

# STRENGTHENING FAMILIES, PROTECTING CHILDREN

# FAMILY SAFEGUARDING

# E-NEWS



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## NEW FS EVALUATION

The Department for Education (DfE) published on the 4th November the latest evaluation of Family Safeguarding. The report shows that the innovative child protection model developed in Hertfordshire was effective at keeping more children safely within their families and helping parents to achieve lasting change. DfE funding to test the evidence base of the model in four additional authorities - Luton, West Berkshire, Peterborough and Bracknell Forest - has also achieved statistically significant improvements and the improvements in Hertfordshire identified in the 2017 evaluation were sustained.

Among other benefits the report shows that since the implementation of the new ways of working during 2018, the number of children coming into care across the five authorities has reduced by up to 30% (per 10,000 population) and Child Protection Plan numbers have reduced up to 46% demonstrating this vision in practice.

This has seen repeat domestic abuse call-outs to the homes of the families involved, by Police fall by up to 64%, and mental health crisis contacts reduce, protecting lives and saving money. Support and programmes for parental domestic abuse and substance misuse is tailored and can be delivered in the family home resulting in better participation and engagement.

The evaluation report also found that families are positive about the new approach. Families say they have been “worked with and not done to” and that it is more participatory, supportive and empowering (than previous experiences of social services), they don’t have to retell their story as all workers are well informed of their cases and that their lives and those of their children had really improved as a result of Family Safeguarding

The full evaluation can be accessed to read at:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/932367/Hertfordshire\\_Family\\_Safeguarding.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/932367/Hertfordshire_Family_Safeguarding.pdf)

# UPDATE ON FS IMPLEMENTATION

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone; with lockdown restrictions, increased pressure on workforces, the need to find creative solutions to safely support families ... and yet you all still successfully delivered safeguarding services in your areas.

Like you, in spite of these difficulties (and with only a short pause from the DfE), the implementation of FS has also continued by adapting to virtual support for training, meetings & events. The SFPC HCC FS Project Team is grateful for the cooperation and positive approach shown by all the authorities we have been working with and the part they have played in helping us to carry on delivering the programme in 2020. By the end of the year we will have delivered over 140 virtual training workshops to 2500+ people and have extended the list of sessions on offer to include Workbook Masterclasses and bespoke events for judiciary and partnership audiences.

The addition of Mutual Ventures to support the DfE project has launched the SFPC Family Safeguarding Assistant Director Group and SFPC Family Safeguarding Practice Lead Group to help FS colleagues to network, share their experiences and develop the FS model and practice. This is a great addition to the Family Safeguarding offer to authorities and practitioners and we look forward to seeing how this evolves in 2021.

We are also delighted to welcome Somerset CC & Oxfordshire CC to the FS Family, having self-funded their own implementation with SFPC HCC FS Project team support in the autumn. This will mean that when the DfE SFPC project comes to an end, 10% of all local authorities in England will be practising Family Safeguarding.

## WALSALL FS LAUNCH

Walsall Family Safeguarding went live on 1st September and welcomed around 250 people to their two-hour virtual launch. Attendees were from front line and senior backgrounds and from all the main partner agencies, they were especially pleased with the numbers of health and education colleagues attending. Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker for England, provided a video message for the launch saying, "This is just fantastic news and a really important programme for the Government, which has invested heavily in it."

*"I'm proud to lead such a great team, this approach makes a real difference to families in the borough"*

*Councillor Tim Wilson, Portfolio Holder for Walsall Children's Services*

The launch included views from Walsall children about the area, an overview of a local family who have already been helped and a strong presence from a range of partners.

Pictured right is Sara Ward, CEO of Black Country Women's Aid who gave an overview of the importance of Partnership work.



# CAMBRIDGESHIRE FS CASE STUDY

Cambridgeshire is fast approaching its first year anniversary of the implementation of Family Safeguarding (February 2021) and is seeing positive changes for families working with social care. One such success, which shows how FS crosses racial and cultural boundaries, was with a family where an Asian male was experiencing domestic abuse from his wife with his children present in the home. He received support from his Social Worker and Domestic abuse practitioner and was able to separate and seek sole custody of his children.

"I was in a really abusive, controlling relationship - to the extent that my partner wouldn't let me watch TV, make phone calls or even let me read my own post. It really damaged my mental health and self-esteem. Our children weren't allowed to socialise with my family and sometimes they were stopped from going to school or to even go to the bathroom in peace.

I cannot express enough how grateful I am to the friendly, dedicated support I received; the specialist team really took the time to understand my entire situation without judgement and were able to offer expert advice along the way. They even offered my children Christmas presents which they absolutely loved.

I now have full custody of my children and we are all doing so much better; I have got my confidence back and the children are much happier and are loving going to school and are living a normal, healthy life. I don't want to imagine what life would be like right now if it weren't for the support we received and all the positive changes we've seen. It was an emotional time all round, but there's only happy days ahead for us now."

This way of working is strongly endorsed by all staff members working within Cambridgeshire safeguarding teams, they believe this is a strong model for change within children's services.

"I like the family safeguarding model because it provides a step-by-step process to enable us to really get to know the families we work with, to gain their understanding of why we are involved, to support them to reflect on the impact of identified risks and to support them to identify what changes could be made for the benefit of their children and family as a whole" **Feedback from a CCC FS Social Worker**

## FAMILY SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE 2021

The date has now been set for the SFPC FS Conference 2021, this will be a virtual event on Tuesday 2nd February 2021. Our speakers will include York Consulting to present their findings that formed the basis of the latest FS evaluation for the DfE and also Alasdair Cant Associates to discuss how Motivational Interviewing supports FS practice.

**To reserve your place at this event please email [FSProjectTeam@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:FSProjectTeam@hertfordshire.gov.uk)**



AND FINALLY... WE WOULD LIKE TO WISH ALL OUR  
FAMILY SAFEGUARDING FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES  
A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

