

Title: Families First Partnership in Herefordshire

Meeting: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: 22nd July 2026

Report by: Dawn Knight, Families First Lead

Classification

Open

Report purpose

This report provides an overview of what has been undertaken in Herefordshire to develop the programme over the last 15 months. It details how we have progressed from transformation and co-design (year 1) and our journey, to date, around our local implementation of the reforms (year 2).

Background

The Families First Partnership Programme report is being submitted to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee as part of their Early Help Task and Finish Programme.

Meeting objectives

The report aims to update the committee about progress and the next steps in Herefordshire to achieve the national reforms as detailed in [FFP Programme guide: delivery expectations for statutory safeguarding partners in England: year 2 \(2026 to 2027\)](#). The introduction and first chapter of this guidance, which outline the programme, are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

The national expectation for all local authorities is that the FFP reforms will be fully implemented by March 2027

Report information

In Herefordshire our aim is for families to receive high quality support at the earliest opportunity, so that they can overcome challenges, stay together and thrive. Our strategic vision for children and young people in Herefordshire to:

- feel Included, valued, happy, healthy and safe in their homes and in their community as they grow up,
- have access to good quality education, housing, sport, leisure and play facilities that enable them to thrive in their physical, emotional, intellectual and social development as they grow up to be young adults;
- live in a county of towns and villages that value them as Children and Young People and be the next generation to help keep Herefordshire the place people want to live and work

Our local vision and strategy align with the The Families First Partnership Programme (FFP), which is a national initiative supporting the transformation of children's social care in England. It promotes a more integrated, family-focused approach to early help and child protection by encouraging multi-agency collaboration.

The programme outlines expectations for delivery around three main pillars:

- a. Family Help
- b. Establishing Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs)
- c. Embedding Family Group Decision Making



Underpinned by [Working together to safeguard children 2026](#) FFP aims to ensure children and families receive timely, coordinated, and effective support tailored to their needs. The overall aim of the reforms is to support children to remain in their family network and reduce the number of children that come into care.

Year 1 Transformation (April 2025 to March 2026)

Families First Partnership Multiagency Steering Group established with representation from Police, Health, Education and Voluntary/Community sector colleagues. The group meets bi-monthly and reports directly into the Children and Young People Partnership.

Community roadshows and Families First information session delivered in each locality. Bringing children's services local services together, so they can understand each other roles and services enables improved signpost and support for families at the earliest opportunity.

Family Help Assessment co-designed with families, the wider partnership, via the steering group and practitioners from children's services. Feedback from our *families making a difference* group indicated the need for the one assessment to strengthen the family voice. Key changes were made and the final version has the family's story and voice front and centre of the assessment. Exploration of the wider family network is also embedded into the assessment.

By working together with partner agencies, we have gained a clear understanding of the strengths and training needs around the role Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLPr) role. This has informed a multi-agency training offer. To date **170** colleagues have attended a Families First training session. Feedback includes:

"It was great to understand the context of how family help can be applied in community settings"

"Engaging in discussions with other professionals in the breakout room was really beneficial"

"I now have a greater understanding of how to offer family help".

Locality teams established in Central, North and South bringing early help and social care teams together. This enabled closer working together across teams and with partner agencies in the local area.

Family Group Conferencing is offered at the earliest opportunity and take up from families receiving targeted early help is increasing. In year one **77** Family Group Conference were facilitated in Family Help and we would expect that number to increase significantly over the next year.

Year 2 Implementation (April 2026 to March 2027)

Management of Change (MOC) process and consultation of staff is now complete. This had facilitated transformational change enabling us to establish.

- a. Families First Team that will support partner agencies to deliver Family Help on the Universal and Community space
- b. Multi-disciplinary family help teams in each locality. These teams consist of qualified social workers, alternatively qualified and multidisciplinary practitioners and will ensure that the allocated FHLP is suitably qualified and experienced to meet family need.
- c. Multiagency Child Protection Teams (MACPT) consisting of 2 teams' manager and 9 Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPP)
- d. A strengthened Family Group Conferencing Service

The MOC has put Herefordshire in a strong position to deliver on the Families First reforms.

MACPT protocol and operating principles have been jointly designed with Police, Health and Education leads. Our MACPT process will be live from August 2026

The Family Help Assessment has been piloted. Feedback from practitioners is that the form flows well and that it is good to have the family network included. Family feedback includes:

"I like that my own words are being used to tell our story"

"It was good to be able to fill out the family section for myself"

Workflow on Mosaic has been aligned to the new Family Help Assessment and will be live from 1st August 2026

A digital self-assessment is in design, which will enable families to self-help and receive appropriate signposting and support. Early feedback on design includes:

"[it is a] great way for people to help themselves and to navigate through the many web sites and information"

"It will help families at an early point which is positive".

A Families First quality assurance framework is now complete, which will ensure our work is outcome based, meets key performance indicators (KPI), is of a high standard and meets the needs of children and families.

An ongoing training programme for staff and partner agencies is established

Consultees

None specifically for this report, although the reforms span across the partnership

Appendices

Appendix 1 - The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide, introduction and chapter 1

Background papers and resources

None