Prevention, Early Help and Intentionally Homeless Families

Families First Homeless Prevention Team

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst
Pathways

Open case
- Held in Family Safeguarding
- CiN/safeguarding issues and family progress to becoming IH

Open case
- Held in Intensive Family Support Team
- Difficulties within the family and family progress to becoming IH

New case
- Not open to Children’s Services
- IH decision referral from housing triggers an involvement

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst
Approach

Prevention

Families First Assessment and Team around the Family plan

Intentionally Homeless - Accommodation Pathway & Exit Plan

Family deemed IH and accommodation provided by Children’s Services (or may require within 28 days) - C&F Assessment and Child in Need plan

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst
Team Structure

Families First Triage Manager

Consultant Social Worker

Homeless Prevention Officer
Homeless Prevention Officer
Homeless Prevention Officer
Homeless Prevention Officer

Launch date: 1st October

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Intentionally Homeless Families

Currently 21 IH families being supported by Children’s Services

16 of which have no other safeguarding concerns and will be case held by the new team

Cases with other safeguarding concerns will remain within FS teams – a HPO will be allocated to assist with the accommodation part of the CiN plan held by the FS social worker.

Risk register to monitor families at risk of IH

FamiliesFirst.Support@hertfordshire.gov.uk

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst
IH Context:

✍️ Increase in the number of families deemed intentionally homeless

✍️ Increase in costs, approximately £392,000 - 2018-2019 – approximately 25 families (30 families at the end of August 2019)

✍️ Complexity of finding enduring accommodation pathways in the private sector for IH families

✍️ Welfare Reform, Universal Credit and the Benefit Cap, Private Sector Rent Levels

✍️ Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 - JHP and joint working arrangements with housing
Assessments of Families being made IH – 1) Families First Assessments, 2) C & F Assessments

Accommodation only provided as a last resort

Provision of short term/interim accommodation - size and location

Rent contribution and utility costs

Developing accommodation pathways – transfer of responsibility back to the family

Resettlement approach and options

[Website link: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst]
Where accommodation is provided:

1) Housing is the primary safeguarding need – ‘Child in Need’ plan and case held by FF,HPT - HCSW

2) Housing is one of a range of safeguarding needs – case held by Family Safeguarding Team with input (where appropriate) to support accommodation planning from FF, HPT - HPO
Team Development and Approach

- Team set-up September/October
- Based in Farnham House - located within housing and housing provider offices part of the time
- Recent case law and LGA transfer protocols
- C & F Assessment Questions and Workbook
- Consultation and advice
- Provision of short term/interim accommodation - size and location
- Rent contribution and utility costs
- Developing accommodation pathways – transfer of responsibility back to the family
- Resettlement approach and options

[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst)
Families First
Early help, brighter futures
Bringing together Hertfordshire’s early help services
What is Families First?

A whole system, multi-agency response to supporting family outcomes at a local level, by bringing together organisations who provide early help services under one “umbrella” of consistent practice and clearer processes.

What are the aims of Families First?

- Provide support as early as possible
- Needs led
- Based in and designed by local communities to make the most of local resources
# Continuum of Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universal Services/Universal Plus</th>
<th>Emerging needs/Universal Plus</th>
<th>Targeted/Universal Partnership</th>
<th>Intensive family support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Requiring additional support</td>
<td>Additional &amp; complex needs requiring multi-agency support</td>
<td>Intensive multi-agency support over a limited period</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Coping</th>
<th>Getting help</th>
<th>Getting risk support</th>
<th>Getting more help</th>
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### Safeguarding & Specialist Services

- 0–25 Together
- Joint Child Protection teams
- Family Safeguarding teams
- Children Looked After (CLA) teams
- Fostering/adoption teams

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### Meets threshold
Help!

This family’s needs cannot be met by our service alone but I know they will not meet the threshold for social care.

How do I help them access the additional support they need?
I want to refer a family that needs help

If you are aware of a family that lives in Hertfordshire and needs support, this toolkit enables you to make sure they receive the right kind of help. It asks a few simple questions about the family’s needs, existing support and your agency’s ability to engage with the family. It takes only a few minutes, and by the end of it you’ll know the support the family requires and who is best to deliver it.

Before you start, some things to consider

- Stuck? The orange help bubble will tell you who can help
- Need to go back a step? Use these buttons at the bottom right
- Jump to a specific section using the arrows at the top

This toolkit is not for Safeguarding referrals. If you think a child is at risk of significant harm, report such concerns now. If you think a child is at risk of significant and immediate harm, call 999.

Start
The Families First Process

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.
Families First Myth Busting

Families First is not another service...
*it's Hertfordshire's brand* for Early Help and includes approx. 8000 workers from a variety or existing early help services.

Families First is not another team...
*“we are all Families First”*

Triage is not the same as Triage Panels – the **Triage Process** happens first and if necessary the case is discussed at **Triage Panel**.

EHM = Early Help Module, this is the name of **multi-agency case management IT system** used to record Families First Assessments (FFA) and Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings and Support Plans.

Anyone who is trained on EHM can **initiate** a Families First Assessment.

Families First is not a single service, you cannot ‘refer a family’ to Families First... you can however make a ‘request for support’ which goes to Triage.

Families First is **NOT** the new name for **Thriving Families teams**... these teams are now called **Intensive Family Support teams (IFST)**.

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www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst
Keep yourself up to date

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.

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.

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