

# Cheshire East Families First Partnership Partnership Event 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025

### Aims of today





**Establish a shared understanding** of the national Families First Partnership reforms

**Generate energy and commitment** across the partnership to design, deliver and embed the reforms across Cheshire East

**Spark initial conversations** for further development through future, more detailed workshops from July

### Great foundations for our journey...

We established a new shared vision and Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements **December 2024**  Ofsted has begun to see progress in children's services -"pace of change has accelerated" March 2025



We celebrated the opening of Crewe Lifestyle Centre as Cheshire East's sixth family hub April 2025



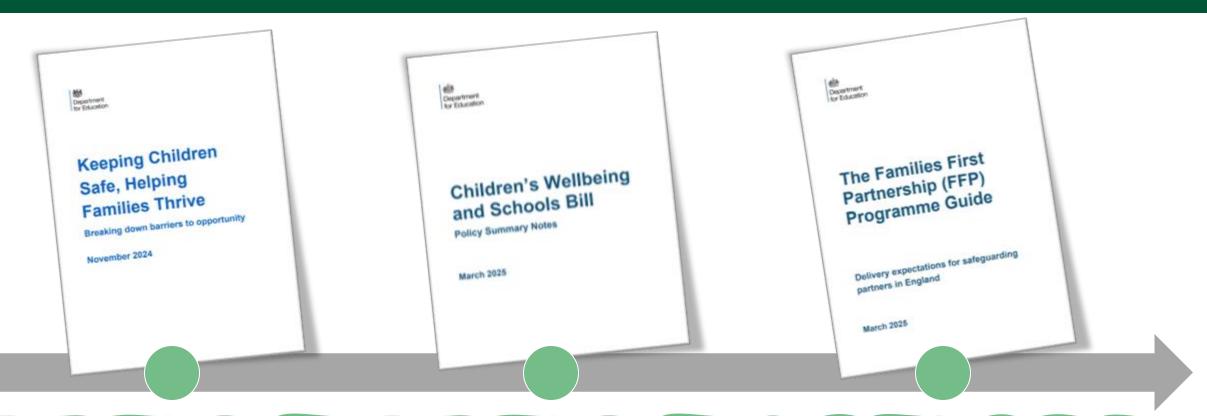
First Education Safeguarding Board taken place with great representation from schools and settings. **April 2025**  'Your Voice, Your Strength' multi agency event hosted as part of Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week May 2025



Cheshire East TOGETHER for Children and Young People

# **Families First Partnership Kerry Madden** Families First Programme Director

## The vision and legislative journey TOGETHER for Children and Young People



Policy statement published on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 Outlines the Governments vision for the children's social care system and core legislative proposals

### Introduced into Parliament on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024 Breaks down the ambitions of the bill in seven parts, centred around keeping families together and children safe

## Programme Guide was published in March 2025

Sets out the delivery expectations for safeguarding partners co-signed by Department for Health and Social Care and Home Office

# Key priorities of the Safeguarding Partnership



**4. Creating a learning culture** that takes action to improve practice

### 5. Ensuring transparent, evidence-based decision-

**making** in all partnership meetings to support improved outcomes

6. Create a highly effective partnership based on positive relationships, shared values and clear vision

### Our improvement context....

#### June / July 2022 - Joint Targeted Area Inspection

Looked at the how each agency (police, health and local authority teams) work together to reduce the risk of harm when children and young people are missing and at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation

#### Early 2024 – ILACS Inspection and Improvement underway

ILACS inspection resulted in an overall judgement of inadequate, an improvement plan has been developed and Ofsted has recognised progress through ongoing Monitoring visits

### December 2024 – New Vision and Safeguarding Arrangements

A new shared vision and Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements introduced in 2024 provide clear line of sight to frontline practice

## **Our partnership context and footprints**

As a partnership, we work across slightly different footprints, operating contexts, and population and community groups – this will be important for us to keep in mind and support

**Cheshire East Council** 



Cheshire Constabulary Divided into 9 Local Policing Units (3 in Cheshire East: Macclesfield, Congleton & Crewe)



Cheshire & Merseyside ICB

### Families First *Partnership*



The reforms are designed to:

- Deliver multi-agency and multi-disciplinary
  working across the children's social care system
- **Deepen integration** within our teams and foster collaboration across all partners and relevant agencies, including VCSE partners that work with children and adults for a whole-family approach
- Build on foundations of Working Together to Safeguard Children and the Children's National Social Care Framework - improving safety and wellbeing children at the heart

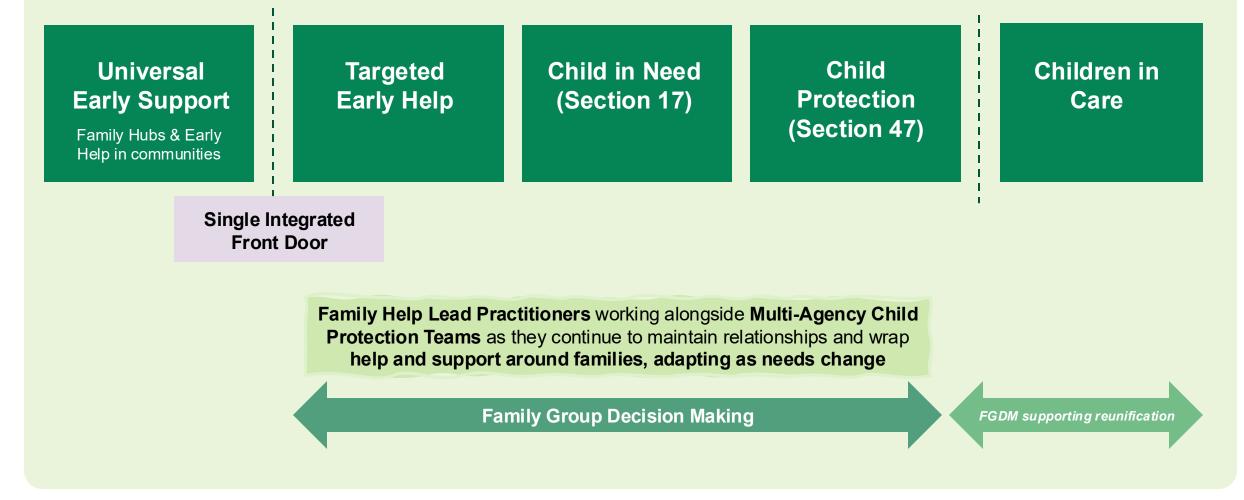


### **Families First Partnership**

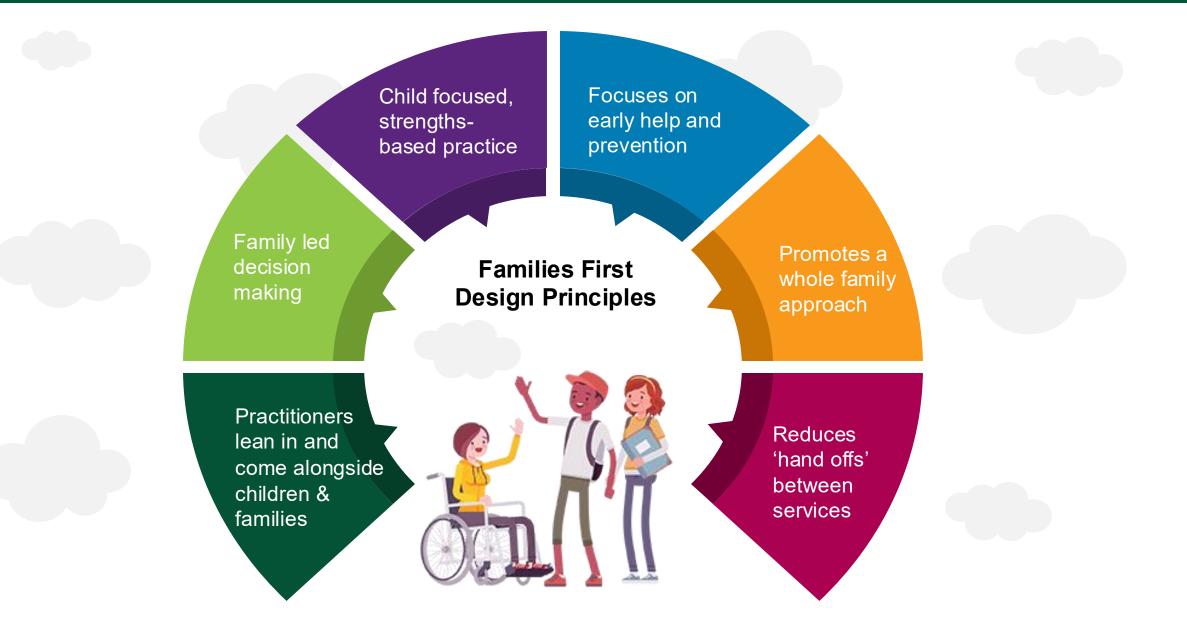


### An integrated system of Family Help and Multi-Agency Child Protection

A seamless model that facilitates dynamic & responsive assessment and planning (without a stop/start approach)



### Children and families at the heart of Children and Young People



# Family Help

Cheshire East TOGETHER for Children and Young People

Family Help reforms represent a major step towards a *seamless, integrated, whole-family approach* to support, involving:

- Merging Targeted Early Help and Child in Need work bringing together family support workers and social workers into a single service (from early help through to multi-agency child protection)
- Family Help Lead Practitioners (FHLPs) acting as the consistent point of contact for families – even when child protection action is necessary
- Community-based, multidisciplinary "Teams Around the Family" wrapping help and support around children, young people and families through a whole-family approach
- Building and/or expanding multi-disciplinary teams, colocating professionals across services such as domestic abuse, mental health, youth justice, SEND, and housing



### **Multi-agency Child Protection System**

The reforms aim to deliver **more effective**, **inclusive**, **and responsive child protection**, **involving**:

- Statutory Safeguarding Partners (Local Authorities, ICBs and Police) establishing new, expert led Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs)
- New expert social worker roles, Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPPs) embedded within MACPTs responsible for statutory child protection decisions, drawing on wider multi-agency practitioners in the team
- Seamless collaboration with Family Help with MACPTs working closely with Family Help Lead Practitioners who retain the relationship with the family

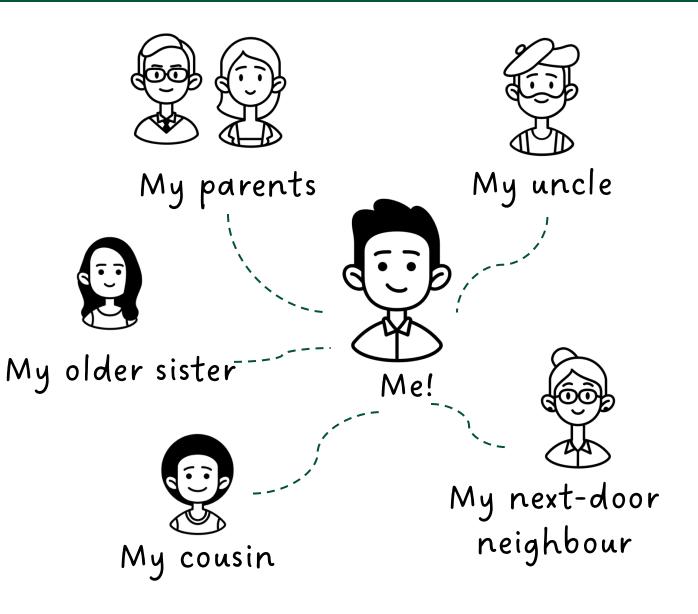
### MACPTs will include:

- Social Workers (including the new LCPP roles)
- Police Officers
- Registered Health practitioners
- Education



### Family Networks & Family Group Decision-Making

- Families should be supported to enable their children to remain living at home with their birth parents, where it is safe to do so
- A family network may include the child's parents or any other person with parental responsibility for the child, relatives, friends of other people connected with the child
- Family Group Decision-Making is a voluntary process that enables the family network to come together and make a family led plan in response to concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing, working alongside skilled professionals



### **Integrated Front Door**

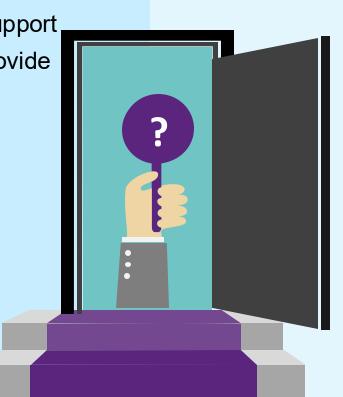
Local areas should ensure families get the right support at the right time through effective "front door" systems—the first point of contact for help.

### These systems vary but should be:

- Integrated with Family Help
- Accessible and non-stigmatising
- Focused on timely and appropriate support
- Provide an out of hours service, to provide support outside core working time

We can determine the roles at the front door, for example:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Youth work
- Domestic abuse



### The Integrated Front Door should:

- Embed a relationship-based approach
- Triage contacts and referrals to the right level of support
- Connect families to universal and community services
- ✓ Strengthen how Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) align with early help or other family contact points
- ✓ Involve a broad mix of professionals, such as education, health, police and youth workers



Universal services and community based early help continue to play a crucial role in identifying emerging problems and providing support at an early stage

For example: Family Hubs, youth services, after school clubs and routine health and housing provision

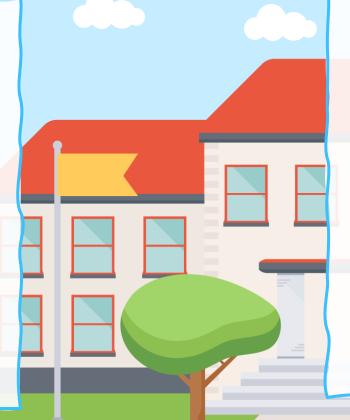
- We will build on the strengths of universal and community based early help delivery
- Voluntary and community services continue to be a vital part of the end-to-end system
- Community, faith and voluntary groups also provide a valued contribution

# **Education and childcare settings**

Education and childcare settings often have the strongest relationships with children, young people and their families. They will often be the first to identify when help or protection is needed.

### Education and childcare settings:

- May be able to offer support directly to families
- Connect them with other local services that provide more targeted support
- Have continued contact with a family to monitor progress and change
- Know when to escalate to seek further input, intervention or oversight



Our education and childcare settings are vital in understanding underlying causes of absence which can be indicators or causes of other issues.

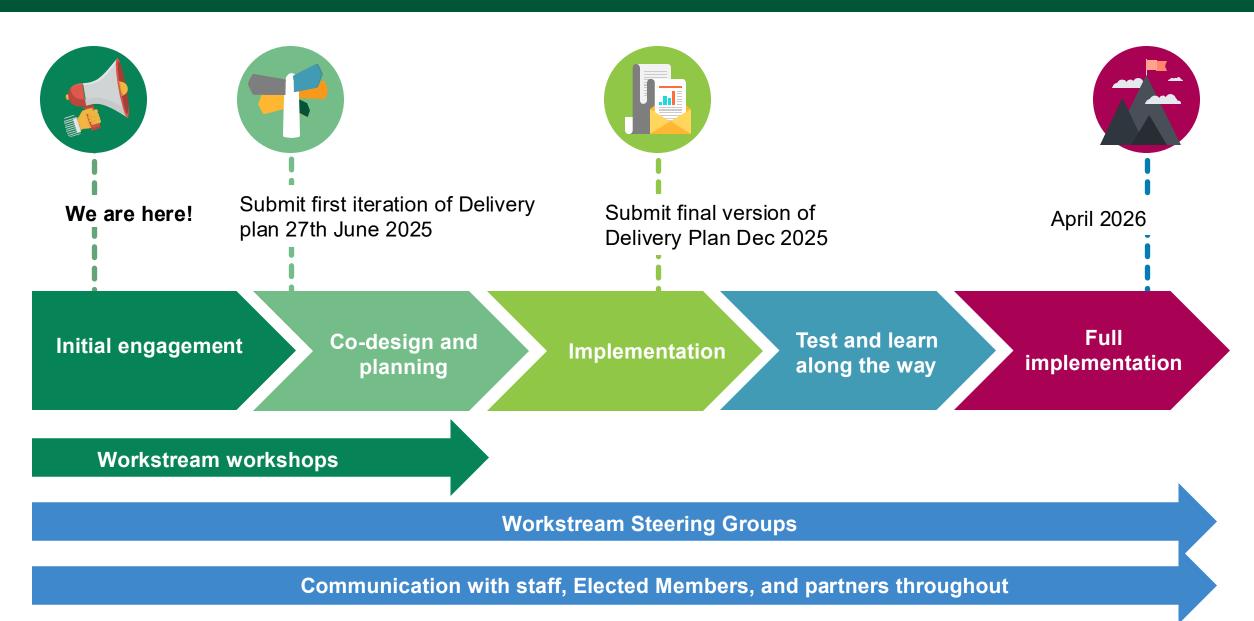
Involvement of education teams ensures we are also focused on the needs of children who are not on the school roll, for example children missing from education or electively home educated children.

Cheshire East **TOGETHER** for Children and Young People

# Ready, steady, go!

**Kerry Madden** Families First Programme Director

## **Our journey**



### **Key enablers**

There are many practical things that will help us to implement the reforms:

- Making sure we're delivering in line with national policy: e.g., Children's Social Care Framework and Dashboard etc.
- Information Sharing: Data, Case management system changes
- **Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements**: including implementing changes in Working Together and strengthening the voice of education across safeguarding arrangements
- **Delivering evidence-based interventions**: understanding local needs, learning from others
- Local Policy and Practice: Updating our local policy guidance and key documents e.g. forms, templates
- Workforce development: Learning and development to support practitioners to implement new ways of working



### Families First Programme Governance

### **Core Programme Governance**

#### **Department for Education**

- Oversight of the Families First Programme
- Quarterly Reporting

#### **NEW : Families First Programme Board**

- Shadow Safeguarding Partnership Board for Families First
- Meeting every six weeks

#### **NEW: Families First Programme Delivery Group**

- Workstream leads to meet fortnightly
- Check in on design progress initially moving to focus on implementation

#### **NEW: Workstream Steering Groups**

• Initially these meetings will be in the form of Workshops and move to Steering Groups as design phase progresses

### **Upcoming engagement activity**

