Families First Partnership Programme

Briefing Session for Education Partners

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Kate Pollard
Children's Services Transformation Lead
kate.pollard@bolton.gov.uk

Geraldine Whitehead
Assistant Director- Inclusive Education and Learning
Geraldine.whitehead@bolton.gov.uk

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02 National Journey

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04 Why Education Matters in the Reforms

05 The role of Education in Family Help

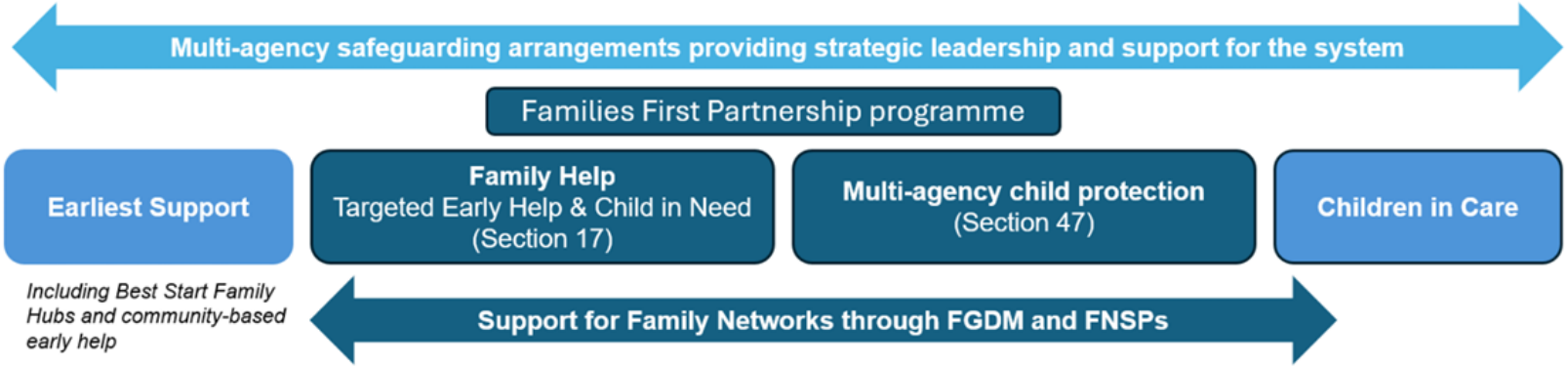
06 Education in Multi-Agency Child Protection

07 Education & the Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

The session will be recorded, and the slides will be shared after the meeting

Families First Partnership Programme: Overview

- Government Major Project to Deliver the national rollout of reforms to Family Help, Multi Agency Child Protection and Family Networks.
- The core goal is to rebalance the system of support away from crisis intervention towards earlier help. This supports the government's mission to provide children with the best start in life, keep children safe and break down barriers to opportunity.
- The programme commenced in April 2025. Local Safeguarding Partners are expected to implement the reforms by March 2027.



National Journey

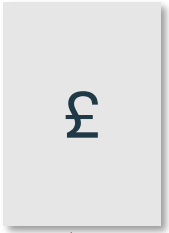
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The **Independent Care Review** and **National Panel review** made a number of ambitious recommendations to transform support and protection in children's social care (CSC).

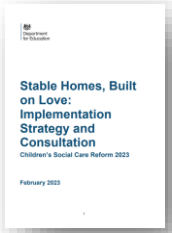


The DfE established the **Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP)** programme to facilitate reforms to family help, child protection and family network services in a phased way.

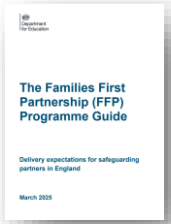


Funding distributed to Local Authorities and official kick off for the FFP programme.

May '22 | Feb '23 | July '23 | March '25 | April '25 | June '25



In response to these recommendations, the Department for Education (DfE) has published its implementation strategy, **'Stable Homes, Built on Love'**, which sets out a range of proposed reforms in CSC.



Published the Programme Guide and shared with Police and ICBs via Police Facilitator and NHSE safeguarding networks.



The **Spending Review** is released, outlining FFP funding until FY 28/29. The initial £523m investment will continue each year supported by an extra £300m over 26/27 – 27/28.

The Case for Change

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care published in 2022 found the following challenges:

Family Help

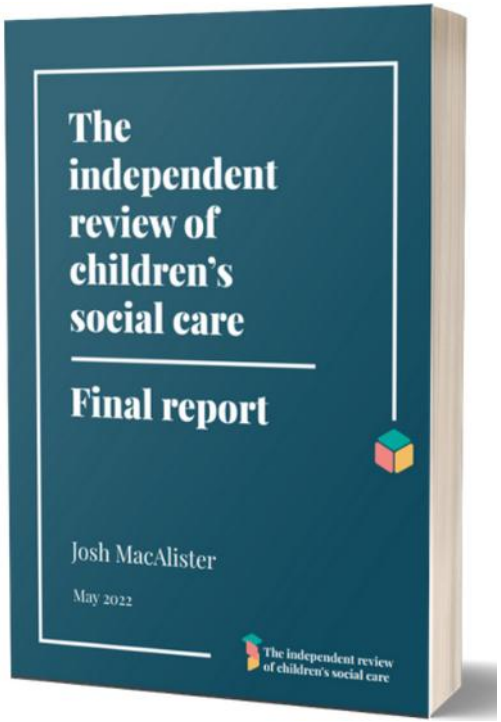
- Limited support for families
- Loss of Relationships
- Unclear Eligibility
- Poorly- Evidenced support.

Family Networks

- Lack of recognition and support for family members
- Limited Emphasis on family members or friends

Multi Agency Child Protection Team

- Inconsistent Social Work Expertise
- Fractured Multi- Agency Working
- Limited Extra familial harm support
- Poor Parental Engagement



Policy Expectations

The FFPP Guide sets out the delivery expectations- three key reform strands, underpinned by system enablers, all delivered as a whole system transformation.

Family Help

Ensuring families can access the right support at the right time. Locally based, multi-disciplinary family help services providing welcoming, seamless and effective support that is tailored to the needs of children and families. Ensuring consistency of relationships with their lead practitioner.

Multi Agency Child Protection

Dedicated and skilled multi-agency child protection teams comprising practitioners from a range of disciplines, including social workers with greater child protection expertise and experience. It will work closely with family help to protect children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Family Networks

Greater use of family networks, with earlier use of Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), facilitated by Family Network Support Packages (FNSPs) to enable more children to live safely at home or support a transition into kinship care.

System Enablers

Establishing a system-wide, "families first" culture, underpinned by clear and shared MASA and effective information sharing. Strengthening the role of education at strategic level.

Why Education Matters in the Reforms

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Schools and other education settings are often the first to spot need - attendance, behaviour, wellbeing.

Education is explicitly recognised as a relevant safeguarding partner in the National Framework.

In practice, education contributes in three ways:

Early identification & referral

(front door, Family Help triage)

Ongoing support

(part of the “team around the family”)

Strategic leadership

(representation in safeguarding governance and MACPTs)

Education brings a unique perspective on children’s day-to-day lives and family context.

What's Changing for Education?

Current approach	Reform expectations
Education might be **consulted late** in safeguarding and planning.	Education **formally part of MACPTs** - co-decision makers on risk and plans.
Representation can be **variable** - some schools and education settings involved, others not.	**Consistent advisory roles** ensure the sector's voice is heard.
Limited information sharing with schools and other education settings.	**Clearer pathways and data flows** between Family Help, MACPTs, and schools/other education settings.
Education settings seen mainly as **referrers** of concerns.	Schools/other education settings as **active contributors** to Family Help plans and ongoing support.
Contribution and collaboration often depends on **individual relationships**.	Education partners embedded in **formal governance and co-design processes**.

What is Family Help?

Coordinated, relationship-based support that maintains trusted relationships



Purpose

Combine targeted early help and Child in Need support around children and families.



How partners work

Integrated support that enables families to get the right help at the right time.



Connection

Bring the right support and expertise around the family as needs change, maintaining trusted relationships.

Continuity of relationships, with support that responds to changing needs.

Family Help in Bolton

Delivery Expectations

- **Single Family Help offer.** Local areas bring together targeted early help and child in need.
- **Lead practitioner.** Implement the Family Help Lead Practitioner role.
- **Multidisciplinary teams.** Implement Family Help teams informed by population needs.
- **Shared assessment and plan.** Establish and use a single Family Help assessment and plan.

Bolton's Approach

- **Test and Learn.** Operating in the East, based at Tonge Family Hub, since April 2026.
- **Integrated Workforce.** Social Work qualified and alternatively qualified workers act as FHLPs.
- **122 children supported** by the end of Q2.
- **Safeguarding oversight.** Trial of the LCPP role within the Test and Learn site.
- **Family Help Partnership Panel.** Brings partners together for reflection, timelier access to services and improved relationships with the wider MDT.
- **Threshold of need.** Review of the document, with the launch of the Right Support, Right Time tool and guidance.
- **Single Assessment.** Coproduced single assessment template and plan with children, families and partners.

Right Support, Right Time

Who We Listened To: A Whole Partnership Approach

Multi agency working group established 2026

Working group established

Multi-agency working group formed to steer and support the development.

200+

6 October 2026

Multi-agency event

Over 200 multi-agency professionals participated in a collaborative event where the single assessment and right support, right time was shared and discussed

Face to face sessions with

children and young people

13 Youth Challenge staff took part in a Single Assessment session, 9 of whom work with SEND.

6

Group Discussions

Focus groups and forums

SEND Steering Group, East Test and Learn, children's services, VCSFE, Early Years settings, 10 school staff, including DSLs, headteachers and SENCOs from Moorgate and Tonge Moor. Staff from a specialist school provision.

58

survey responses

Parent, carer and professional survey

Explored the language, structure, accessibility and usability of the proposed framework.

500+

North West regional co-production Built on existing work informed by over 500 children, families and practitioners, that took place over 2026 to co produce the right support, right documents, North West Language Charter and Conversational Tool

Single Assessment: “My World- My Family Plan”

Feedback has directly influenced the development of a simpler, more inclusive and proportionate framework that supports meaningful conversations and a shared professional understanding.

What We Heard	How We Responded
Keep language simple, respectful and child-friendly	Refined wording, reduced duplication and simplified prompts
Focus on conversations, not completing forms	Developed a conversational framework, with more detailed guidance and optional tools sitting alongside it
Children and families should not repeatedly tell their story	Designed one evolving assessment that can build on existing information as needs change
Recognise the whole child, SEND, family strengths and trusted relationships	Strengthened inclusion, communication, education, family networks and the child's lived experience
Make it proportionate and practical across different services	Aligned the framework with existing assessments and statutory requirements, allowing greater depth where needed
Use consistent language and professional thinking across the partnership	Connected My World with Right Support, Right Time to support shared reflection, understanding of need and appropriate responses

94% positive about clarity

95% positive about respectful tone

87% positive about structure

Continuous Learning and refining through the working group

One assessment, One Plan

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The Child's Story: One Shared Understanding. The right Support at the Right Time.

1. Capture the child's story and lived experience
2. Build on conversations and information already gathered
3. Reduce duplication and repeated storytelling
4. Understand strengths, needs, relationships and risks
5. Bring together information from different professionals
6. Support early identification of need and decisive safeguarding action
7. Maintain continuity as needs increase or decrease

Not intended to generate unnecessary additional work or information gathering.

Test and Learn: The Evidence so far...

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Q1 & Q2 Evidence Base:

122 Children and Families Supported

10 Cases Audited

17 Families Provided Specific Feedback

9 Practitioners Consulted

26 Partner Agencies

Evidence sources

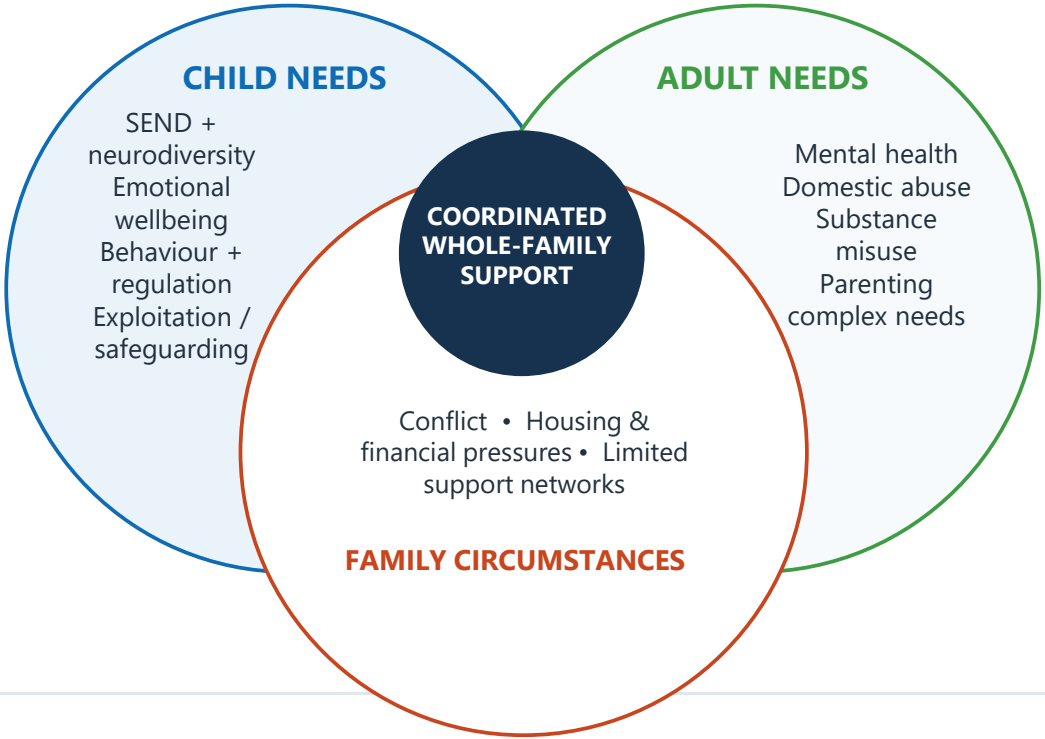
- Performance Data
- Quality Assurance
- Family Voice
- Practitioner Experience
- Partner feedback
- Facilitated reflection

Findings: The pilot has demonstrated the value of the Family Help approach.

- Relationships and continuity.
- Children's voice in every audit.
- Families felt heard, valued and less judged.
- Stronger links with schools and health.
- Co-location accelerated advice.
- Panel mobilised help faster.
- Capacity and flexibility enabled practitioners to work relationally with the whole family.
- Lower caseloads created time for direct work, continuity and coordination.

Families are presenting with overlapping and interconnected needs

EVERY AUDITED CASE REQUIRED COORDINATED MULTI-AGENCY SUPPORT



STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

Children's needs cannot be addressed in isolation from parents and the wider family.

Integrate more strongly with adult mental health, domestic abuse, substance misuse, housing, health and community support.

The role of Education in Family Help

- **Spotting needs early:** Education settings are well placed to notice changes in a child's circumstances and help identify where additional support may be helpful.
- **Building on trusted relationships:** Where appropriate and agreed, an education colleague may act as the Family Help Lead Practitioner, particularly where a trusted relationship already exists.
- **Shared assessment and planning:** Education can contribute to, and where appropriate help lead, the Single Assessment and Plan alongside children, families and partners.
- **Support and coordination:** Education can provide support and work alongside other services to help families access the right help.
- **Attendance as insight:** Changes in attendance can contribute to a wider understanding of a child's lived experience and emerging needs.
- **Working together:** Education brings valuable knowledge to shared conversations, assessment and planning, supporting a more joined-up response.
- **Shaping our approach:** Education is an important safeguarding partner and will help shape how Family Help and Families First develop across Bolton.

Education in Multi-Agency Child Protection

The Children Act 1989 & 2004

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

Families First Partnership Programme

Strong links between the team and education settings

MACPTs bring together child protection expertise to:

- Support assessment and analysis where there is actual or likely significant harm
- Contribute to child protection planning and review
- Support effective multi agency decision making
- Provide consultation and advice for practitioners who need MACPT expertise
- Support the local authority in connection with its section 47 duties.

Education's role

Education's role is to bring expertise and information as part of a multi-agency response to significant harm. The LA retains the statutory section 47 duty. MACPT members, including education representatives, contribute to collective child protection assessment, analysis, planning and decision making in support of that duty.

Education's role in Multi Agency Child Protection Teams

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Why include practitioners with education experience in MACPTs?

People with education experience help ensure that child protection decisions are informed by contributing:

- Insights and risk assessment
- Planning
- Review
- Challenge

Wider education practitioners and settings do not become responsible for:

- Leading section 47 enquiries
- Chairing child protection conferences
- Holding statutory accountability for child protection plans
- Exercising local authority child protection duties.

This rests with the LA, supported by the MACPT.

Education inclusion was a grant condition for FPP and will be a legal requirement under CWSA26 in 2027.

Multi Agency Child Protection in Bolton

Delivery Expectations

- **Fully operational MACPT.** Deliver all core child protection functions.
- **Core membership.** Appoint and train the core MACPT team.
- **Additional practitioners.** Identify practitioners in line with harm profiles.
- **Shared practice framework.** Develop and implement a shared MACPT practice framework.
- **Parents and carers.** Provide accessible information, advice and support during child protection activity.

Bolton's Approach

- **Steering group.** Established to drive MACPT activity.
- **Operating model.** In development, informed by the co-design workshop on 09.11.26.
- **Core membership.** Core team and workforce requirements in development.
- **Lead Child Protection Practitioners.** Role tested and evaluated through Test and Learn. Operating model and role profile further developed. Posts planned for advertisement next quarter.
- **Police and health.** Greater Manchester Police is investing in a consistent GM-wide MACPT model. Manchester South Test and Learn commencing October 2026, with local senior police engagement in Bolton governance. ICB supports recruitment to a specialist health role, hosted by the local NHS Foundation Trust, subject to funding transfer and hosting arrangements.
- **Education role.** New MACPT post to be advertised next quarter.
- **Parents and carers.** Working with Wigan and Salford on an accessible video explaining child protection processes.

Education & the Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

Strengthening the role of Education in the MASA is essential for effective multi agency safeguarding practice.

This is underpinned by legislation and delivery expectations detailed in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

Statutory safeguarding partners must include education and childcare settings as relevant agencies.

Participation is required in both governance and operational delivery levels.

Evidence of Strengths from FFP Pathfinders:

Strategic Voice: Education represented at exec level alongside statutory safeguarding partners.

Structured Practitioner Input: DSL Networks, Forums and safeguarding partnerships feed into governance.

Integrated Governance: Education embedded across subgroups

Strong two- way communication: feedback loops between partnership and providers.

Core objective- To strengthen safeguarding to protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Who can be the strategic lead for Education?

A senior local authority education leader, such as a Corporate Director for Education and Learning or Director of Education OR Children and Young People's Services.

A director of safeguarding from a multi-academy trust (A headteacher or principal acting as a sector representative).

A representative nominated through an education safeguarding forum, board or committee.

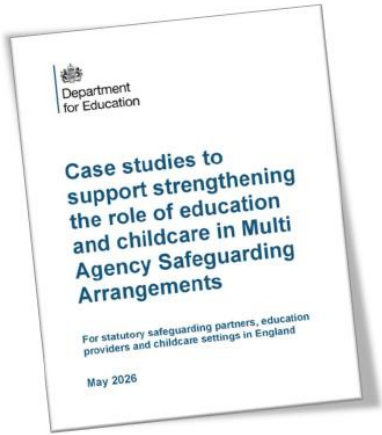
An education and childcare specialist seconded from the sector.

An existing local authority safeguarding or education officer who has been redeployed into the role.

A dedicated strategic safeguarding lead appointed directly by the partnership.

An independent education safeguarding consultant commissioned by the partnership.

A shared leadership arrangement, for example a local authority education leader working alongside a sector representative such as a headteacher or safeguarding director from a MAT.



Bolton's Arrangements

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Safeguarding Education Team

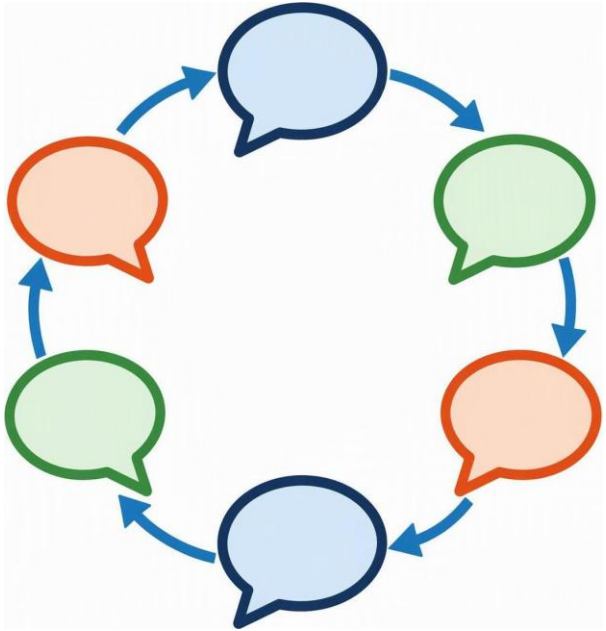
Representation on BSCP

DSL Forums

Education Collaborative

Early Years Forums

Primary, Secondary and Special School Networks



Consistent approach: Share Learning: Strong Communication.

Opportunities and Benefits for Education

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- **Clearer role clarity** - education input built into plans and decision-making, not added afterwards.
- **Less duplication** - fewer repeated referrals and assessments, clearer pathways into support.
- **Better communication** - more consistent information sharing between children's services and education.
- **Shared responsibility** - attendance, safeguarding and inclusion tackled jointly with partners.
- **Professional recognition** - education staff and leaders seen as core members of multi-agency teams.
- **Strategic influence** - stronger voice for education in safeguarding governance and partnership forums.

Bolton's implementation roadmap

October 2026

Partnership co-production

November

Operating-model co-design

December

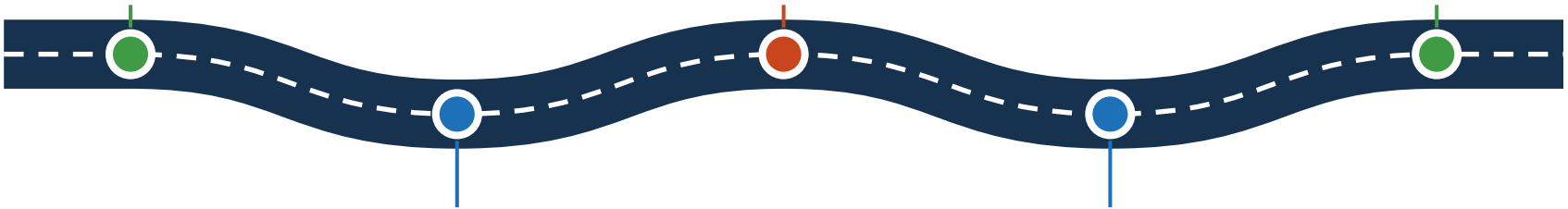
Operating model final draft

Jan-April 2027

Training, recruitment, implementation

April 2027

Families First launch



Families First Partnership Programme (FFPP) reforms

Thank you for attending.

If you have any follow up Questions or Reflections please send to kate.pollard@bolton.gov.uk