

Families First Partnership Programme

Delivery Plan 2025-2026

This document is for strategic and operational leaders in local authorities, police, health, education and other relevant agencies involved in the delivery of the Families First Partnership Programme (FFP).

Effective multi-agency relationships and working practices are fundamental to successful reform and improving outcomes for children and families. It is critical that the statutory safeguarding partners, and relevant agencies including education and childcare settings, work together to deliver and embed change.

It is expected that 2025-2026 will be a transformation year, with local areas investing time and resource into local design in the first stage of the programme.

Developing a local delivery plan will be an important early step to set out how you and your partners will approach the reforms and codesign a local model tailored to your local context. A shared plan focused on codesigning your model will help foster collective responsibility for the reforms.

This phased plan will help you reflect on the existing strengths of your local system and the areas you need to develop. Identifying what you already know about your local system and identifying strengths will help you plan the codesign of your reform, reflecting your local context. You should consider this alongside your key partners to focus on commitment, capacity, leadership and wider engagement and build out from this as you are ready to move into implementation.

Signatories

Chief Executive	Anne-Marie Bond
Director of Children's Services	Nancy Meehan
Senior Responsible Officer	Shaun Evans
Practice Lead	Gemma Abrey
Data Lead	TBA (interviews taking place w/c 23.06.25)
Safeguarding Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Police- Health- Education	Roy Linden Penny Smith Stuart Heron

Part One - Submission date: 27th June 2025

Set up and codesign

For each section of the plan, it may be useful for you to consider the questions in the supporting information section.

Baseline position

It is important to recognise local context, understand that every area's starting position is unique, and activity and progress will look different everywhere. Having a good understanding of your starting position will help you be realistic in your planning and demonstrate progress and the impact of reform in your area. Think about how integrated targeted early help and child in need currently are. Do you use family group decision making, how integrated is it? What is the current multi-agency/multi-disciplinary elements of the service? What are the strengths and challenges within your multi-agency safeguarding and child protection arrangements? Do you have a strong and up to date understanding of your area/community needs across your locality?

400 words

Torbay Council aims to enhance its status as a Restorative Council by developing and delivering a Families First Partnership Programme, which places children and their families at the centre of decision-making. The Front Door is a well-established multi-disciplinary team that includes professionals from statutory agencies and education, working in an integrated manner. Early Help collaborates closely with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to ensure proportionality in progressing referrals. Over the past 18 months, service accessibility has improved with the establishment of portal facilities for electronic referrals to the Case Management System (CMS).

Early Help underwent a transformation in 2020/21, evolving into a multi-disciplinary service that includes Family Intervention, Reducing Parental Conflict, Housing Support, Benefits and Work Coaching Support, and Youth Homeless Prevention. This approach extends to partnerships with all partner agencies and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to ensure a team-around-the-family delivery. A recent service redesign has integrated Early Help with the Front Door, Family Intervention, Youth Services, and Child in Need under a unified Family Help umbrella service.

In terms of multi-disciplinary child protection work, there is a strong commitment from partners regarding strategy meetings and child protection conference attendance, with quoracy rates for 2024/25 being 91% for strategy meetings and 94% for Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) and Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPCs). However, there is room for improvement to ensure comprehensive input from statutory partners for robust Child Protection (CP) Planning. The number of s47 inquiries proceeding to ICPC is relatively low at 20%, compared to statistical neighbours averaging 35% and the national average of 36%, suggesting possible overreach in meeting needs.

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) has been well-established in Torbay since 2020 and is promoted at CP and Public Law Outline (PLO) points in a child's journey. Despite a reduction in the number of children in care over the past five years, the rate of children entering care at 52 per 10,000 is still higher than statistical neighbours. School exclusions remain high, and the number of electively home-educated children is increasing, indicating further scope for improvement in CP Planning and PLO processes.

Despite the positive multi-agency working culture, gaps hinder a complete team-around-the-family approach, particularly the lack of coordinated work with Adult Services and challenges with Health practitioners' capacity to take on the Early Help lead professional role. These issues will be addressed through a strategic needs and gap analysis and a partnership workforce development plan.

What will good look like?

Spending time identifying what you want to achieve will help keep the project focused and ensure everyone is working to the same end goal. It is critical to involve everyone in this and share the vision to help understand the reason for change, what the outcome will be, and how everyone has a role. How will engaging with services feel for children and families? How might services be designed and integrated across the journey of support for a family? Will people's jobs have changed? What will be the impact on the local authority and partners?

400 words

The overarching vision is to ensure that children and families receive the appropriate level of service at the right time, led by a single Family Help Lead Practitioner who preferably has an established relationship with the family. This will build upon the success of the Family Hub network by embedding multi-disciplinary Family Help Teams in community settings. This approach will include aligning Family Help with other established locality-based models of delivery, such as SEND and the evolving Health offer as well as services the Youth Service offer which is also being transformed.

A key component of providing a positive and effective experience for children and families will be the redevelopment and rebranding of the current Front Door Service to embrace the philosophy of 'whole family' thinking. This will necessitate an expansion of the service to include adult-related professionals to provide advice, guidance, and support, with warm handovers to relevant practitioners in the Family Help Teams.

By frontloading and providing whole family support at the right time by the right group of practitioners, children and parents/carers will experience a proportionate response to their needs, significantly reducing escalations into the safeguarding arena. Consequently, fewer children will be subject to strategy meetings and s47 investigations, ultimately resulting in fewer children being subject to CP Planning and potential escalation into PLO.

For those children requiring safeguarding arrangements, the framework for CP investigations and planning will be more efficient and effective due to fewer children escalating to this level of need and greater oversight from expert teams comprising key agencies. This will result in greater scrutiny over CP planning and interventions, minimizing the time children are subject to CP Planning.

Placing children and parents/carers at the heart of all assessment and planning is crucial to building resilience within the community we serve. Recognizing that the greatest and most responsive asset families have is their own social support network is essential to the success of the Families First Partnership Programme. With this in mind, the FGDM offer in Torbay will be reviewed and redeveloped to ensure all families have the opportunity to create a family plan that is taken forward as their Family Help Plan. Where possible, families will be supported to chair their Family Help Planning and Review meetings at whatever level they are on the continuum of need. The objective is to support parents/carers in owning the challenges they face, determining the direction of the work, and devising viable solutions within their social support network, thereby reducing the risk of dependency going forward.

What are our strengths and challenges?

Honestly assessing strengths and weaknesses provides important insight as you start to plan your changes. Understanding this can help you build on existing good practice, identify activities to be prioritised, provide rationale for decision making and understand the teams' capabilities.

Project management tools such as SWOT analysis can be useful. Consider where there are strong shared aims, practices and governance that can be built on. Where there are challenges, do you have the right people involved to change this, or are these opportunities to build new working relationships?

400 words

In order to tease out the strengths and challenges of implementing the Families First Partnership Programme A multi-agency SWOT analysis was undertaken as noted below:-

Strengths:

- The Early Help offer is well-developed.
- The Local Authority is ready to transition to the Family Help model following a comprehensive service redesign.
- The Learning Academy is well-established and supports broader partnership development.
- Universal services are effectively delivered through an established network of family hubs.
- Partnership approach is supported and embraced.

Weaknesses:

- The current Local Authority CMS has limitations due to its software configuration.
- Different recording systems across the partnership are not interconnected, which will significantly impact the child single identifier activity.
- High levels of child protection processes triggered (strategy discussions and s47 investigations).

Opportunities:

- A reduction in the number of children subject to CP Plans will allow for greater focus on those children who need safeguarding arrangements, potentially reducing the duration of CP Planning and improving the quality of work delivered.
- The end-to-end system will include aspects beyond the Reforms, enabling further transformation work to be delivered to enhance the offer to children and families.
- Strengthening multi-agency arrangements and collaboration as outlined in Working Together 2023.
- The ICB footprint spans the entire Devon region, providing opportunities for regional sharing and learning.
- The Police footprint covers Devon and Cornwall, offering similar opportunities for regional collaboration with our neighbours in Devon, Cornwall and Plymouth on the basis of consistency where possible but not blanket uniformity as Torbay recognise the importance of developing a FFP that meets the local needs.
- Developing consistent approaches to certain FFPP functions while maintaining the need for localized delivery of the Reforms.
- Developing an integrated model of locality working that is aligned to the models partners are moving to.
- Opportunity to strengthen strategic multi-agency planning.
- Opportunity to second Police and Health professionals into the Transformation Team and bring further dimensions to the work.

- Opportunity to strengthen relations and codesign work with the VCSE.

Threats:

- The ICB footprint across Devon may place a strain on resources and pose challenges in developing models regionally.
- The Police footprint across Devon and Cornwall may place a strain resources and complicate model development.
- Pressures from other Local Authorities in the region regarding different model proposals may over influence partners.
- Integrating Education, given the presence of numerous multi-academy trusts within the Local Authority.
- Managing workforce anxiety regarding the changes.
- National changes to the ICB delivery model.
- Budgetary cuts across partner agencies including the VCS.

Note that some matters lie in more than one component of the SWOT analysis.

What are our key activities in 2025-2026?

Be realistic about what can be achieved in this year. Focus on activity you all agree is a priority and will move you closer to your end goal. Give yourself deadlines to keep you focused and moving at pace. Prioritise engagement and codesign at this stage. Please share key milestones and anticipated dates.

400 words

The partnership project plan outlines the timeline for key high-level transformation activities, divided into two phases: development/planning and implementation/delivery. The initial development and planning stage, leading up to December 2025, includes several milestones:

- The Transformation Lead (SRO) and Transformation Service Lead were onboarded at the end of April and May 2025, respectively. The Transformation team and governance were established at the end of April and May 2025.
- Work streams and the initial Transformation Champions Group (LA practitioners) was established at the end of June 2025. Initial partnership engagement and co-design workshops linked to Family Help and Multi-agency Child Protection Team workstreams ran at the end of June 2025.
- The wider Transformation Champions Group, including all partner agencies, will be established by mid-July 2025. A communications plan across the partnership will be agreed upon and regular communications to all stakeholders will start by mid-July 2025.
- Transformation practitioner drop-ins, led by transformation champions, will be established by the end of July 2025.
- The Data Lead and Project Manager will be onboarded by the end of July 2025.
- Partner secondments into the Transformation Team are to be agreed upon and established by the end of July 2025.
- Data harvesting to establish a full set of baseline measurements for improvement will be completed by the end of July 2025.
- The next two partnership engagement workshops, running up to phase two in January, will be booked by the end of July 2025.
- Parent carer/young people engagement events and a regional working group will be established by the end of July 2025.
- Regional consistencies will be established by the end of August 2025.
- Partner secondments will be onboarded by the end of October 2025.
- The Family Help (FH) structure, including community locations, the Multi-agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) structure, and the Child Protection Lead Practitioner (CPLP) role will be defined and agreed upon by the end of October 2025.
- The second and third partnership engagement workshops will be run by the end of September and November 2025 respectively.
- A partnership development plan will be established initially by the end of July 2025 and followed up by mid-December 2025.
- CMS workflows will be redesigned and ready to go live by the end of December 2025.
- All reporting dashboards and reports will be aligned to new workflows by the end of December 2025.

These milestones set the foundation for developing a comprehensive implementation plan, which will be shared via the part 2 plan in December 2025 and set the scene for phase 2 of the work.

Part Two - Submission date: 19th December 2025

Codesign and implementation of Family Help, multi-agency child protection, family group decision making

For each section of the plan, it may be useful for you to consider the questions in the supporting information section.

The reforms to Family Help and multi-agency child protection, and embedding family group decision making, are fully interconnected. Whilst it may be useful to look at elements of planning and implementation of each strand individually to reflect the local starting point and activity needed, it is essential that they should not be seen as isolated strands and should always be considered from the perspective of whole system reform.

Baseline position

Family Help	Multi-agency child protection	Family group decision making
200 words	200 words	200 words

What will good look like

Family Help	Multi-agency child protection	Family group decision making
200 words	200 words	200 words

What are our strengths and challenges

Family Help	Multi-agency child protection	Family group decision making
-------------	-------------------------------	------------------------------

200 words	200 words	200 words
-----------	-----------	-----------

Key activities and milestones

Family Help	Multi-agency child protection	Family group decision making
200 words	200 words	200 words

Progress (local use only)

Family Help	Multi-agency child protection	Family group decision making

Supporting Information

Part One – Set up and codesign

Who are our key stakeholders for this programme?

Children and Young People,
Parents/Carers,
Children's Social Care staff,
Health Staff,
Police Staff,
Education Staff,
Public Health Staff,
Adult Social Care Staff,
Voluntary and Community Sector Workers,

Is there a shared vision and understanding of the purpose of the reform and where change is needed?

Yes – the high-level overarching vision is set out in the terms of reference for the Transformation Board. This vision is being shaped over time via the scrutiny of the Children's Continuous Improvement Board and ultimately the Local Safeguarding Partnership that owns the overall programme of work.

What are the opportunities to align to other government programmes to support an integrated end to end system of support for families e.g. Family Hubs.

The Family Hub network in Torbay is well established and the Reforms provide an opportunity for further development of the range of services and support offered via the Hubs such as co-location of multi-agency teams.

The Governments approach to utilisation of redundant school space and the alignment of the multi-agency teams with that of Health partners' neighbourhood models provides additional opportunities for locality-based partnership working. On a local level, the utilisation of vacant and/or redundant corporate assets will bring back into play valuable community-based resources.

What shared practices can be built on – practice frameworks, co-locations, workforce development, shared family voice?

As noted above, the neighbourhood delivery approach being developed by Health partners provides an opportunity to develop multi-agency delivery frameworks.

Significant pieces of work have already been completed via UNICEF Child Friendly Torbay activity as well a number of strategic needs assessments across the partnership that will be used to inform an over-arching needs-gap analysis.

The Learning Academy covers the wider partnership development which will form a solid foundation for delivering multi-agency training.

Is there a communications plan in place to communicate the vision to everyone, including families?

A communications plan will be developed to include the voice of all key stakeholders including parent/carers and young people as well practitioners. Within the Transformation Governance structure is a parent/carer group, young people's group and transformation champions group which will have members from across the partnership.

Communication channels will be agreed to ensure all key stakeholders receive consistent and timely updates as to the progress of the work.

How will we monitor and understand the impact of engagement?

Partnership engagement workshops will be delivered at crucial points in the transformation programme. These will provide measures in terms of numbers of practitioners attending the workshops as well as their agencies. The workshops will also allow for feedback from practitioners.

Workstream leads will provide highlight reports to the Transformation Board with the expectation that deliverables within the workstream are linked to direct impact on children and their families.

Transformation drop ins will be delivered by the Transformation Champions with feedback directly into the Transformation Board.

Staff surveys will be undertaken at key milestones within the Transformation work to directly measure and sense check the impact of the Reforms on practitioners across the partnership.

What are our codesign principles and processes? Who do we need to involve?

The codesign principles embraces a whole stakeholder and relational approach to codesign. This will involve the establishing of a parent/carer group, and young persons group and a transformation champions group for practitioners across the partnership.

What local data can we build on? Have we got a comprehensive up to date area needs assessment?

There is a current JSNA along with a number of other area assessments that have been completed over the last few years by different partners. These form the basis of a comprehensive literature review that will inform a needs-gaps analysis.

The local authority has a comprehensive suite of data dashboards and reports and a Business Intelligence Service that has the understanding and ability to write bespoke reports. This is complimented by partner agencies also having comprehensive data sets that will be used to triangulate data to form a richer understanding of baseline positions and measure progress over time.

Do we need a gap analysis?

An up-to-date gap analysis will be devised as noted above.

Do we have the right mechanisms to engage a diverse range of service users in our codesign?

There are a number of established parent/carer groups as well young people's groups across the local authority that will be tapped into. Previous work will also be referred to such as the UNICEF Child Friendly Torbay work as well as the Breathing Space work with parents who have repeatedly had children removed into care.

The Local Authority has a mature Participation Team as well as a Relational Practice Team which will collectively be able to facilitate engagement with parents/cares and children.

Do we have a range of lived experience groups to reflect different needs?

There are a number of established groups within the Local Authority such as SEND Family Voice, Breathing Space Parents Group, and the Children in Care Council to name just a few. The Participation Team along with the UNICEF Child Friendly Torbay Team will be able to enhance this area of work.

Do these enable ongoing feedback from families and in turn the continuous refinement of practice?

Feedback from these groups feeds into mechanisms such as the Council's Practice Improvement Forum as well as the Learning Academy which in turns designs and develops training packages or commissions training as appropriate.

Regular Local Authority auditing also captures feedback from parent/carers and children (where appropriate to do so). Audit and dip sample findings are translated into actions and learning to take forward. Learning is fed back via the Practice Improvement Forum as well as the TSCP QA Group.

The Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership also provides opportunities for refinement of practice via regular Multi-agency Case Audits (MACAs) and the annual conference.

Does this work align to the outcomes in the national framework?

All the Transformation work being undertaken marries well with the National Framework.

Who will be our change champions?

A volunteer group of practitioners has been established to champion the Transformation Programme going forward. This group has been tasked with the role of promoting the opportunities that come with the programme of change as well as helping to support staff and contain anxiety going forward. The group will be visible and accessible using mechanisms such as drop ins to gather views from practitioners across the partnerships and relay these to the Transformation Board. The initial group were Children Services based practitioners but now that it is established it will be expanded to include practitioners from across the whole partnership.

Do we have the appropriate practitioners within codesign groups with CYP with lived experience?

As previously noted, a practitioners transformation group has been established as well a child and young peoples group.

How will we monitor and understand the impact of engagement?

The views from the above noted groups will be continuously fed back into the Transformation Board for consideration and linked back into the workstreams that are tasked with planning and implementing key components within the overall Transformation programme of work.

Where might it be useful to work regionally with police/ICB leads to support implementation across shared LA boundaries?

Discussions have already taken place with colleagues in neighbouring authorities across the region. There is a general consensus that establishing a regional group will allow for the development of consistent approaches to the Reforms where appropriate whilst also ensuring localised delivery is maintained.

How will we assess the project's progress, effectiveness and impact?

Clear deliverables have been included in the terms of reference for all the workstreams. These feed into the Transformation Board which is scrutinised by the Children's Continuous Improvement Board.

The high-level activity is subject of a project plan and will be managed by a dedicated project manager who will report any identified risks into the Transformation Board as well as maintain a risks register.

Baseline data will be established as part of the initial planning and development work which will be used to measure improvement against going forward.

Do we have a dedicated programme leader who is well supported and enabled and has permission to make change?

A Divisional Director for Children's Services Transformation has been employed who reports directly to the DCS.

The Divisional Director is supported by a Service Lead and will also have the dedicated support of an analysis and project manager.

The Divisional Director is also supported by senior officers across the partnership to ensure a fully collaborative approach is taken to the Transformation work.

What local strategies and governance do we have in place we can build on?

The Children's Continuous Improvement Board is a multi-agency board that has been established for some time and is independently chaired. This board sits underneath the Delegated Safeguarding Partners.

The Transformation Board will feed into the Children's Continuous Improvement Board and therefore there is a line of sight from the Transformation Board up to the DSP.

Is there a partnership governance board everyone is engaged in? Should that cover the reforms?

A Transformation Board has been established that will hold to account all the national reforms based workstreams as well as the local workstreams to account.

Part Two - Codesign and implementation of Family Help, multi-agency child protection, family group decision making

Family Help

What services/agencies will form our multi-disciplinary teams?

What partners are already part of the front door?
How will these teams link with community/universal services (inc. VCS)?
What does our needs assessment tell us?
What recruitment do we need to start?
Do we have a shared practice framework?
Do we have a shared multi-agency workforce development plan outlining L&D offer for Family Help workforce (including FHLPs) and skills and knowledge required for FHLPs?
What processes do we need in place to identify and allocate the most suitable lead practitioner?
What management structures and supervision arrangements will we need for oversight of all FHLPs, including those that are alternatively qualified and/or not employed by the local authority?
Do existing data sharing agreements enable us to identify families needing support and understand outcomes?
Can we bring together TEH and CIN into the same CMS, with a single/assessment plan, that can be accessed by all relevant people?

Family group decision making

How do we already use family networks to support families?
How does FGDM align with existing practices? Where it is already used, what are the opportunities and learning to build from?
How can family network plans be integrated into Family Help and child protection plans?
What are the partnership's training needs? How does this align to existing practice frameworks and workforce development plans?

Multi-agency child protection

What does our local needs assessment and harms profile tell us about child protection in our area? What does this mean for our MACPT planning and design?
How many MACPTs might we need, who might work in them, where will we locate them?

What existing strengths and opportunities can our current multi-agency arrangements offer to this work?
How can we promote and embed a shared vision, identity and practice framework, whilst retaining agency expertise and clear lines of sight to parent agencies and MASA?
How will we integrate our MACPTs and establish them as centres of excellence for the wider system, including with our multi-agency front door(s) (MASH, Family Hubs or equivalent), LAC and court teams, etc?
How will we equip MACPTs to identify, understand and respond effectively to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of all children and to all harm types, inside and outside of the home and online?
How will MACPTs build trusting relationships with parents and carers to ensure their meaningful participation?
How will we equip MACPTs to identify, understand and respond effectively to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of all children and to all harm types, inside and outside of the home and online?
What form might our management, supervision and assurance processes take?