

# Families First Newsletter

## Introduction to the Pathfinder Programme

Welcome to the first edition of our Families First Newsletter.

This will be where we share an overview of everything that is happening with the programme in one place each month.

In this edition, we will share all the activity that has been going on for the Families First (Pathfinder) Programme, and what will be happening next.

It is going to be a busy couple of months but exciting times ahead!



## Getting Started

The last month has been taken up with getting things in place to take the Families First Programme forwards.

A project team has been established led by Antony Schaffarczyk and Julie Jones, bringing together Early Help and Children's Social Care.

Partnership Leads are being recruited as the Families First Programme is a partnership programme about how we all work together to help families and keep children safe. Our Police Lead has been confirmed and is in place, welcome DCI Chris Wilkes and leads are being recruited for Health and Education.

Key roles have been established including a Participation Officer, Mosaic Senior Systems Developer, Data and Systems Officer and Business Support Officer recruited to begin in May. This will enable the team to implement sustainable changes to systems and processes.

We have attended four key workshops in April from the Department for Education setting out the detail of the programme Design Specification, and what we will need to do as part of the programme. In addition, we attended the Walsall Learning Alliance Belong Conference and will be aligning the pathfinder.

Reports have been provided to key decision-making forums in the council and the Safeguarding Partnership.

A first draft of the programme plan has been developed. This will evolve as the project continues. We have also set up a Families First Programme Board chaired by Executive Director for Children's services Colleen Male which will oversee the plan and make sure the programme is moving forwards.



# Consultation and Engagement

We are starting a Families First Big Conversation across May to seek initial feedback from children and families about the programme.

A Participation Officer is being recruited who will direct a focus on collaboration and hearing from children and families through the Families First Programme.

There will be locality and service area workshops held in May and again in June to seek more detailed feedback about the Design Specification and the proposals we develop.

If you want to have further discussions, please invite Julie or Antony to one of your team meetings.

We have also started to consult and engage with partners. A partnership event was held on 22nd April with the Department for Education to begin to explore the Design Specification.

We will be engaging with key colleagues throughout the programme, the Families First Board will have a strong partnership focus.



We want to hear from you too! Please see three initial questions we want you to discuss your upcoming team meetings, and feedback to us.

Feedback to us by **Friday 24 May**

- **What excites you about the Pathfinder?**
- **What worries you about the Pathfinder?**
- **What do you think we need to focus on over the next few months?**



Everyone is eager to work together to build our ambitious agenda for change, we know that having a 'coalition of the willing' can and will make positive changes.

## Working Groups

A range of working groups are going to be established to start in May and June to look at key areas of the programme. We want your views to be represented. If you are interested, please volunteer by emailing the working group lead below. The first round of working groups are:

- 1) Developing our new single Family Help Assessment – Antony Schaffarczyk:  
**antony.schaffarczyk@walsall.gov.uk**  
We need volunteers from Early Help and Children’s Social Care for this group!
- 2) Developing the Family Help Lead Practitioner role– Julie Jones: **Julie.jones@walsall.gov.uk**  
We need volunteers from Early Help and Children’s Social Care for this group!
- 3) Providing children with the best start in life (and connecting Family Hubs and Family Help – Rachael Phillips: **rachael.phillips@walsall.gov.uk**
- 4) Helping disabled children and children with Special Educational Needs – Zoe Morgan  
**zoe.morgan@walsall.gov.uk**
- 5) Child Protection practice and enquiries – Antony Schaffarczyk:  
**antony.schaffarczyk@walsall.gov.uk**
- 6) Our Workforce Development and Wellbeing Strategy across Children’s Services –  
**claire.jervis@walsall.gov.uk**
- 7) Stable homes for children in care and young people leaving care – Jivan Sembi and Zoe Morgan  
– **Jivan.sembi@walsall.gov.uk** and **zoe.morgan@walsall.gov.uk**



## Coming Next



Thank you for reading our newsletter! We want to keep it short but there is a lot happening and lots to share so future editions may grow.

We would love to hear from you, so please feel free to reply to this email with any questions, comments, or suggestions. May is going to be a busy month! Coming up next...

An exciting opportunity is being shared today for a practitioner from Early Help or Children's Social Care to join the team as the Practice Improvement Lead, bringing a frontline voice and experience to the project team. There will also be an expression of interest going out to senior leaders within education as an opportunity to join the project team.

