



Service Description, Purpose, Practice & Process

Our primary focus is to reduce/prevent children from becoming accommodated by the local authority and enable children to have experience of being raised in a family setting.

Family Solutions provide direct work to children and families in the community. We promote and provide Family Group Conferencing. We provide a service to adults who have had their babies permanently removed from their care.

Family Group conferencing is a specialised tool for bring families/support networks together and empower them to resolve their own dilemmas that enables safe plans of action to be formed in the best interest of children.

We ensure that wherever possible, children and young people have the chance to grow up safely in their family environment by offering a family based, cost effective solution/intervention that is timely and effective in keeping families together where it is safe and reasonable to do so.

We ensure that adults who have had their babies permanently removed from their care, are supported to delay subsequent pregnancy, improve their own lifestyle and choices so that they are less likely to go on and have a pregnancy that results with a subsequent removal.

We also provide support/interventions to children and families where it has been identified as safe for a child to return home following a period of time of being accommodated by the local authority.

We also provide support/intervention to ensure the safe transition from a residential settings to foster families/shared lives/semi- independent living if it is considered safe to do so.

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Introduction

Telford & Wrekin Council is committed to providing children and young people, the most vulnerable families, and adults in need of specific care and support, the best services we can.

The Family Solutions service was developed into the current form by “invest to save” funding.

The funding gave managers the ability to develop new approaches to previous practice that focused on issues such as demand management, challenges with the overall aim of achieving improved outcomes for children, young people and families and delivering savings for the Local Authority.

Family Solutions family work and Family group conferencing were embedded into mainstream funding as a result of the targets achieved and outcomes for children and families.

Family Solutions Family group conferencing has expanded in line with the evidence of data and cost savings made through a further “invest to save approach”.

A Family Solutions model of support currently offers a service capable of:

- Providing consultation to Social workers and practitioners on their allocated case work.
- Providing Consultation, advice and direct contribution to placement referrals to enable foster families to come forward for identified children in residential provisions and foster families for hard to place children to prevent them from becoming accommodated in residential provisions if it is safe to do so.
- Family Solutions facilitate training to share knowledge, skill base and expertise across Children services.
- Preventing immediate accommodation of a young person into the care of the local authority if it is safe to do so;
- Identifying support for families to prevent a crises situation where a child may become accommodated by the local authority if it is safe to do so.
- Assisting and supporting return home plans following a period of time in local authority funded accommodation
- Incorporating a solution focused/systemic approach to assist with determining the most effective intervention.
- Identifying and processing referrals for the spot purchase contract arrangements with the Staffordshire local authority Short breaks provision and monitoring the cost effectiveness of the respite service.
- Identifying and processing referrals for alternative cost effective community based respite provision.
- Family Solutions do work out of office hours and weekends in the course of their allocated work.
- Family Solutions contribute to social work assessments and use the Family circle tool to measure progress and present the journey.
- Producing a range of plans that are presented in a variety of forums i.e. Step down meetings, Care planning meetings, Core groups, Child protection forums, strategy meetings etc.

- Working alongside other professionals to enable a child to transfer from a residential provision to a foster family/shared lives/semi- independent.
- Family Solutions manager leads on the Step down meetings.
- Family Group conference approach is designed to prevent escalation to child protection services by targeting identified families at the earliest opportunity.
- Family Group Conference approach enables family based plans of action that could prevent children from becoming accommodated by the local authority to enable them to remain in their family network
- Family group conference compliment the Public Law Outline to assist the swift identification of connected carers and this reduces court timescales.
- Family group conference also provides an effective forum for families/support networks to develop their own support packages for promoting the welfare of the child/ren
- Changing Futures work in partnership with a range of adult services to promote the welfare of adults who have had their children permanently been removed by the local authority.
- Changing Futures have also had direct involvement with case work for where children are being returned home and work directly with the parents to address key areas of professional concern.

Family Solutions will ensure that multi-agency working is at the heart of early identification, prevention and reunification of children coming into or leaving the care of the Local Authority emphasising that everyone has a contribution to make to ensure a child, young people and family are achieving more and feel supported in doing so.

1. Family Solutions Purpose

Our primary focus is to ensure that wherever possible children and young people are safely cared for by their own family/alternative family or a family environment by offering a family based intervention that is timely and effective in keeping families together where it is safe and reasonable to do so.

Family Solutions seek to promote the resilience of families and reduce the need for children and young people being accommodated by the local authority, working with Children's Services, this includes safeguarding and early help to prevent, resolve dilemmas and reunify children home if it is safe to do so.

The Family Solutions service relies on Children services safeguarding and Early help to identify the children concerned and will design plans of action in partnership with them initially. Family Solutions service will then go onto provide the agreed service/intervention.

Family Solutions collate data relevant to the identified child in question. However the service does work holistically with the whole family/wider network approach.

Family Solutions do contribute and analyse data designed to measure outcomes achieved.

Outcomes Framework and Data Performance.

Success for Family Solutions is vitally important to ensuring that children and young people achieve positive outcomes and that the number of accommodated children is reduced or slows down.

In order to demonstrate our service outcomes we work closely with the Organisational Development and Delivery Team below is an outcome framework that we will evidence saving against that supports the Service Cost improvement Plan

Outcome 1	A child / young person already in local authority care has a support plan to return home to their family with support.
Outcome 2	Following time in care the child / young person's family are able to sustain positive outcomes by accessing relevant community support services.
Outcome 3	Adults who have had their child/ren removed from their care are supported to delay having another child.
Outcome 4	A child / young person can move out of a residential home to be placed within a foster care in a timely way.
Outcome 5	Children / young people do not enter into the care of the local authority because relevant support and interventions are provided at the earliest opportunity.

2. Family Solutions Practice

Family Solutions work across the Telford & Wrekin borough, and have a direct interface with all teams based in both adult/children services and community based services. This approach enables us to work collaboratively with children and families, Council staff, partners, residents, and local groups cost effectively.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Family Solutions Service Delivery Manager** oversees the delivery of the service, establishing policies and practices to ensure consistently high service delivery and performance and monitors employee practices by embedding robust quality assurance mechanisms including evaluating customer and stakeholder feedback. The Service Delivery Manager reports to the Director, Children's Safeguarding & Family support and has an interface with Service Delivery Managers across both children's and Adult services.

The **Family Solutions Team Leader** oversees the practice of the service, provides direction, instructions and guidance to the team, allocates tasks, overseeing and allocating casework and takes direct responsibility for the most complex cases. The Team Leader provides consultation across Children Services and training. The post holder manages resources, provides supervision and is responsible for developing Senior Social worker, Senior practitioner, Team Lead FGC, Changing Futures Social worker for the purpose of achieving Local Authority priorities and service outcomes. The Team Leader also forges strong links with other services and promotes positive relationships with the wider community. The Team Leader leads on Step down

meetings, contributes to service documentation and processes, file audits, quality assurance processes and data analysis. Team Leader on chairs multi-agency meetings.

Team Leader also produces reports on request. The Team Leader reports to the Family Solutions Service Delivery Manager.

Family Group Conference Team Lead provides consultation and expert knowledge of the model to Social workers and practitioners. Has a specific role in LPM (Legal planning meeting) review forums. Allocates case work, supervises facilitators, provides training, is a point of contact re complexity. Contributes to recommendations for consideration during Public Law Outline procedures. Leads on crises response and delegation of tasks in FGC. Participates in data cleansing activity and service reports. Has a direct interface with Managers across Children Services.

Family Solutions Senior Social Worker, Highly trained post Providing consultation and casework support to social workers and Strengthening Families Practitioners. The senior social worker also supervises practitioners within the team, this includes case supervision. This post leads on case work decision making. The senior social worker contributes to data collation processes and file audits. The senior social worker leads on crises intervention. The senior social worker does attend meetings where there is complexity ie Strategy meetings. The Senior Social worker provides training opportunities for student social workers. Undertakes significant complex family work in the community. The Senior Social worker deputises for the Team leader. The Social Worker Post reports to the Family Solutions Team Leader. Senior social worker also chairs relevant multi-agency meetings.

Family Solution Senior support Practitioner, Highly trained post for providing consultations to Strengthening Families and CATE practitioners by facilitating a weekly clinic. Supervises Family solutions practitioners. Deputises for the senior social worker to respond to crises intervention, contributes to data collation. Undertakes complex family work in the community.

There are 8 **Family Solutions Support Practitioners** posts. They are trained to manage complex whole family working. They have the ability to respond to crises, they undertake and record assessments, they attend various relevant multi-agency

meetings. They support identified children being stepped down in foster care and reunification to family/alternative family and step out into semi- independent living. They contribute to placement referrals and Social work assessments. Each child and family situation are allocated to two practitioners operating in a buddy system. This ensures that the children and families are provided a consistent service, it eases crises work, ensures health and safety of practice and it enables the practitioners to plan their day effectively whilst simultaneously being prepared for crises working. It means the families are less likely to be impacted upon by staff absence.

Changing Futures Practitioner is a part time social worker providing direct support/intervention and advice to parents who have had child/ren permanently removed from their care with a view to supporting them to make positive life choices and thus reduce the likelihood of subsequent pregnancies that will result with further children becoming permanently accommodated. This post holder report directly to the Family Solutions Team Leader.

The **Family Group Conference** area of Family Solutions has six posts, one **Family Group Conferencing Team Lead** and three Family Group Conference Facilitator posts. Two Family Group conference facilitators are additional invest to save posts. The post holders facilitate and arrange families/support network meetings where they are empowered to come together to resolve a family based dilemma. These family based plans are reviewed and tracked by the same post holders. More recently they provide a crises “Family conversation” approach using the same tools which includes the use of technology for swift immediate decision making to promote the safety and security of a child.

How:

- By providing a response to empowered families to develop their own plans for the safe care of the child/ren, and enable them to continue to live together safely.
- To assist social workers and practitioners to adopt a strengths based approach to working with families, and addressing concerns.

- By taking on the responsibility of explaining the process to families, to ensure they are making informed decisions, when agreeing to participate with the process.
- By providing consultation to social workers and practitioners on the suitability of the family group conference process in relation to certain scenarios.
- Enabling practitioners to use Family Group Conferences and Family conversations to identify the family/support network and their commitment and creative response to problem solving, to actively encourage safe plans to support children where concerns have been identified about their care.
- By being persistent, reliability and having a flexible approach to ensure a prompts response to requests, and encouraging the engagement of the family network.
- By providing a swift response in relation to crisis situations to prevent local authority accommodation, and identify alternative carers within the family.
- To support section 17 processes to prevent escalation to child protection plans, by enabling the family to work in collaboration with, and alongside support plans.
- To work alongside family solutions practitioners to assist with the reunification of child/ren home or to their family network.
- To ensure the voice of the child is heard and part of the planning process in relation to decisions that will affect them.
- To provide information about relevant services and access routes to them.
- To unblock obstacles in relation to the resolution of concerns and improve communication within the family by means of mediation.

3. Family Solutions Processes

Who Family Solutions Support

Ultimately Family Solutions offer support to those children, young people 0-18 years and families in the Telford and Wrekin community and identified children placed in residential provisions/high cost care provision. Adults who have had a baby, small child permanently removed from their care and are likely to go onto have another pregnancy with a similar outcome.

Family Solutions have the brief to prevent a child from becoming accommodated by the local authority if it is safe to do so, and step children down into foster families, reunification home or to alternative family members.

Family Solutions-Family group conferencing prevent escalation to legal proceedings , enable families/ support networks to resolve their dilemmas safely and is a tool for promoting alternative family based care to prevent children from becoming accommodated by the local authority or enable family/support network support packages to ease a family situation.

Family Solutions -Changing Futures provides direct intervention to adults, enabling them toward positive life style choices with a view of delaying pregnancy. This is in order that a further pregnancy is likely to be more successful for them or prevent pregnancy. This is designed to reduce the number of babies being accommodated by the local authority from high risk parents if it is safe to do so.

Changing Futures have a presence on the unborn baby forum.

Business support-Family Solutions have a Business support officer undertaking vital administration tasks to support the work flow and ensure access to the service.

Referral Process

Family Solutions-**Changing Futures**; the referral pathway is in line with the Family solutions referral process. This means referrals are welcomed via the Family solutions referral form. **Please Note:** Changing Futures cannot provide a direct intervention until permanency for the baby/child has been achieved. However, consultation is available until permanency is established.

Changing Futures referral is via the child in question but it is the adult that is allocated.

Family solutions- Family group conferencing; Referral is in the child's file in forms

Family Solutions-Family work; Referral is in the child's file in Forms.

The below diagram offers referral guidance as an overview of how interventions can be accessed.

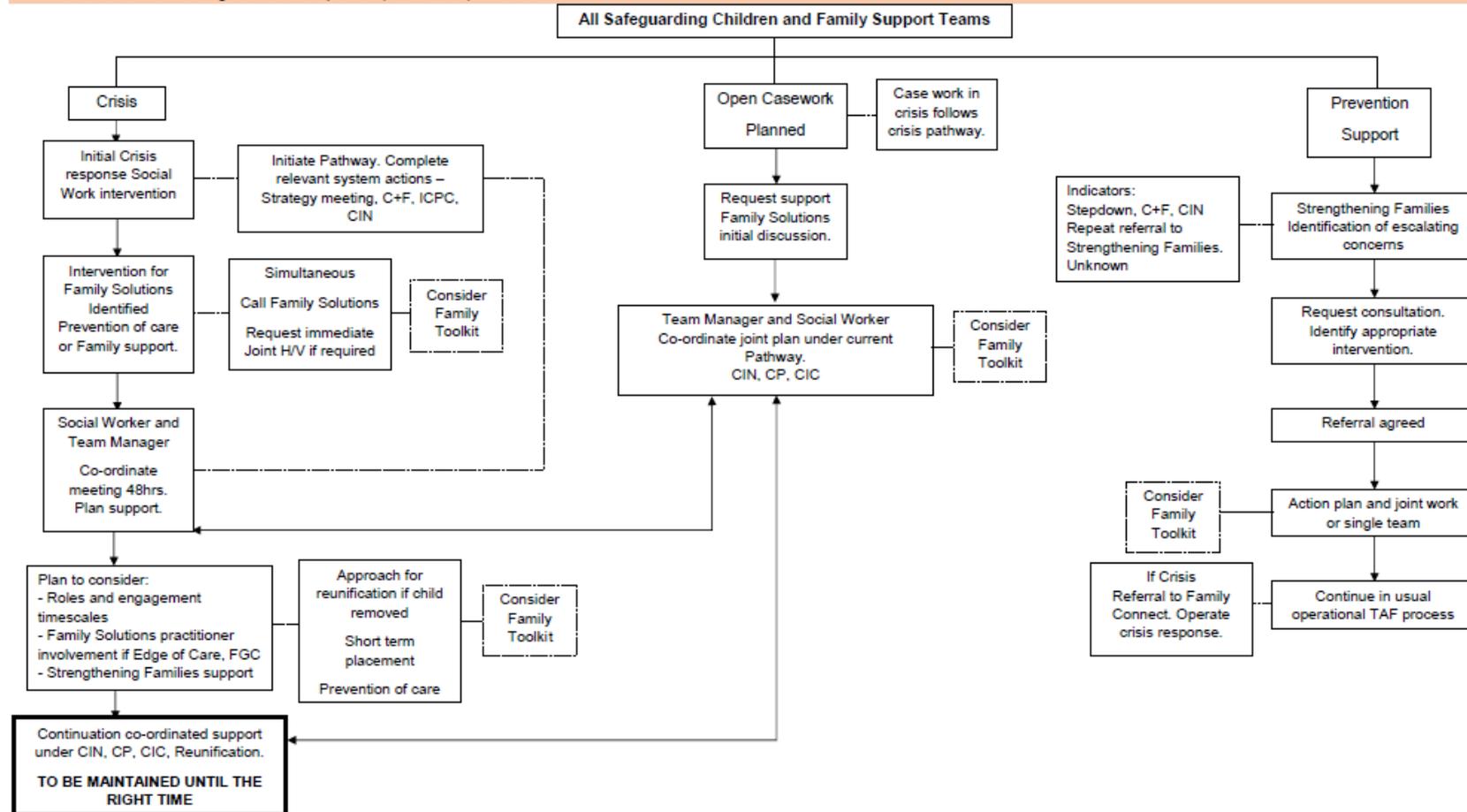
Family Solutions

Family Support Practitioner (FSP) and Family Group Conference (FGC) Intervention Process

Guidance

- Family Group Conference is to be offered along the Intervention Continuum (see Appendix 1) and be common practice in all Case Work.
- Children with Disabilities – may need to build in longer term process – FGC's and support from other may incur additional costs this needs to be considered.
- Parents declining an FGC at any time is not an end – FGC to be revisited repeatedly.
- Communication Joint planning – joint working
- The System does not drive the intervention response
- Involvement of FSP for Edge of Care – Step Down (reunification) – Prevention

- Toolkit – Families do themselves
- Scenarios: CIN – support network / CIN plan process to prevent C.P /C.P Process prevention long term / C.P Viability consideration / Prevention of children becoming looked after / Return children home from care – parents or carers / Care leavers – independent leaving network support. Return to families/relatives.
- **Preference before LPM** – Part of LPM prevent PLO.
- PLO to prevent proceedings or identification of Connected Carers.



Appendix 1

