



To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Date: 26 March 20206

Subject: Families First Partnership Programme Update (Social Care Reforms)

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To update the Scrutiny Board on Coventry's progress in design and implementation for the Families First Partnership Programme

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
- 1) Note progress to date on the design and implementation planning.
 - 2) Endorse the delivery approach and the governance and monitoring arrangements

3 Information and Background

- 3.1 In March 2025, the Department for Education published new guidance on the Families First Partnership Programme (FFPP), which aims to transform the whole system of help, support and protection for children and families, so that every family can access the right help and support when they need it, with a strong emphasis on early intervention to prevent crisis and strengthened partnership working.
- 3.2 In May 2025, Coventry City Council initiated work to support the implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme. This programme aligns closely with the broader ambition of delivering the One Coventry approach and strengthening the system around families.
- 3.3 Between June and August 2025, Coventry brought together partners from across the local system, including council services, health, policing, education, and the voluntary and community sector, to develop an initial response to the national programme. This work built on Coventry's well-established strengths, including its strong Family Hub offer and mature, targeted Early Help system, which already provide coordinated, accessible support to children, young people and families across the city.
- 3.4 To support this work, a dedicated multi-agency transformation team was established, bringing together secondees at a senior level from education, health,

and policing, alongside local authority colleagues. This approach has ensured that the programme is genuinely co-owned across the partnership, with the right level of expertise, influence, and leadership to drive system-wide change. The multi-agency team has played a critical role in maintaining momentum, coordinating design activity, and ensuring that the emerging model reflects the perspectives and priorities of all key partners.

- 3.5 This collaborative infrastructure has strengthened Coventry's ability to take a whole-system approach to transformation, aligning strategic intent with operational delivery and ensuring that reforms are both locally grounded and partnership-led.
- 3.6 The focus of this phase was on shaping the Family Help service model, ensuring that future developments both align with national reform requirements and enhance Coventry's existing integrated approach. Partners worked collaboratively to map the current landscape of provision, recognising the impact of Family Hubs as community-based access points and the effectiveness of targeted Early Help in providing timely, needs-led interventions that prevent escalation.
- 3.7 A co-design approach was central to this process, enabling partners to identify opportunities to further strengthen integration, streamline pathways, and improve outcomes for families. This included building on existing practice around relationship-based support, multi-agency working, and whole-family approaches.
- 3.8 This phase has generated strong momentum across the partnership and established a robust foundation for the next stage of development, including further design, testing, and phased implementation through 2026.
- 3.9 Alongside this, Coventry also began preparing for a wider set of developments required through Families First, including:
 - More detailed design and test-and-learn activity for the Family Help model.
 - Establishing a model for Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT) and the Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCPP) role.
 - Strengthening the local Family Led Decision Making offer, aligned to both government expectations and Coventry's Family Valued approach.
 - Assessing the core multi-agency safeguarding conditions needed for successful transformation.
 - Planning for effective performance monitoring, data use, communication, and engagement—including with children, young people, and families.
 - Supporting stronger collaboration across departments and partners to deliver place-based prevention.
- 3.10 Coventry entered autumn 2025 with a clear commitment to mobilising the next phase of transformation in line with the expectations of the national programme, including the integration of Family Help and Child Protection, the strengthening of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and the delivery of more consistent, relationship-based practice for children and families.
- 3.11 A key priority within this phase was the design of the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) model, which will sit alongside Family Help as a core component of the future integrated system of support, safeguarding, and protection. This reflects

the national ambition to create a more seamless continuum between early help and statutory intervention, reducing fragmentation and ensuring children and families experience a more coordinated and effective response.

- 3.12 This phase of Coventry's transformation work focused on the detailed design of both the MACPT model and the Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCPP) role. The LCPP role is central to the national reforms, providing greater professional oversight, strengthening decision-making, and ensuring a consistent focus on risk, impact, and the lived experience of the child.
- 3.13 A collaborative, multi-agency design approach was adopted, consistent with the methodology used in developing the Family Help model. This brought together partners from across the system to co-produce a model that reflects national reform principles, including clearer accountability, stronger multi-agency working, skilled and confident practitioners, and a relentless focus on the voice and experience of the child.
- 3.14 This work positions Coventry well to move into the next phase of implementation, ensuring that both Family Help and Child Protection reforms are aligned, mutually reinforcing, and capable of delivering improved outcomes for children and families.
- 3.15 Building on the development of the new Family Help model, which strengthens support for children and families requiring targeted and specialist intervention, the partnership has progressed its focus on multi-agency child protection arrangements for those children identified as at risk of harm and in need of statutory intervention.
- 3.16 This work has been underpinned by Coventry's existing strengths, including a well-established multi-agency safeguarding infrastructure, a strong culture of collaboration and shared accountability, and a commitment to relationship-based practice. These foundations have enabled meaningful progress at pace, with partners working collectively to design a more integrated and responsive system. In particular, opportunities have been identified to enhance joint working arrangements, strengthen shared approaches to risk assessment, and enable timelier, more informed multi-agency decision-making, in line with national reform expectations and statutory safeguarding duties.
- 3.17 The proposed Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) model builds on and evolves the current Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) arrangements. It seeks to enhance capacity and capability by increasing multi-agency resource, enabling greater oversight, scrutiny, and strategic coordination of child protection activity. This will support more consistent thresholds, improved information-sharing, and stronger collective ownership of risk.
- 3.18 A key feature of the model is the integration of the Child Protection Conference Chair function into the Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCPP) role. This development ensures that the role is underpinned by the necessary expertise, independence, and professional authority to provide robust oversight, challenge, and direction within child protection processes. It also aligns with the direction of national reform by strengthening practice leadership, improving the quality and consistency of decision-making, and maintaining a clear and unwavering focus on the voice and lived experience of the child.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 In December 2025, Central Government announced that the implementation of multi-agency child protection teams within the national Families First Partnership Programme would be paused, pending further national evaluation of the emerging evidence base. This decision reflects the learning from pathfinder areas, which has not yet identified a single, consistently effective national model of best practice.
- 4.2 In response, while Coventry will continue with local planning and development of enhanced, partner-involved multi-agency arrangements, this pause provides an important opportunity for further national reflection and refinement. It ensures that any future implementation is evidence-informed, safe, and sustainable and supports local areas to align with a model that is both effective and deliverable within the wider safeguarding system.
- 4.3 Coventry remains committed to the principles underpinning the programme, including strong multi-agency collaboration, improved information-sharing, and a coordinated response to risk, and will continue to build on its existing strengths while remaining responsive to further national guidance and direction.
- 4.4 As part of the next phase of work and early mobilisation, Coventry is developing a test-and-learn pilot focused on the end-to-end pathway from Family Help through to Multi-Agency Child Protection (MACPT). This will initially be implemented within the East locality, providing a defined area in which to safely test, evaluate, and refine the model in practice. Learning from this pilot will directly inform further development and support a phased roll-out across the city, in line with the Department for Education expectation for full implementation by April 2027.
- 4.5 Given the national pause on MACPT implementation, the initial emphasis will be on Family Help, ensuring that this element of the model is fully embedded, robust and delivering impact. However, the overarching intention remains to test the coherence and effectiveness of the whole system, ensuring readiness for full integration once national direction on MACPT is confirmed.
- 4.6 During this period, Coventry will continue to test and refine key components of the MACPT model where these align with and complement Family Help, building on the progress already made. This includes strengthening multi-agency working, shared decision-making, and practice oversight, ensuring that momentum is maintained and that the system is well-prepared for full implementation.

5 Coventry's Funding Position

5.1 Headline position

	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31
FFPP grant allocation	£2,312,596	£5,771,232	£5,771,232	£4,654,790	£?	£?

- 5.2 The Department for Education has committed four years of funding to support Coventry in delivering the full scope of the Families First Programme, providing a significant opportunity to embed sustainable system-wide reform. While there is currently no confirmed position regarding funding beyond the 2028/29 financial year, this investment enables Coventry and its partners to take a planned, phased approach to transformation, building capacity, capability, and evidence of impact over time.

- 5.3 This funding creates a strong platform to further strengthen existing service delivery across the partnership, building on Coventry's established foundations in Family Hubs, Early Help, and multi-agency safeguarding. It also provides the opportunity to think innovatively and ambitiously, testing new approaches, scaling what works, and ensuring that services are increasingly integrated, preventative, and responsive to need.
- 5.4 Importantly, this period of investment allows Coventry to focus on delivering meaningful and lasting improvements for children and families, ensuring that resources are used in a way that not only meets national expectations but also reflects local priorities, ultimately striving to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families across the city.

6 Governance arrangements.

- 6.1 Coventry has established clear and robust governance arrangements to oversee the delivery of the Families First Partnership Programme, ensuring strong leadership, accountability, and alignment with existing safeguarding and partnership structures.
- 6.2 A dedicated Families First Partnership Board has been established to provide strategic oversight of the programme. The Board brings together senior leaders from across the partnership, including children's services, education, health, policing, and the voluntary and community sector. Its role is to set the overall direction, monitor progress against key milestones, manage risk, and ensure that the programme delivers on its intended outcomes for children and families. The Board maintains a strong focus on partnership working, system integration, and the effective use of resources to support sustainable transformation.
- 6.3 The Families First Partnership Board reports directly into the Coventry Children's Safeguarding Partnership (CCSP), ensuring clear lines of accountability and alignment with statutory safeguarding responsibilities. This reporting relationship provides assurance that the programme is fully connected to wider safeguarding priorities, with appropriate scrutiny, challenge, and oversight from safeguarding partners.
- 6.4 In addition, a separate Children and Education Steering Group has been established to support the operational delivery of the programme. This group focuses on driving forward key workstreams, including the development and implementation of the Family Help model and wider system reforms. It plays a critical role in translating strategic direction into delivery, coordinating activity across services, and ensuring that education partners are fully engaged in the transformation agenda.
- 6.5 Together, these governance arrangements provide a coherent structure that supports both strategic leadership and operational delivery, ensuring that the Families First Programme is effectively implemented across Coventry in line with national expectations and local priorities

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