



Families First Service Update

Working with your new Local Support Teams

Families First: the right help at the right time

The Families First Service is about delivering the right help at the right time in the right way so that Staffordshire's children, young people and families have the best possible outcomes in life.

To achieve this, we've reorganised children's services provided by the county council so that it is easier for children's service professionals with different skills to work together, identify family needs early and stop them getting worse.

Our new way of working will begin week commencing 19th September when the full service becomes operational.

New Local Support Teams focusing on helping families early

A key feature of the new Families First Service is twenty new Local Support Teams (LSTs). Each team works to support children and families across a small geographical area or 'patch'.

The teams contain a number of children's service professionals, with the skills needed to support children and families, put the right interventions in place as early as possible and prevent problems escalating.

Some Local Support Team members (including Parents Support Workers and Education Welfare Officers for example) will be based in local offices. Other



children's service professionals, based at a district or county level, link closely with each Local Support Team to ensure that you have access to the full range of specialist skills needed to support families in your area.

You can [find out which team supports families in your area and who manages the team](#) by visiting our web pages.

How you can work with your Local Support Team

For those children and young people that need additional help it is vital Local Support Teams and partner organisations work together to provide a clear package of support.

The Common Assessment Framework is not a referral process but a way of working that will help you and your Local Support Team assess the needs of the child, formulate a clear plan of support and jointly implement and monitor support.

In some areas, Local Support Teams are already working closely with a number of partner organizations and are adapting their ways of working to fit the picture and needs locally.

Integrated working in the future

Our Local Support Teams represent a new way of working for county council children's services and whilst we've put some initial protocols in place to enable multi-agency working, we are continuing to work with our partners towards a position of fuller integration through the Integrated Service Delivery Board.

All of the Local Support Team early intervention processes and protocols will be subject to review and as integrated working matures, we hope to meet the needs of all our partners as well as county council staff.

New Specialist Safeguarding Units to provide intensive support

Because Local Support Teams will work to prevent a family's need getting worse, the social work professionals in the new Specialist Safeguarding Teams will have more time to concentrate on those children and families who need more intensive support.



Go live date approaches

The majority of Local Support Team staff commenced their new roles on Monday 6th June with some starting earlier and a few starting later.

However, they will not physically move to their new offices until week commencing 19th September 2011, when the full service, including Specialist Safeguarding Units, will launch.

We can assure you that there will be no disruption to service delivery – it is very much business as usual.

Local Support Teams will continue to deliver services in schools, children's centres, family homes and other local community venues.

How to access support...

From a Local Support Team

Before contacting your Local Support Team with a request for support, you will need to complete a [Request for Support form](#) and, where one has been completed, provide a copy of the pre-CAF (Common Assessment Framework) checklist.

This identifies the needs and desired outcomes for the child and will help your Local Support Team Co-ordinator decide whether those needs can be met by a single service (Level 2) response or whether a more detailed assessment (a full **CAF**) is needed to inform a multi-disciplinary (Level 3) response.

Once you have completed the [Request for Support form](#), you should [contact your District Team Manager or Local Support Team Co-ordinator](#) in the first instance.

From a Specialist Safeguarding Unit

If you have a safeguarding concern, where a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, you should contact our First Response Team immediately. You can do this in the following ways:



- Email: frist@staffordshire.gov.uk
- Fill in an online form by visiting the [First Response Team webpage](#)
- Freephone: **0800 1313 126** (Monday to Thursday 8:30am-5:00pm and Friday 8:30am-4:30pm.)
- Fax: 01785 854223
- Write to: First Response Team, Wedgwood Building, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2DH

In an emergency outside office hours, please telephone 0845 6042 886 or email eds.team.manager@staffordshire.gov.uk

An invitation to meet your Local Support Team

In the next few months, our Local Support Teams will be inviting local frontline staff in partner organisations to meet the team and discuss how we can work together.

Please look out for your invitations and if you'd like to put yourself forward to attend your local launch event, get in touch with your [Local Support Team Co-ordinator](#).

Multi-agency Continuum of Need Framework 2011

The Families First Service aims to support children at all levels of need and is underpinned by a continuum of need framework.

This framework is currently open for consultation through Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (SSCB) as a potential tool by which all partners working with children could work collectively to provide services for children along a continuum from universal need to acute need; Levels 1 to 4.

The continuum of need can be accessed via <http://www.staffsscb.org.uk/professionals/Consultations>.

To contribute to the consultation, please forward all comments/feedback on this document to sscb.admin@staffordshire.gov.uk by Wednesday 23rd November 2011.



Get in touch

If you'd like more information on Families First, please go to <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirstpartners>

In the meantime, please get in touch with your [District Team Manager or Local Support Team Co-ordinator](#) if you have any queries about your Local Support Team.

Alternatively, if you have any queries about Families First and what it means for your organisation, please drop a line to families.first@staffordshire.gov.uk