|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **What is a FNSP?** |
|  | A FNSP is a practical or financial package of support available to individuals who are part of a child/family’s support network. These individuals have been identified by the family as key people in providing support which will allow a child to remain safe in the care of their birth parents, in the family home.  The primary intention is that FNSPs help to de-escalate risk and prevent the need for further or escalating statutory service involvement. The FNSP’s will enable a child to safely remain living with their birth parents and for birth parents to retain parental responsibility, while being supported to do so by the involvement of the wider Family Network.  FNSPs will provide practical support and funding to a Family Network Member when a child has a suitable Family Network, but there is a barrier to them stepping in and providing support that could not otherwise be resolved without financial and/ or practical support from the Local Authority. While in some instances, FNSPs will unlock informal respite care from Family Networks (which could be recurring or for short periods), the intention is that children will remain in their parents’ care and the respite arrangements for the child are agreed by the Family Network, and not overseen or regulated by the Local Authority.  It is for the child and birth parents to decide who is in their Family Network and engagement of this network requires their consent. |
|  | **Eligibility Criteria and Family Network Identification** |
|  | **When determining whether the use of an FNSP is appropriate, the following baseline criteria must be met:**   * The child has a suitable Family Network as identified and recorded in the 'Family and Friends (Networks)' section of the Early Help Assessment form/ Child and Family Assessment, within a Family Network Meeting, or through Family Group Conferencing. * **The child must have an allocated lead professional at the point of application, and whilst funding remains in place** * The child is ordinarily resident in Lincolnshire. * There is a barrier to the Family Network stepping in and providing support that could not otherwise be resolved without financial and/ or practical help from the Local Authority. * The birth parents have parental responsibility for the child. * None of the following apply: Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangement Order or Private Fostering Arrangement * The funding is not used to directly fund something that alternative programmes are designed to address such as half-term activities, access to funded nursery hours, support with debt or school meals. * The funding directly enables the Family Network to overcome financial and practical barriers to providing support. * A Family Network Meeting/ Family Group Conference has taken place and there is a clear, agreed family-led plan.   PLEASE NOTE:   * A Family Group Conference should be considered for higher cost support packages or when issues of risk or higher complexity within the Family Network are present. * Direct cash payments will not be paid directly to parents unless that directly unlocks support from Family Networks.   **When establishing the suitability of the child’s Family Network, the following should be considered:**  Whether a child has a suitable Family Network should be determined with the family, through discussions when completing the Early Help Assessment Form/ Child and Family Assessment or other ongoing casework. Lead Professionals from social care and partner agencies are best placed to assess the needs, risks and outcomes and monitor the progress of arrangements, always prioritising the safety and best interests of the child.  Safeguarding checks of Family Networks will be undertaken in line with the level of support the family are receiving and for example: families engaging with Early Help or TAC would not be subject to statutory checks, whereas if a child is subject to child protection planning, the Lead Professional may undertake police or Local Authority checks of individuals who are proposed to provide support.  Prior to or following the use of an FNSP, where it is deemed that a child is suffering significant harm or cannot remain living safely at home, the responsible team should continue to follow existing legislation and guidance regarding escalation, next steps, and referrals.  **The FNSP is not designed to replace current statutory guidelines relating to the safeguarding of children and young people**. |
|  | **Support Packages** |
|  | The document below gives examples of items/ support that can be requested through the FNSP process. This list is by no means exhaustive and is intended as guidance for Lead Professionals to use before making an FNSP application: |
| **4.** | **Application Forms** |
|  | If after following the above guidance, the Lead Professional feels a FNSP is appropriate to support the Family Network, they should complete the relevant application forms below.  These should be completed no later than **20 working days** after the completion of the Early Help or Child and Family assessment. This assessment should contain the information relating to the Family Network and the support they are providing where possible and should be included with the application form and costing sheet for the application to be accepted.  Best practice guidance for exploring Family Networks can be found here:  If the Family Network meeting or Family Group Conference took place after the assessment, then evidence of this meeting, including full details of the Family Network support plan should be sent, alongside the assessment with the application form and costing sheet. The family-led plan must have been agreed no earlier than **20 working days** prior to the application to ensure that the referral contains relevant and up to date information and to ensure that funding is correctly allocated.  If the referral is being completed by a professional involved in the family’s support, please ensure that there is sign off for the request by the **Lead Professional** before submission:    Please ensure that the form and spreadsheet above are completed prior to your application being submitted. Once complete please return to [fnspapplications@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:fnspapplications@lincolnshire.gov.uk) |
| **5.** | **What happens next?** |
|  | All complete applications will be screened within 5 working days, and an outcome will be provided to the Lead Professional, Family Network Member and parent within 10 working days. This outcome will be provided by letter, usually within an email.  If the application is successful, the parent and Family Network Member will also receive an acceptance letter which requires their signature, and must be returned to [fnspapplications@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:fnspapplications@lincolnshire.gov.uk).  Upon receipt of both acceptance letters, the FNSP will be issued as outlined in the outcome letters. Business support will coordinate this and communicate directly with the Family Network Member via telephone or email.  If the request is for recurrent support, the Lead Professional will be advised of a review date and will be contacted via email for updating information ahead of the review. Repeat FNSP’s will not be processed without relevant updating information.  For any requests totalling £1000 or over, or for recurrent requests that accumulate over £1000, the Lead Professional will be invited to attend FNSP panel virtually to advocate the Family Network’s plan and request.  For any requests totalling under £1000 as a singular or cumulative request, there is no panel attendance required.  The Family Network Member, parent and Lead Professional will be asked to provide feedback about the FNSP and the impact this has had **20 working days** after the Family Network have received the support. |
| **6.** | **Ongoing Monitoring and Support** |
|  | Any identified provision will be co-ordinated by the Pathfinder team and reviewed/ monitored by the Lead Professional who maintains case responsibility. The impact and relevance of the FNSP should be included in the ongoing casework and shared with the parent/carer.  The impact of the FNSP should be discussed with the family as part of their ongoing work processes. Lead Professionals will continue to work with the family and capture information on FNSP within usual meetings and within any timescales agreed, if the case was heard at panel.  Where the FNSP is recurrent/ ongoing, regular reviews by the Lead Professional should be undertaken to ensure that funding remains appropriate and agreed case management responsibility will remain with the Lead Professional.  Where there are ongoing costs identified (such as those for loss of earnings) work should be undertaken with the Family Network to empower them to identify alternative ways to provide support once FNSP assistance ends. |
| **7.** | **Feedback** |
|  | Feedback to be given via the forms below and emailed to:  [fnspapplications@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:fnspapplications@lincolnshire.gov.uk). |