

*Together...Keeping Children Safe*

# Proposed design for new Family Support Service



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This paper sets out an overview of the proposed design for the new Family Support Service in Buckinghamshire.

## Service design proposal

The proposed early help model will provide the opportunity to ensure children and families receive the right support, at the right time, in order to improve their outcomes. Together with our partners, we will support the most vulnerable children and their families and prevent problems from becoming too complex to resolve. Working together to achieve sustainable outcomes, we can avoid the need for statutory intervention.

Family support is not just about services for families with young children. The Council also has a responsibility to provide support to families with children of school age and older. One of the challenges for many families with more than one child is easily finding the help needed to address the issues they face which can affect the whole family. Buckinghamshire's new Family Support Service will be available and relevant to families with children and young people aged 0-19 (or up to 25 for those children with special educational needs or disabilities).

## Service aims

The vision for the new Family Support Service is:

*“That all children and young people in Buckinghamshire are enabled to live in resilient families, to be happy, safe and healthy, and to grow up with skills, knowledge and attributes to be confident and independent, ready for adult life.*

*As partners we will work together, and alongside volunteers and communities, to provide a seamless service for children and their families. This will prevent the escalation of need and ensuring targeted, timely interventions that achieve positive outcomes for children and families which are supported by effective multi-agency practices.”*

We will work to achieve this vision through:

- Supporting vulnerable children and families to enable them to thrive and achieve positive outcomes.
- Integrating services, creating stronger partnerships, and making effective use of all available resources to improve family and community resilience.
- Improving access and reducing duplication to enable children and families who need our support to reach appropriate services and tell their story only once.
- Evidencing the impact of our early help offer so that over time, where possible, resources can be moved from statutory services to early intervention provision.

## Key benefits

There are three key benefits of an integrated Family Support Service:



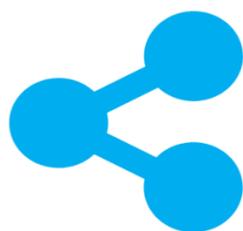
### 1. Targeted support for those in need

- Specialist practitioners in key areas: including special educational needs, domestic abuse, and parenting.
- A pro-active focus on identifying those who can benefit most from early help.
- A named key worker for each family with a support plan to co-ordinate activity to address the family needs, achieve agreed outcomes and sustain improvements.



### 2. Improved access to support

- Residents will be able to access services through a variety of ways: including self-referral and via professionals such as GPs, health visitors and schools.
- Open access stay and play sessions for babies & toddlers, held at family centres across the county.
- An enhanced Buckinghamshire Family Information Service website, including new self-help online tools.



### 3. Better connected

- Three area family support teams working jointly with key partners, particularly schools and health colleagues to identify and support vulnerable families.
- Each school will have a named link family support worker to improve early identification and multi-agency early intervention, supporting families with emerging needs.
- Each area family support team will have a dedicated officer to develop community capacity and grow local networks, encouraging independence and building resilience.

The new service model is an integrated, locality-based offer which is a significant departure from the current range of directly delivered and commissioned provision.

This will enable children, young people and families to access a network of 16 family centres offering:

- Open access (universal) sessions for families with children aged 0-5 (on average 2 sessions per week, per centre).
- Access to health clinics and drop-in sessions run by health professionals.
- Programme of targeted activities to support families 0-19 (up to 25 for those with special educational needs or disabilities) with specific challenges.
- Parenting group sessions, youth mentoring, support for young carers, Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) support, healthy eating, budgeting and benefits and other community-led activities.
- Drop-in support, advice and guidance at Family Centre Plus sites, five days a week.

Family Centre Plus sites will be open for families to drop-in to get advice and to discuss any issues. Health services will also be delivered from these centres, providing additional expertise and opportunities to identify emerging concerns that might require additional support.

There will be three area teams and each will comprise staff with different specialist skills to provide support to families. Staff with a range of specialist skills will provide responsive and flexible services.

### Family Support Service responsibilities

The Family Support Service will:

- Promote the early identification of emerging needs and responding appropriately to prevent problems from becoming too complex to resolve.
- Deliver a range of family support services that meet the current and future needs of children and families, which do not meet the statutory threshold for children's social care.
- Provide early years open access sessions across the network of family centres to promote informal support, peer networks and the early identification of need.
- Co-ordinate and develop bespoke, localised programmes of activity for children, young people and families across the family centre network.
- Build effective partnerships that increase capacity and strengthen the way in which health, schools and support services work together to help children and families.
- Promote universal support and family activities through the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service.
- Enhance support for children with SEND and their families by promoting the Local Offer and ensuring that specialists within the Family Support Service help build parental knowledge and confidence, enabling their children to thrive.
- Simplify pathways to support for families by improving communication and cooperation across partner organisations.
- Demonstrate impact through evidence-based performance reporting.

### Accessing services

A key aspect of the development of the new Family Support Service is to improve access to support for people whose needs can be met by a universal service, as well as those with greater or more complex needs.

This will require better interface with other services and partner agencies and in particular with mainstream and special schools, health practitioners and community groups. This will ensure that we focus on the identification of emerging needs so that we can provide appropriate and timely support.

We plan to invest in, and enhance, the current Buckinghamshire Family Information Service. We want to make it easier to find information quickly by reducing the number of 'clicks' through the introduction of simpler site navigation. We are also looking to add new, self-help modules, which will enable visitors to the site to self-assess, deal with and develop their own action plan to help them with the issues they face. Visitors will be able to self-refer to the Family Support Service at any time.

In addition, the new Family Support Service will have early help staff in First Response, working alongside colleagues, assessing and allocating contacts received by Children's Services. This approach will help connect key elements of children's support services with referring agencies, providing information, advice and guidance. This will promote the approach that wherever possible and safe, children and families are supported at universal or emerging needs levels, rather than escalating to statutory intervention. This will also contribute to our goal of reducing demand into children's social care.

Family centres will offer open-access sessions, where parents and young families (children 0-5) can attend and speak informally to early years staff. We are working closely with health providers to ensure that where possible, services will be delivered concurrently from family centres, to make sure families are able to access partnership early help services.

### **Critical success indicators for the new service are:**

- Reduction in number of contacts into First Response (Children's Social Care) from schools.
- Reduction in the number of cases previously closed to social care that are re-referred within 12 months from closure.
- Increased percentage share of contacts received in First Response, allocated to early help services.
- Number of early help assessments completed.
- Number of contacts signposted effectively via appropriate information, advice and guidance or to Buckinghamshire Family Information System (BFIS).
- Increased attendance for school age children engaged with family support services.
- Reduction in number of Post 16 young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET / unknown).
- Reduction in number of fixed term exclusions from school.
- Reduction in number of exclusions from school for students with SEND.
- Reduction in the number of students permanently excluded from schools.
- Reduction in the number of Education Health and Care Plan assessment

requests.

### Family centre activities

Each family centre will have a programme of activities and services on offer which reflects local need. This will include community and voluntary sector activities. Examples of the range of sessions offered might include:

Age range / target group	Activity
<b>Children 0-5 and parent / carer</b>	Drop-in Play and Stay
	Health provision including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developmental checks</li> <li>• baby weighing</li> <li>• pre and post-natal clinics</li> </ul>
	Speech & Language sessions ( e.g. Little Talkers)
	Messy play
	Breast feeding support
	Post-natal well-being
<b>School-age children</b>	Mentoring for young people
	Young carers support
	Pre-NEET support and guidance
	Employment advice for post 16 young people
<b>Parents and families</b>	Family mediation
	Parenting advice and parenting courses
	Benefits and money advice
<b>Local residents</b>	Community and Voluntary group meetings

## APPENDIX A

### Examples of how the Family Support Service would work

#### Example 1: Peter, single dad



*Peter is feeling overwhelmed by trying to cope with the behaviour of his teenage son who has obsessive-compulsive disorder, an anxiety disorder. Peter's son is lashing out and can be violent, causing damage to the house.*

#### Accessing Support

Peter goes online and finds some information on the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service website. He decides to complete the online Family Support Service self-referral form.

Within a few days Peter is phoned by an officer in the Family Support Service to understand the situation and to arrange a home visit.

#### Support Provided

Sharon, a Family Support Worker with expertise in working with children with special educational needs meets with Peter and together they develop a support plan. Actions include:

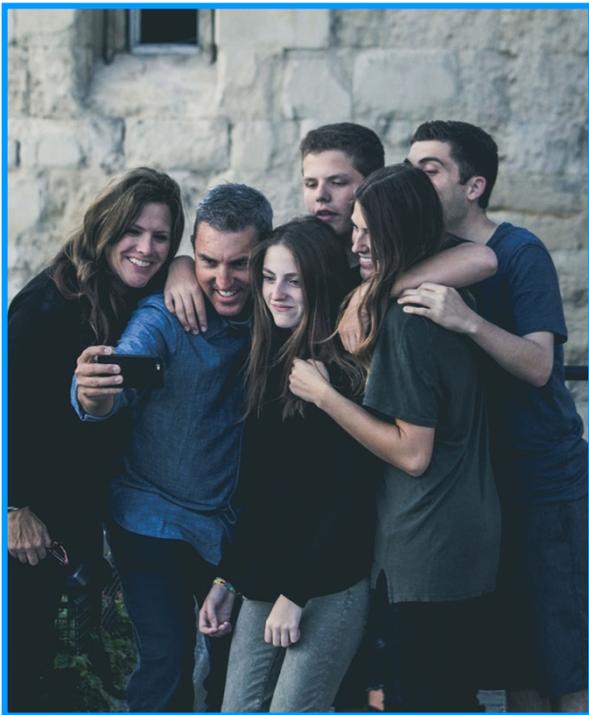
- Developing Peter's parenting skills to enable him to identify what triggers his son's challenging behaviour and help him better understand and respond to his son's condition and influence his behaviour.
- Sessions held with his son to understand his perspective and allow this to inform actions to improve the relationship.
- Working with the school to ensure appropriate support is in place and establish consistent school-home routines to reduce negative behavioural triggers.
- Providing Peter with contacts for community-based organisations that provide support, peer networks and respite sessions.
- Engage with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to ensure the Family Support Plan compliments their work.

## Positive Outcomes

The outcomes include:

- Son feels able to talk to his dad about his feelings on an ongoing basis, which helps improve their relationship.
- Peter puts in alternative routines and adapts home-life to minimise the triggers for challenging behaviour, so reducing aggressive incidents.
- Peter feels less isolated and more confident in his parenting to able to manage his son's behaviour. His mental health and wellbeing is significantly improved from the interventions.

## Example 2: Sandra and Malcolm with four children



*Sandra and Malcolm have been married for 10 years and have four children; the oldest is nine years old. Concerns have been raised over Malcolm physically chastising one of the children. Sandra also has low self-esteem and potentially has mental health issues. The family are distrustful of social care and have threatened to leave the country if they get involved.*

### Accessing Support

The children's school are worried about the family and contact the named link officer in the local Family Support Service to seek support.

With the consent of Sandra and Malcolm, the school arrange an initial meeting between the family and the link family support worker.

### Support Provided

Sarah, the family support worker who has a specialist background of working with families meets with the family to talk to them about how they view any problems and their potential support needs.

The views and wishes of the children are captured and used to inform the plan. A family support plan is agreed which includes:

- Sarah working on a 1:1 basis with Malcolm to help him understand the impact of physical chastisement, which helps to safeguard the children.
- Coaching Sandra and Malcolm on different aspects of their parenting, including routines and boundaries, rewards and sanctions, family time and co-parenting.
- Parenting course scheduled at their local family centre.
- Sandra supported to access appropriate support via her GP to explore her emotional and mental wellbeing.

### Positive Outcomes

The outcomes include:

- Malcolm no longer resorts to physical chastisement as he is better able to deal with negative behaviours and feels confident in managing the children's behaviour.
- All the children feel their relationship with their dad has improved and enjoy spending time with him.
- School reports an improvement in the engagement of the children in their lessons and learning outcomes.
- Sandra's self-esteem is improving and she has a better understanding of her feelings and the confidence to seek appropriate medical supervision and care when needed.
- Sandra has started volunteering three hours a week at her children's primary school, which is building her confidence.

### Example 3: Adel, single new mother



*Adel is a single mother with a baby boy aged 3 months. She has recently moved to Buckinghamshire and is feeling isolated and finding it hard to cope.*

*Adel attends a health clinic, run by the health visiting team, at her local village hall to get her baby weighed. Adel gets chatting to Dave, a member of the Family Support Team, who is running a stay and play session alongside the health clinic. During the conversation the staff member encourages Adel to talk about how she is feeling.*

#### **Accessing Support**

Dave gives Adel information about a voluntary mums group that is run in the local area and encourages her to give it a try.

He also tells her about the local Facebook groups and Buckinghamshire's Family Information Service website to find out about other activities that she can attend.

#### **Positive Outcomes**

Adel starts to attend the weekly stay and play group on a regular basis.

Adel also starts to make new friends via one of the Facebook groups and they are planning to meet up for coffee.

She starts to like the people she meets in the area and feels part of the local community.