Strengths

- delivering our own front door will ensure full oversight of processes, standards, and decision-making, ensuring alignment with Stockton's practice model and priorities
- police, health partners, education, SEND, domestic abuse and substance misuse services have been involved with all aspects of the design and are working with us to determine their resourcing.

In Stockton-on-Tees, good Family Help will mean families experience timely, proportionate and relationship-based support that is integrated, locally accessible and focused on improving outcomes while reducing demand for statutory intervention.

- anchored in our systemic practice framework ensuring that interventions consider the whole family system, strengthen relationships and promote sustainable change. Practitioners will work collaboratively with families, using curiosity and reflective approaches to understand lived experiences and build solutions that are meaningful and enduring.
- a consistent Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLP) who remains involved throughout a family's journey.
- growing partner agency involvement over time, recognising that partners are often best placed to support families, but this will need to develop gradually and that building confidence among partners is essential
- an infrastructure of support including training and shared learning opportunities so partners feel equipped and confident to deliver Family Help effectively.
- support for families to develop their own family networks

Our vision for Family Help

Family Help progress update

Current Position

- 'test and learn' Family Help pilot launching in May
- pilot will test the Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLP) role across Social Workers and Family Workers
- co-location in Billingham Family Hub
- will link with multi-agency, multi-disciplinary partners working within the Billingham Hub including health visitors, midwives and domestic abuse workers
- robust evaluation framework in development with DfE partner, Mutual Ventures

Strengths

- data and evidence driven
- phased approach to build confidence before refinement and scaling
- co-designed model, including new Family Help assessment

Our vision for Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT)

The MACPT will :

- be a specialist, co-located team that strengthens child protection practice through expert advice, consultancy, and collaborative problem-solving, rather than direct case delivery
- support existing social work teams and partner agencies to achieve high-quality child protection planning, ensuring consistency and confidence in safeguarding responses and that plans are clear, realistic and focused on reducing risk
- work closely with our Integrated Front Door, sharing multi-agency resources and making best use of partner expertise

MACPT progress update

Current Position

- 'test and learn' MACPT pilot launching in May
- detailed analysis of Child in Need and Child Protection data undertaken to determine focus
- pilot will focus on pre-birth and under 1s – an area of practice which is recognised as in need of strengthening
- test the Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCPP) role
- close links with 0-19 Healthy Child Programme service and their enhanced pathway, STEPS
- robust evaluation framework in development with DfE partner, Mutual Ventures

Strengths

- data and evidence driven
- phased approach to build confidence before refinement and scaling
- co-designed model with partners supportive of focus

Our Vision for Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)

FGDM will :

- maintain use of Family Group Conferencing (FGC) as the evidence-based approach
- embed FGC within Family Help Point, creating opportunities for early identification and proactive engagement with family networks and maximise family strengths and resources at the earliest possible stage, reducing the need for statutory intervention wherever appropriate
- be used from early help through to child protection, promoting continuity and reducing escalation where possible.
- ensure family network planning is consistently used in everyday practice. Practitioners will routinely explore family and community connections as part of assessment and planning, enabling families to draw on their own support networks.

FGDM progress update

Current Position

- well-established Family Group Conferencing (FGC) team who are embedded within our current Early Help services offering support across the range of teams from family solutions (family support) through to Children in Our Care and Care Experienced
- achieved Family Rights group accreditation during 2025-26

Strengths

- our approach to family group decision making (FGDM) is underpinned by systemic practice principles, promoting whole-family thinking and sustainable change.
- we are committed to building confidence and skill in family networking approaches across practitioners and partner agencies.