

Families First is here!

The way services provide early help to families in Hertfordshire is changing. Families First will bring together organisations who provide early help support to families under one 'umbrella' of consistent practice and clearer processes.

The story so far...

For families

Support is fragmented and difficult to access.

Support is provided by a variety of services but it isn't always well co-ordinated.

It takes too long to get help.

Families repeat their story many times.



...and the difference we want to make

Quicker access to the right support, including self help where appropriate.

Needs will be considered holistically for the whole family.

Problems are addressed before they escalate, improving overall outcomes.

For practitioners

Processes are complicated and duplicated, especially the initial gathering of information about a case.

It is unclear what support is available and how to access it.

There is a 'refer on' culture.



Less duplication of processes.

The benefit of shared local knowledge, trends and resource will be maximised.

Move away from a 'respond to crisis' culture.

Reduction in requests as families are encouraged to self help where appropriate.

The Families First process

This process will be rolled out across the county in a phased approach by April 2017.



Families with emerging needs will be supported by a single agency.

Request

- A request for support is made if a family needs more help than a single agency can provide and they do not meet the social care threshold. Families and professionals will make this request through the Customer Service Centre. Alternatively the case could be stepped down from the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

FF Triage

- Families First Triage assesses the request for support and offers advice, guidance or signposting.
- Sends to Triage Panel as appropriate.

Triage Panel

- Weekly multi-agency triage panel uses local knowledge to identify the most appropriate support for the family.

Key Worker

- The family is allocated a Families First Keyworker (from any agency).
- The keyworker co-ordinates the support around the family.

Action & Impact

- Cases showing no progress are brought to the relevant monthly Families First Action & Impact Meeting to discuss and progress.

Find more detail in our [FAQs](#).

Families First Hubs

There will be nine Families First Hubs, one in each of the Families First areas (each district, but combined Hub for Watford & Three Rivers).

Local implementation groups will oversee the details of how Families First is set up locally, including whether the Hub is a physical location or a way of working.

Each Local Families First Hub will have:



Weekly triage panels to consider most appropriate support for new cases.

Monthly Action & Impact Meetings to consider and resolve cases which are not progressing.

Contribute information gathered locally to inform family progress, impact and outcomes.

Local partnership board will provide ongoing governance and feed back to the county's Families First Board.

At a countywide level there will be:

- Improved information for families, encouraging self help and reducing requests for support from professionals (estimated 1000 fewer requests each year).
- Training to improve confidence of staff to work with whole families.
- Delivery and impact overseen by Families First countywide.

Keep yourself up to date

You can keep yourself up to date on developments by signing up for [Families First News](#), the newsletter for all professionals involved in early help in Hertfordshire.

You can find resources and training opportunities on the [Families First Portal](#). You can also find information on the portal about how you can arrange to shadow a worker from another Families First organisation.

