



Norfolk County Council

Family Help Teams

An Introduction - November 24

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What we'll cover today

Our Pilot Work and why Family Help was needed in Norfolk

What does a Family Help Team look like?

What does this mean for the families we support?

What does this mean for our partners?

What's next?

Why did we need Family Help?

Children's Services has undergone significant transformation in achieving an ILACS in January 2023 that rated services Good across the board, with exemplary and exceptional practice in a number of areas.

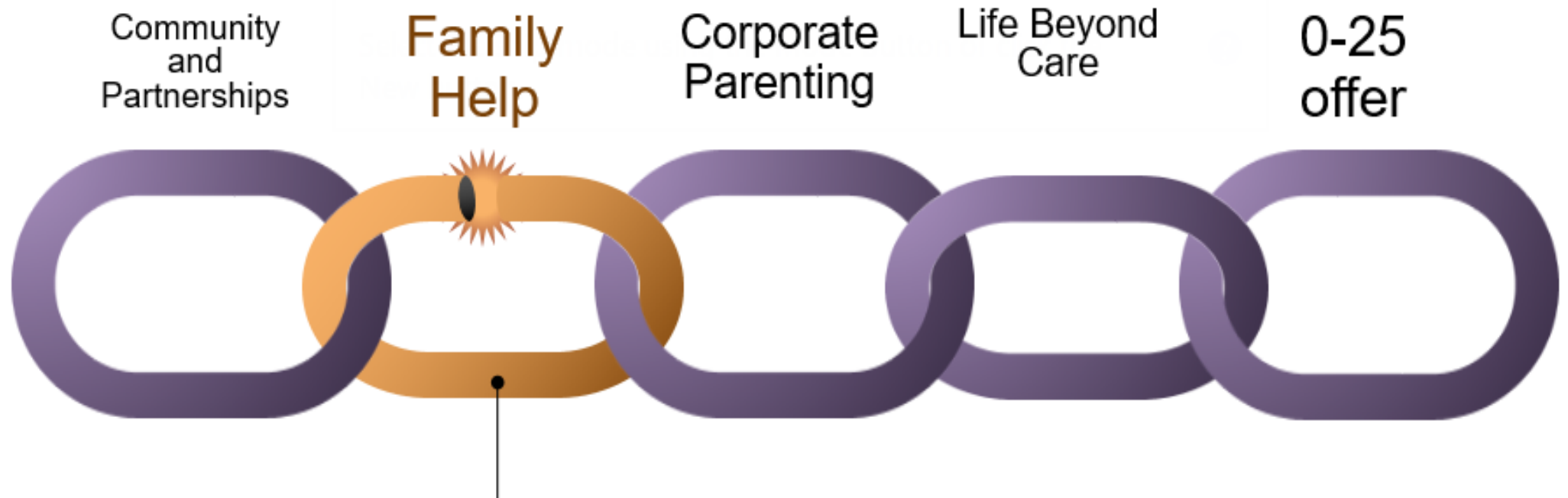
We are proud of our staff teams in their achievement of this but we know there is more we can do to improve the experience of children, young people, families and the staff who underpin all the work we do.

Challenges continue to exist including:

- Demand for support across multiple complex areas
- Getting the right help to families at the right time through a consistent key worker
- Supporting the development of Family Networks
- Confidence around holding risk
- Creating a system wide approach to decision making creating an impactful Team around the Child or Family

The social and financial impact of not always getting this right can be significant – we want to support families in the right way for them

Where does Family Help link to our other services?



This is the focus of today's presentation

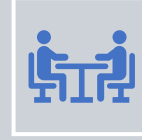
Family Help has brought together the FAST and Family Help Teams that many of you will have worked with in the past.

Universal services eg Family Hubs, Schools and Community Teams etc are not impacted and continue to offer their critical support to children and families.

Our Family Help Pilot



A test and learn approach in 2 of our localities since July 2023



Larger multi-disciplinary teams led by pairs of Team Managers to create additional resilience and a far wider knowledge base and skills set amongst practitioners



Innovations in creating new 'expert' roles focusing on key themes – this has provided additional wrap around support for practitioners



The approach seeks parity of esteem across practitioners with different qualifications and tests how a team of practitioners working collaboratively to support a family can hold and respond to risk as a unit



A wider remit spanning early help, protection and care allows our practitioners to build long standing relationships with families

Journey to a Family Help Model

Design Phase for the model we piloted – this involved significant change and risk for the teams involved so a smaller scale pilot was agreed

Evaluation and testing of the model over a 9 month period. Internal and Independent evaluations were put in place

Reshaping following staff consultation to refine and improve the approach

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Implementation of the pilot in two of our 6 localities. This meant a whole new way of working for several of our key teams

Staff consultation on rolling out the model countywide to support co-design and seek input into the proposals

Go Live and Induction of a County wide model

Rolling out Family Help Countywide



In Spring '24 once the findings from the evaluations had been considered a decision to roll out the approach County Wide was taken



The change involved for staff involved was significant as our structures shifted from specialist teams with defined thresholds to larger multi-disciplinary teams prioritising a more seamless experience for children, families and young people



Now that teams are formally established the focus for the remainder of the year will be on embedding the approach and new ways of working



Staff inductions have taken place



Partner engagement is a priority to ensure the model is well understood across Norfolk



We have committed to ongoing collaboration with our staff to ensure the model is as good as we can make it, and we want to hear from our partners too

Family Help

Key Facts

- Our Family Help Teams span 3 patches, and each patch is led in partnership by Heads of Prevention and Protection. These are:
 - City and South
 - West and Breckland
 - North, East and Broadland
- There are 6 Family Help Teams in each patch
- Each patch has dedicated leads in key themes (Court Work, Child Protection and Interventions) – this support is available to all teams
- Referrals into Family Help are managed through the existing CADS “front door” – this process remains unchanged
- Each Family Help Team is multi-disciplinary in make-up
- Family Help Teams will also draw in support from other areas of Children’s Services as well as from our partners

What does a Family Help Team look like?



Key features of Family Help – What makes it unique?

- Shared holding of risk is central to the model spanning Heads of Service, Team Managers and Practitioners – no one should be working in isolation
- Multi-disciplinary teams removing processes for accessing the types of support we know many families will benefit from
- Expert roles – these roles provide specialist support in areas of Child Protection, Court Work and Interventions.
- This has enhanced our offer of support to newly qualified Social Workers even further and has received particularly positive feedback from our staff group
- Allocation Meetings bringing together the whole team and providing a forum for initial joint decisions
- Joint working of cases and Team around the Child Supervision – this is a key feature of the model – the focus is on collaborative decision making
- Ongoing access to specialist call in services

What we know Family Help is delivering

Key highlights

- Impact on families getting the right support at right time.
- Flexibility of practitioners around the child/ families.
- Less defensive practice.
- New ways of working for our staff – bringing practitioners together, internally and externally – we want this to continue to grow
- Good shift in decision making , shared responsibility in holding risk.
- Development of relationships between pairs of Team Managers.
- Model exposes excellent practice as well as highlighting where we must improve
- Wealth of knowledge in the teams including understanding of the skills sets of various practitioners
- Culture of learning is developing.
- Togetherness mindset , seen as one team “Family Help”

What does this change mean for children and families?

- The ability to maintain key relationships regardless of changes of circumstances or emergencies within the family setting – providing that continuity of support was a critical aim of the pilot
- Collaborative working with professionals from the same team – a feeling that all professionals are working together rather than having different objectives
- Not needing to tell your story multiple time
- Focus on developing a Family Network – this is an ongoing theme for development and an area that we want to see become even more embedded in our practice
- We had great feedback from families as part of the pilot which was a key influencing component around rolling out the model forward
- Getting the right service in place for our families is key – there is much more we want to do in this space

What does this change mean for our partners?

- New Team Names and a small number of personnel changes – we will circulate key contacts to all partners.
- There are no changes to the referral pathways to any part of our system as a result of Family Help
- New roles and specialisms within our Family Help Teams particularly at manager level – these innovations were a particular success within the pilot and we hope will also benefit partners
- Consistency – both of professionals but of approach across the county
- A single point of contact even if family circumstances change
- A renewed emphasis on the Team around the Child – we want our partners to also be part of this team, to join key meetings and to collaborate with us in joint decision making for the benefit of children and families.

What's next?



Exploration of further alignment between CWD and Family Help to ensure that children who do not meet the threshold for support from a specialist team still receive targeted support



A countywide Enhanced Family Help Team to target support at families who are edging towards care but for whom our existing interventions have not yet delivered enduring change



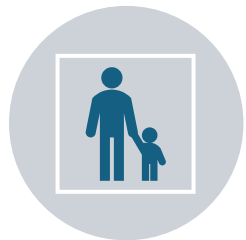
Review of recording and plans for children and families to ensure they are streamlined, appropriate and written “for” children rather than “about” children.



Development of a new Adolescent and Therapeutic Service to ensure we are able to meet growing demand for support in this area



Embracing new technology to ensure that our teams are fit for the future and enabled to work as efficiently as possible



Developing a new s17 protocol to agree how we support Children in Need and implementing this within our team structures



Any questions..

Key Contacts

West and Breckland	City and South	North, East and Broadland
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