

24 September 2025

Agenda Item: 7

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHILDRENS AND FAMILIES

THE FAMILIES FIRST PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S APPROACH TO WHOLE-SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the Families First Partnership Programme, highlighting Nottinghamshire's approach to whole-system transformation in children's services, and to seek continued support for cross-sector collaboration aligned with the [Nottinghamshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#).

Information

2. The Families First Partnership Programme is a national reform programme backed by over £500 million in funding for 2025/26 from the Department for Education. It aims to redesign children's social care through:
 - a) Strengthened multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
 - b) Integrated Family Help services for Early Help and Children in Need.
 - c) Expert-led Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams.
 - d) Enhanced support for family networks.
3. The Department for Education has published a [Families First Partnership Programme Guide](#), which outlines the framework and objectives of the programme, delivery methods, and areas for local flexibility.
4. To deliver the whole system reform the programme must involve all relevant stakeholders, including safeguarding partners, local authorities, education and childcare settings, and community organisations.
5. In Nottinghamshire, the programme is being delivered through a coordinated transformation approach led by the Families First Programme Governance Board with representation from key stakeholders from the local authority, education, police and health.

6. The Families First Programme Governance Board are currently in the process of recruiting dedicated secondees from Health, Education and the Police who can represent their services and lead co-design, engagement activities, and communication within their respective agencies.
7. The key workstreams of the Nottinghamshire Families First Partnership transformation programme include:
 - a) **Front Door Redesign:** Creating a seamless access point for families.
 - b) **Family Help:** Community-based multidisciplinary teams led by Family Help Lead Practitioners.
 - c) **Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams:** Developing expert-led teams with local authority, police, health, and education partners.
 - d) **Adolescents Service:** Scoping a targeted service for vulnerable adolescents.
 - e) **Practice Models:** Co-designing and embedding a practice framework, supporting multi-agency working and promoting shared language and values among professionals. Including, family group decision making and trauma-informed approaches.
8. This transformation is underpinned by enabler programmes in workforce development, digital systems, and data sharing. The programme aligns with the Children's Social Care National Framework and Working Together to Safeguard Children.
9. The programme is collating existing data and knowledge from the local authority and partners to build a detailed understanding of the strengths and needs for children and their families across different communities in Nottinghamshire. The programme will use this detailed information to ensure the whole system design is able to respond to local need.
10. The transformation will use a test, learn grow approach. Where practitioners and stakeholders are enabled to design and test the new approaches and gather feedback, then use the insights gained to refine and improve the programme before full-scale implementation. It's a continuous process of testing and learning. This small start will be in a specific area, with a particular group of users, and limited features. By testing and learning in cycles, small successes will grow to larger ones, avoiding the risks of trying to do everything at once and ensuring safe decisions to transition services to deliver better outcomes will be made.

Other Options Considered

11. Alternative models were reviewed, including standalone service redesigns. A whole-system transformation was chosen to align with national expectations and to deliver sustainable, integrated outcomes.

Reasons for Recommendations

12. To ensure Nottinghamshire remains aligned with national expectations, delivers improved outcomes for children and families, and strengthens multi-agency collaboration.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

14. The programme supports compliance with:

- a) Children Act (1989)
- b) Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- c) Children's Social Care National Framework (2023)
- d) Public Sector Equality Duty.
- e) Data Protection and Information Governance.

Financial Implications

15. The programme is funded through the Department of Education grant.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

16. The programme responds directly to [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#) findings, including rising adolescent risk, mental health needs, and inequalities in access to early help. It supports the JSNA's emphasis on integrated, preventative services.

Consultation

17. Extensive engagement will take place with families, practitioners, and partner agencies through workshops, forums, and co-design sessions.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

18. The programme strengthens safeguarding through the development of multi-agency child protection teams, improved data sharing, and consistent multi-agency practice frameworks.

Implications for Residents

19. If successfully implemented, the Families First Partnership Programme will ensure children and families receive the right support at the right time, from professionals who know them well. Families will experience more joined-up services, fewer handovers, and greater involvement in decisions about their care leading to safer, more stable, and empowering outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Health and Wellbeing Board:

- 1) Notes the progress of the Families First Partnership Programme
- 2) Endorses the whole-system transformation approach.
- 3) Supports continued multi-agency collaboration and engagement.

ANNE COYLE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHILDRENS AND FAMILIES
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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Constitutional Comments (LPW 09/09/2025)

20. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Health and Wellbeing Board by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SH 11/09/2025)

21. The funding for the Families First Partnership Programme comes from two grants. The Children Social Care Prevention Grant is new funding for 2025/26, with Nottinghamshire County Council's allocation being £3.2 million. Nottinghamshire County Council's Children and Families Grant 2025/26 includes £3.2 million of funding for Supporting Families which is also within the scope of the programme's funding. All programme initiatives are in line within the grant's conditions. There are no financial implications on Local Government Reorganisation within the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Divisions and Members Affected

- All