

Working Well With Children And Families In Lancashire

Blackpool Part Three Information about Services and Support in Blackpool



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Part Three – Summary And Overview

This guide is for everyone who works with children and young people and their families in Blackpool. It should not be read in isolation – it sits alongside Parts 1 and 2 of the Working Well with Children and Families guide which is for everyone working in Lancashire.

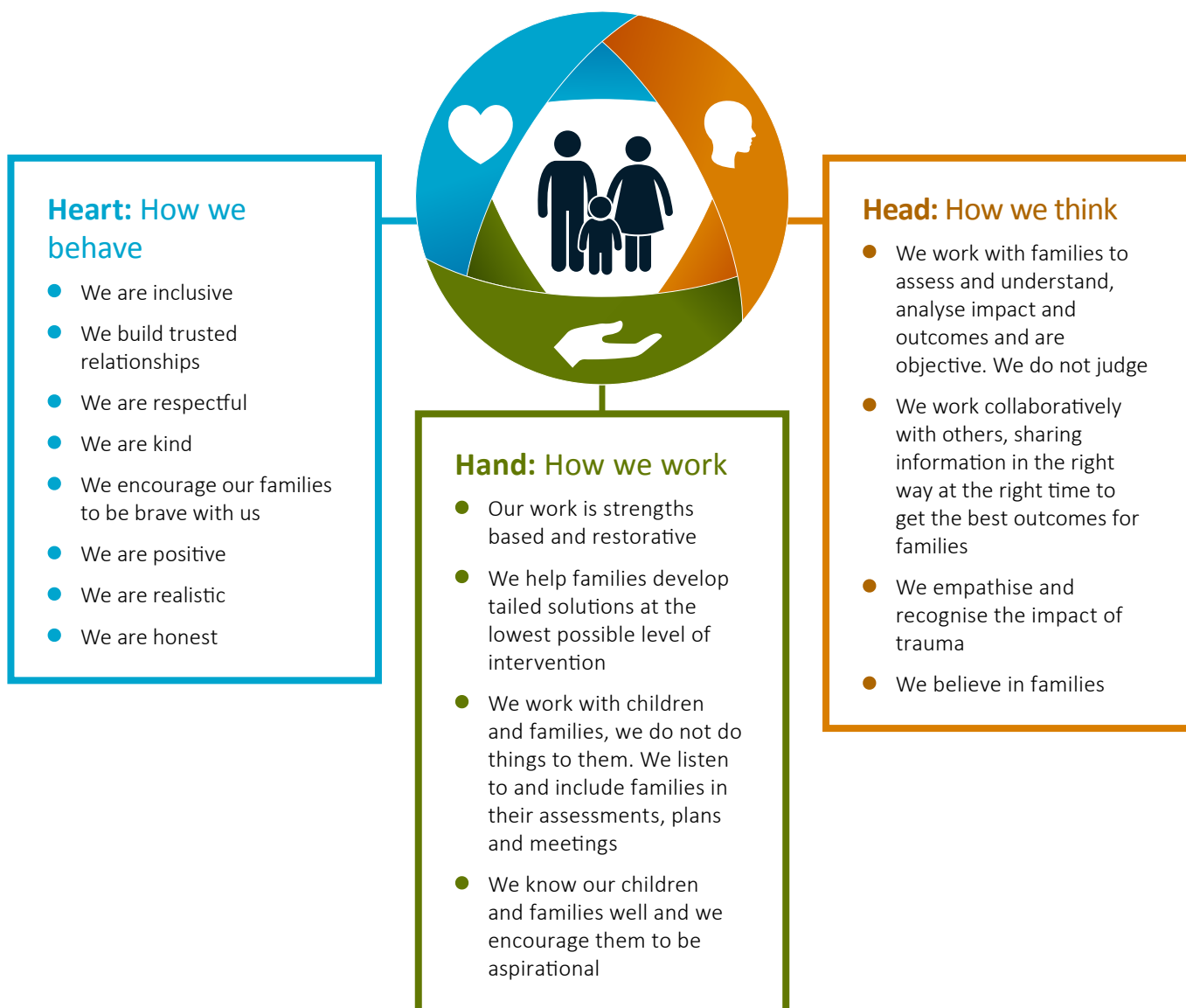
It is publicly available for anyone to access, and is particularly key for organisations including:

- Health services
- The Police
- Local Authorities
- Early Years, Schools, Alternative Education and College settings
- Services supporting adults who care for, or have children in their households, such as Adult Social Care, Substance Misuse, Probation and community health services.

- Providers of support for children and their families in our local communities, such as leisure services and community safety and housing providers
- Voluntary and community led organisations supporting children, young people and families

This guide talks about how agencies work together to support children and their families in Blackpool, to build on their strengths, seeking to support children to remain living safely within stable and loving families wherever possible. It is designed to ensure that we give families who are experiencing challenges the advice, information and support they need that helps them make a positive and long term differences to their lives.

In Blackpool we have developed with our families a series of principles that guide our work, we call this “Blackpool Families Rock”.



Our Head, Hearts and Hands model co-produced by our children, families, carers and partnership underpins our approach to working with children and their families. We have developed our partnership culture, values and behaviours based on this approach.

- Building family network strengths
- Being Trauma informed
- Undertaking restorative practice
- Solution focused in our approach
- Mindful and transparent about risks and worries, but focus on safety planning
- Child and family focused

In Blackpool we believe

- Children can achieve better outcomes when they are supported to safely remain living within stable and loving families and in their local community, and that every child has a fundamental right to family life.
- It is the responsibility of everyone who works with children and their parents and wider family network to make sure they support their families at the earliest opportunity and seek to prevent families' needs from escalating.
- Support for families should be available in their local communities via our Family Hub offer of support - We have set out our offer of Partnership Early Help support in our Early Help Strategy.
- All of our partnership agencies workforce need time, space and training so they can develop trusted relationships with children and their families, so they can trust us to share their trauma experiences.

In Blackpool our Values are

- We are accountable for delivering on the promises we make and take responsibility for our actions and the outcomes achieved.
- We act with integrity and we are trustworthy in all our dealings with people and we are open about the decisions we make and the services we offer.
- We are compassionate, caring, hard- working and committed to delivering the best.

- We take pride in delivering quality services that are community focused and are based on listening carefully to what people need services that we can with a positive and collaborative attitude.
- We are committed to being fair to people and treat everybody we meet with dignity and respect.

Our beliefs and values influence our behaviours. In Blackpool we

- Work 'with' families, not 'do things to them'.
- Are child focussed, but support the whole family via our strengths based approach.
- Build and nurture trusted relationships with children and families.
- Are consistent and do what we say we will do.
- Encourage our families and communities to be aspirational for themselves and each other. Build on families wider networks of support wherever possible, so families and local communities can help and support each other.
- Ensure that we support children and families at the earliest stage, seeking to prevent their needs from escalating and children experiencing significant harm.
- Support and train our workforce to deliver a great service via our partnership learning culture.
- Respect the differences in families and communities and ensure we are always inclusive.
- Are transparent and objective in our decision making.
- Our senior leaders will lead and implement a learning culture, learning from what works and what does not work and keep developing our services, so our partnership offers a good quality and consistent offer of support to all families.

All of this will be based on our co-production culture – we will continue to listen to what Blackpool's children, families and communities tell us and seek to co-produce service developments wherever possible.

Supporting Families Early

All children in Blackpool have the right to live and grow up in a safe environment in which they are protected from harm, nurtured to build their resilience to any adversity that they may face and supported to achieve their aspirations. Some children will need additional help and protection to achieve this and this document provides the multi-agency framework by which all practitioners who work alongside children and families provide the right support, at the right time, in the right place, by the right people.

Central to this approach is responding to families early in the life of a problem with an effective early help offer, rather than reacting later when a family's problem is more difficult, or needs more intensive or specialist support. **Early help is everyone's responsibility** and typically best provided or co-ordinated by the service or organisations already working with the child and their family. Support delivered by practitioners with established positive relationships will always have greater chance of engaging children and families and maximising positive outcomes. Practitioners should work with the family and other services and organisations who know the family to develop an accurate assessment of the whole family's needs. This should then be used to co-produce a **Family Plan** that sets out the multi-agency offer of support to address the needs identified in the **assessment**. Family Plans should always be co-produced with the child and their family, as they are experts in their own lives and know what will make a difference for them. A **Team around the Family Meeting** (TAF) should then be brought together to work with the family to drive the plan forward.

The early help approach and process supports the partnership to work within our Blackpool Families Rocks principles, by supporting families to be the driving seat of their family plan, supporting them to build on their strengths and to build their resilience without the need for statutory interventions/services.

Contacting Blackpool Families Rock Request for Support Hub

If you would like to request support from Children's Social Care you should read part one and two of this document and discuss your concerns with the safeguarding lead in your organisation.

If you are a professional who is making a referral to Children Social Care due to be concerned that a child is experiencing neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse significant harm you can access a request via [Online Referral Form](#).

If you are family member or a member of our local communities and suspect or believe that a child is currently suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm or any form of mistreatment or abuse, you should report your concerns immediately by making telephone contact with the Blackpool Families Rock Request for Support Hub via Tel: 01253 477299.



Support Available To Children And Families In Blackpool

FYI online directory

The FYI online directory provides information about the range of services that are available to support families, children and young people in Blackpool. It is available for practitioners and for families to use directly.

On the FYI directory you will be able to find information about the support available from local family hubs, including timetables for activities, information about nurseries, schools, food banks and access to support to get furniture and essential items for families who are experiencing hardship. Advice and contact details are available for services to support victims of domestic abuse, for people experiencing addiction or living with someone who is addicted to drugs or alcohol. There is information on services to support emotional and mental health and wellbeing. There is also the full “local offer” for families with children with additional needs. You can search for services by postcode and activity type.

Lots of organisations and peer support groups exist in Blackpool, and we are finding new ones all the time that people tell us are helpful in supporting families. If you have any suggestions about services that you do not see on FYI but you know are available, you can suggest that they are added.

Family Hubs

There are three Family Hubs in Blackpool, one for each locality community. They are open to all families in Blackpool with children aged 0-19 and up to 25 for SEND.

The Family Hubs are called:

- North Family Hub (formerly Grange Park Children’s Centre)
- Central Family Hub (formerly Talbot and Brunswick Children’s Centre (TAB))
- South Family Hub (at Palatine Leisure Centre)

Family Hub services are also delivered in a range of community buildings such as Schools, Community Centres and Church Halls to support all communities to access support. Groups and activities are open to all children regardless of their needs and there are some specific sessions that are offered to children with SEND and their families. Families can access any Family Hub it doesn’t need to be the one near where they live.

Family Hubs are the home of Blackpool’s Start for Life Offer. This is a group of services designed to support families in the first 1001 days (conception to second birthday). This includes:

- **Support for parents and carers** – access to evidence based parenting groups, one to one support for those who need it, access to good information, advice and guidance in the hub or on line.
- **Home learning environment /Speech and Language** - supporting parents and carers to understand and provide learning opportunities at home and out in communities to support early development particularly focused on the development of speech and language.
- **Infant Feeding** – focus on supporting feeding choices. Support with breastfeeding and supporting families who choose bottle feeding to do so safely as well as weaning and first foods
- **Parent infant relationships and mental health** – support for emotional health a well-being before and after the birth of baby for mothers and fathers and working to build positive early relationships.

Family Hub positive activities, groups and activities for older children developing all the time, and are working with the Youth Partnership to support families to access the support that the members of that group offer to children and their families. There are a range of **Parenting Programmes** on offer now through the Family Hub for families with children across the full age range and for families with children who have SEND.

Family Hubs also provide community access to a wider range of other support services such as, Kinship care support groups, debt and welfare advice, domestic abuse support, housing, mental health services, substance misuse (alcohol and or drugs).

For the most up to date timetable of activities and groups, contact details and how to make a request for support please visit the [Early Help and Support for Families section of our website](#).

Better Start – supporting families with young children

Better Start supports and empowers families in Blackpool to have the best outcomes for their babies and children, from pregnancy to starting school. Better Start has taken a whole systems approach to delivering universal services, early help and specialist support. These services range from universal sessions supporting speech and language at Family Hubs, infant feeding, and antenatal education, to services which support families struggling with parent infant relationships and violence in the home. The offer is underpinned by Community Connectors who play a vital role in bridging the gap between professionals and parents and ensure all parents are receiving the support they need. Details of all the programmes available and contact details can be found at www.blackpoolbetterstart.org.uk.

Early Help Service

The Formal Early Help Service provides packages of whole family support using the Early Help process. The service is made up of three teams and who are based in Blackpool's Family Hubs.

The service works with families who need a more intensive early help offer (usually level 3 on the CONR), using a strengths based approach with the aim of improving families outcomes and prevent their needs from escalating and needing statutory services involvement.

The team work in a tenacious and assertive way delivering evidence based interventions as part of a plan that is co-produced with the family. Teams use a number of evidence based programmes in their work including, Video Interactive Guidance (VIG) and Safe Care, as well as practical support for building positive routines and boundaries and supporting families to positively and consistently access services. Workers will also connect families to their local Family Hub offer and support access to parenting programmes, relationship support, groups and activities.

Young Carers

In Blackpool, young carers aged 5 to 18 receive dedicated support through the [Blackpool Carers Centre](#), which offers practical help, emotional guidance, and opportunities for social connection. Family Support Workers provide confidential advice, liaise with schools to ensure flexibility, and organise free activities to help young carers relax and meet peers facing similar challenges. They also offer information about the conditions of those being cared for, help with navigating services, and encourage hobbies and interests to boost confidence and wellbeing.

YAC activities and respite sessions

The YAC group meet every Wednesday evening from 6.30pm to 8pm at Beaverbrooks House.

The aim of these sessions is to provide young carers with a short period of rest or relief from their caring role.

These sessions are guided by YACs themselves and we have regular consultations with the group about what activities you would like to do. The main aims of YAC group is to provide young carers with new experiences, learn new skills, have fun, be creative, socialise, make new friends and give young carers a little break from their caring roles.

For Baby's Sake

Funded by A Better Start Blackpool the team deliver an intensive evidence based programme for expectant parents who want to bring an end to domestic abuse and create the best possible start in life for their baby. The intervention addresses the cycle of domestic violence and abuse (including the impact of parents' own childhood experiences of abuse) and seeks to improve mental health and parent-child attachment outcomes.

In Blackpool our partnership is commitment to support families during the early stages of pregnancy, so more babies can remain living safely in their parents care at birth.

Adolescent Drug, Alcohol and Sexual Health Team (ADASH)

ADASH provides interventions including drug awareness and harm reduction for young people at risk of poor sexual health outcomes for children and young people (10-25 years old) misusing substances. The team delivers the ADAPT preventative programme in schools and youth clubs, facilitate access to support including, prescribing, community and residential detox and rehabilitation as well as access to clinical sexual health support

Support for 16/17 Year Olds at Risk of Homelessness

Late adolescence can be a challenging time for teenagers and their families and sometimes, it can feel so stressful that there is a heightened risk of family breakdown and young people, and their families feel they can no longer live at home. Children's Services and Housing Options work together to support young people and their families where this is a risk and they jointly support young people to live with family or friends where it is safe to do so.

Where this is not possible, there is a Homeless Joint Protocol to support a thorough assessment with young people so that they can make informed decisions about where they live and what support they need. Adolescent Service Family Workers provide support to homeless young people identified as part of a joint assessment, track young people not in education, training or employment and provide whole family support where necessary.

Making a Request for Support to Children's Services in Blackpool

Agencies requesting a service from the Request for Support Hub will use the online referral form using the following link:

[Blackpool Families Rock Family Hubs Request for Support](#)

The Referral for Support Hub Team Managers have oversight throughout the working day of the online referrals and will establish if consent has been obtained, unless:

- the child is in immediate danger or
- approaching the parents for consent will put the child at risk of further significant harm or prejudice a criminal investigation or
- it is possible that consent will not be sought for cases with a Red BRAG rating where there is a high level of risk.

If the referrer has any immediate significant safeguarding concerns for the welfare of a child not currently supported by Children's Social Care, then a duty Social Worker will be available on the duty line 01253 477299 (option 1). This line can also be used by members of the public.

A verbal referral will be accepted by agencies if there are immediate or significant safeguarding concerns for the child and likely to warrant a same day response. However, the agency must then follow up the referral in writing within 48 hours via the Online Referral Form, as stipulated in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. All other referrals to Children's Services must be made via the online Request for Support Form.

Where possible, agencies should always seek parental agreement for a request for support, unless there are immediate safeguarding concerns or by speaking with parents/ carers would increase the risk of harm to the child/ren. If however there are potential safeguarding concerns and no consent, consent will be overridden in the best interests of the child/ren to ensure their safety.

If there is an immediate safeguarding concern please call the police in the first instance Tel: 999

Principles – the information gathering in the Referral for Support Hub should ensure that there is rigorous and effective practice to consider the right response to concerns about children and families. The right decisions should ensure a prompt response where there is need, and protect families from needing to be involved in a formal statutory assessment process where the indicators of need for assessment and intervention are not met.

What does the Request for Support Hub do?

Receive and consider

The primary task of the Request for Support Hub is to provide advice, information, and support and triage/screen requests for support and phone calls to Children Services. It is Blackpool's "one front door" to Children's Services and is designed to ensure that referrals are signposted to the appropriate service in line with the Levels of Need.

The Request for Support Hub brings together agencies from services that have contact with children who are vulnerable, require additional support or who are at risk. This is to make the best possible use of their combined knowledge to keep safe from harm. It enables those agencies in the RfSH to lawfully and securely share relevant and appropriate information with others so that an accurate understanding of the vulnerability/need for support or assessment of risk assessment can be made and appropriate intervention agreed.

Gather information and make decisions in context

- The team will bring together information including the known history from key organisations (the Police, Schools, and Health etc.)
- The team might arrange for someone to visit the family if they need more information to make their decision.

Decide on the next steps

- If the family need support – the team will consider whether the kind of support that is needed requires a statutory assessment or an Early Help Assessment.
- If the family need support due to worries about significant harm the request will be sent to the Assessment and Support team for them to consider a statutory assessment. Exceptions to this may arise for children who have been open to the Strengthening and Supporting Families team within the last 6 months, when they will return to this team to ensure consistency in relationships for the child; or for specialist assessments, e.g. by the children with complex needs team.

- If the family need support because they are struggling the team will look at sending the request to the Early Help Hub to agree which agency is best placed to offer an Early Help Assessment and support.
- There are Early Help specialists in the Hub who can work with families to identify local services in their community that can offer help, which could include support from children's services.
- If an assessment is not required, the family will be supported to access help directly and this will be recorded.
- If the family does not want support and there is no significant harm, this will be respected.

Determine what kind of assessment is appropriate

- If a statutory assessment is required to support planning with the family, this might be through
 - A Child and Family Assessment (CAFA)
 - A Section 47 Child Protection Enquiry
 - A specialist assessment (e.g. from the Supporting Children with Complex Needs Team)

Why will they do this?

- So that decision about whether a family would benefit from and meet the threshold for intervention from social care are made in context and using the relevant information.
- To ensure that only those families who meet the threshold are subject to an assessment.
- To ensure that assessments from specialist teams are facilitated promptly.
- To make sure that information about children who are missing from home or care is followed up consistently.
- To make sure that there is a clear and professional response to requests for information from others.

This may happen if:

We prioritise our referrals, working within local and national policies and procedures, and statutory obligations to promote the safety and wellbeing of service users and carers.

We work with other partner agencies that can help in emergencies including police, health and housing. We respond to situations that require an immediate out of hour's response:

- A child or vulnerable adult is at risk from immediate, significant harm

- The carer of a vulnerable person is suddenly taken seriously ill and no-one else is able to provide care
- A person needs an urgent mental health act assessment
- Homelessness

Out of Hour's Emergency Services for Children's & Adults' Social Care

The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) operates a service outside office hours during the week and continuously over weekends and bank holidays. The team consists of experienced social care practitioners who are skilled in both adult and child safeguarding and provide the Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) role in response to mental health crisis.

Blackpool's 'Out of Hours' Team can be contacted via calling **01253 477600**

Core teams in Children's Social Care

If you are working with children and families who are known to Social Care, it can be helpful to understand how the services are designed to support them, the names of different service areas and what they do.

Assessment & Support Teams

Principles – The assessment will ensure families and children are well supported, including providing short term interventions that build family strengths and assets, reduce concern of child experiencing significant harm and improve family relationships during the period of assessment.

What will they do?

- Decide what kind of assessment is appropriate
- In cases where there has been significant harm, or it is suspected and the risk is current, there will be a section 47 inquiry.
- In cases where it has been determined that the family needs support there will be a Child and Family Assessment (CAFA)
- Assess families in line with the Blackpool Social Work Practice Model, make a meaningful plan with them and, if appropriate, organise support during the assessment process, reviewing progress with the family regularly.
- Coordinate the engagement of a wider partnership in the assessment and planning process, if required.
- Determine Next Steps

- If during the assessment it is clear the family are no longer in need of support, they do not need to progress further with Social Care interventions. The child might be closed to the service during, or after, the assessment or be stepped down to Early Help or Universal services. Clear and defensible decision making will be recorded by the Team Manager.
- If the family need further support, this will usually start at the Child in Need (CiN) level. Exceptionally, cases will progress directly to the Child Protection / a child be taken into care level using clear transfer protocols.
- Where appropriate, to maximise effective relationships, work with families at

Child in Need (CiN) level for up to three months using the Blackpool Social Work Practice Model to support long lasting and impactful change.

Why will they do this?

- So that the right assessments are carried out with the right families at the right time and there is a clear focus on the child and their needs.
- To ensure that families are supported through the assessment process to make changes which remove the necessity for statutory involvement.
- To reduce the number of unnecessary transfers of workers for children and families and ensure that when the plans for children and families are transferred, a clear and effective process is followed.
- To ensure that assessments from specialist teams are facilitated promptly.

Outcomes from this period of support may include 'stepping down' children and families to supportive services with clear decision making where, following assessment and short periods of support, the threshold for statutory intervention is no longer met. If this is not possible, and following an assessment statutory support is required, this will be managed alongside the family through one of the following:

- A Child In Need (CIN) Plan
- A Child Protection Plan (CP) Plan
- A child is brought into our care

Where this is the case, the family will usually be supported by the Family Safeguarding Teams.

Blackpool Family Safeguarding Teams

Blackpool Family Safeguarding Teams work alongside families who have either a Child in Need, Child Protection or Child in Our Care plan. They are multi-disciplinary teams which include social workers, family workers, enhanced recovery workers, domestic abuse workers and probation workers who are co-located and work together to support children and families to remain. The multi-disciplinary teams ensure early identification of support and timely intervention to support children and their families.

The Family Safeguarding Teams will provide holistic support to families, using a strength-based approach in order to identify strengths, needs and effect change. They will co-produce clear and meaningful plans alongside families which will be regularly reviewed.

We have also developed the 0-infant team to work alongside parents who are pregnant and have previously had children removed from their care; the team will work with parents as early as possible in their pregnancy in order to identify a bespoke plan of support. The 0-infant team will work closely with midwifery services and community resources in order to offer families wrap around support.

Children and families will be supported via child in need plans; the plan will only escalate from a child in need plan when children are judged to be 'suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm'. In these situations an initial child protection conference would be held which is where the parents, (the children if appropriate), the allocated social worker and other key practitioners come together to discuss these worries. If a child protection plan is considered necessary it will always be created alongside the family.

If the social worker and others workers remain concerned about the welfare and safety of the child(ren) this may result in the team seeking legal advice, and potentially entering in to pre proceedings process. This means parents, the social workers and legal representatives come together to discuss the concerns, explore solutions with a view to keeping the family together and avoiding entering the Family Courts.

Sadly, there are times when children cannot remain safely with their parents, in these circumstances social workers will always work openly with the family to find an alternative family member, or friend, who can offer a loving and safe home. When, despite a high level of support and intervention, the children cannot safely remain within their immediate family and friends' network, a clear and timely process for the children to become looked after will be followed. The family Safeguarding Team will remain involved throughout the Family Court proceedings.

Positively, many families make the necessary changes and remain together without the need for a statutory plan of support, in these circumstances the family will be supported to access alternative support services such as the Family Hubs.

What will they do?

- Get to know a family well and ensure time spent together is purposeful and has a direct benefit for the child(ren).
- Support families to access support that helps them to improve their parenting capacity (housing, health etc.)
- Work with the family to develop a purposeful plan that is clear, meaningful and can be delivered.
- In most situations, this plan should start at the lowest level (child in need) and be focused on achieving change.
- Use a strength based model of practice to reassess the balance of strengths, needs in order to effect change
- Only escalate to a child protection plan/pre proceedings when the risks have escalated and the child is considered to be at risk of, likely to suffer significant harm
- Ensure that the family are at the centre of everything they do and feel heard

Why will they do this?

- We believe that children and families should be supported to stay together and achieve good outcomes.
- We believe that children and families should be supported by workers who can help to make the changes they need
- We believe children and families should be supported with an effective plan that will help them to make changes which remove the necessity for statutory involvement.
- We believe families are best supported by a strength based approach

Children with Complex Needs Team

The children with Complex needs team work alongside families undergoing assessment for support and short breaks and for those families who have either a Child in Need plan, Child protection plan and Children in Our Care plan. The children with Complex Needs teams consist of social workers and family support workers and all work in collaboration with partners such as education and health and work closely with SEND.

In Blackpool, services for children and young people with a disability have been developed within the context of the Children Act 1989 (2004), the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004, the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

The basis of this approach is that children with a disability are regarded as children first and, as children with impairment, second.

Care and Short Breaks Services

Many parents and carers need a regular break from their caring role. Short breaks can also help children and young people to meet others, do activities they enjoy and increase their independence. We can arrange support with registered private and voluntary sector organisations. Some families prefer to have a direct payment and employ care staff.

At Level 3, children with disabilities will have a Child and Family Assessment (CAFA) to understand their needs and the needs of their family. The assessments will be undertaken by a social worker based in the Supporting Children with Complex Needs Team.

At level 4 a Child and Family Assessment (CAFA) will need to be completed by a Social Worker to assess a child in need.

Our social workers are trained in child protection. If a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, we work with families and other agencies to reduce the risk of harm.

We aim to support families so that children can continue living at home. If children or young people can no longer live with their family we arrange for them to be Looked After.

- What will they do? Listen to children and families with complex needs and help them to access coordinated support for life at home, education and plan for their future.
- Work closely with a range of agencies including educational psychology, virtual school, health and voluntary agencies and develop holistic plans with families to ensure children and young people receive the right support at the right time, without feeling like they have to tell their story lots of times.

Why will they do this?

So that children with complex needs have the same opportunities and aspirations as their peers.

Families Together

Our commitment to strengthening families and improving relationships is focussed on enabling children to continue living safely within their family home wherever possible. Whether it's to limit the risk of children being brought into care, to address complex multiple needs across the family network or to support the re-unification of families who have been separated, this service develops and delivers innovative and impactful solutions that improve the lives of children and families.

What will they do?

- Provide structured, evidence-based brief solution focused interventions that enable families to develop problem solving skills, build resilience and achieve positive, sustainable behaviour change.
- Provide a rapid response to children and families in crisis, enabling them to address and overcome the difficulties that have led to the family being at risk of breakdown, and prevent further escalation into care proceedings, working alongside the Families Together Meetings team.
- Hold Family Together meetings to involve the wider family network in the plan of support.

Why will they do this?

- Because we believe that children and young people should be supported in their family home by their families wherever possible, and that if we can prevent family breakdown, we should.

If support for families is not able to achieve safety for the child in their own family, a decision may be made by senior managers that a child needs to be brought into care. Children in our care (Looked after Children) are then allocated a social worker from the Supporting our Children Team and their own Independent Reviewer Officer (IRO).

Family and Friends Meetings

Family and Friends meeting the name for Family Group Conferencing in Blackpool. The Family Group Conferencing model is based on the principle that families have knowledge about themselves that professionals cannot easily match and are therefore able to make better decisions in relation to themselves.. The way of working that complements our Blackpool Families Rock principles and provides families with an opportunity to come together to make safe and achievable plans for their children.

How to make a referral:

This is a family led decision making process, using the evidence based model of Family Group Conferencing. It is a transparent, culturally sensitive, solution focused and restorative process. It provides families with an opportunity to come together to make safe and achievable plans for their children. The Families Together process compliments our model of practice 'Blackpool Families Rock'. Family Group Conferencing principles are based on the fact that families have knowledge about themselves that professionals cannot easily match and are therefore able to make better decisions in relation to themselves. This empowering process enables them to make decisions about their children by giving them the opportunity, information and support to do so. Referrals are made via the allocated social worker who attends a consultation session with the Families Together Coordinator.

Awaken (Exploitation and Missing from Home Service)



In Blackpool our partnership is committed to prevent children from experiencing any form of exploitation from others outside of their family unit.

Awaken is a co-located multi-agency team and is made up primarily of professionals from Blackpool Council Children's Social Care, Lancashire Constabulary and Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, with support from agencies and professionals across the partnership including the Community Safety Partnership, Licensing Department and the Youth Justice Service. The team work together to reduce the prevalence and impact of child exploitation in Blackpool.

The Awaken team work with children and young people who are being exploited (whether that is sexual or criminal exploitation, trafficking or modern day slavery), or are at risk of exploitation, to undertake timely assessments of need and protection and to formulate supportive targeted plans and interventions to keep children safe. Plans are informed by the Child Exploitation Multi Agency Risk Assessment (CE2) and Planning Tool, the multi-agency support plan is then incorporated into the child's relevant plan (Child in Need, Child Protection Plan, child in our care My Plan or for a young person's Pathway Plan).

Partnership working and timely intelligence and information sharing is facilitated by the Daily Exploitation and Missing meeting (DEM), in which professionals discuss day to day business along with the management of risk. Professionals from partner agencies contribute and participate in the meeting ensuring the right services have the right information at the right time to enable effective working together to safeguard children. The DEM considers all children who have been missing from home or care (MFH) overnight, including those currently missing, along with all relevant Police logs and intelligence. This enables all professionals across all services working with children in Blackpool to improve awareness of current hotspots; addresses of concern and what disruption is in place or needs to be progressed, considering criminal and civil orders.

The Missing From Home process has strengthened significantly from the Request for Support Hub right through to Awaken, where return home interviews are co-ordinated across the service, including those for Blackpool children living out of area. There is a clear process in place that professionals understand and complies with the current Pan-Lancashire Missing from Home Protocol. Return home interviews are delivered in accordance with Blackpool Families Rock principles and information gleaned from interviews is used to map and understand local concerns.

What will they do?

- Work with children, young people and their families to reduce the risk of exploitation and disrupt the activities of people who seek to exploit children.
- Support professionals across Blackpool to identify and mitigate the risk of exploitation to children of exploitation

Why will they do this?

- So that Blackpool is a safe place for children and young people to thrive without being exploited



Supporting Our Children Service

The team will work with children that the local authority is looking after and help them to find a stable place to live and make plans with them for their future. No child will be looked after by the local authority in Blackpool if there are more appropriate people in their lives and reuniting children with their families will always be explored and relationships with families maintained, wherever possible.

What will they do and why?

- Listen to and work with children who are not able to live with their families and have a long term plan of being in our care and make sure that they are well cared for, in a stable and loving home that meets their needs.
- Listen to the needs and wishes of children, carers and families and ensure that their voice is amplified and influences what happens whilst the child is in our care.
- Maintain links with children's birth families and support reunification whenever possible, to ensure that children who are in our care are in stable and loving homes that meet their needs wherever possible.
- Listen to and work with children who are not with their families to make sure that the time they spend together is positive.
- Ensure that all of our services support children and young people remember and make sense of their lives, understand their family history, and make sense of decisions made that have impacted them via recording our decisions and our insight of the life experiences.
- Work with other professionals and the child's support network to help them achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Strive to support children to have the best health and education outcomes possible.
- Ensure that children have a plan of permanence at the earliest possible opportunity and understand the decisions that have been made about them, including plans of adoption.
- Make sure that children who are leaving our care are supported to develop their independence by people they trust and who step in to help when needed.
- Support, through supervision, observation and objective reporting, the ongoing assessment and planning process for children and families.

Leaving Care

The Leaving Care Service support 'Our Children and Young People' who are care experienced to achieve their potential and prepare for living independently or with other people significant in their lives. Support from a Personal Advisor starts before a child's 16th birthday to help build trusting and lasting relationships that promotes a positive transition to adulthood. The team's priorities are to ensure that young people are living in suitable accommodation, engage in aspirational education, employment or training opportunities and are able to contribute positively within their local communities.



Fostering

The Fostering Team recruit and support families who can provide our children with a loving, safe and secure environment when they cannot be with their own families. They assess and support not only mainstream foster carers, but also undertake assessment of Connected Carers / Special Guardianship (SGO) carers within the wider family network.

What will they do?

- Hold recruitment events to provide advice and answer questions for those interested in helping and supporting Blackpool's children.
- Support families through a robust assessment process and plan to make sure that they are able to provide great care for children and young people.
- Work closely with other teams to ensure foster families are meeting the needs of children and our carers are afforded the opportunity to contribute to children's plans.
- Respond to the learning and development needs of foster carers to ensure they can care for our children to the best of their ability.
- Provide opportunities for foster carers to benefit from peer support

Why will they do this?

- So that we can support our children and young people in family environments in and around Blackpool, whenever this is possible.
- So that foster families feel supported and valued for the great work they do.
- So that the needs of our own carers, most significantly kinship carers, are also considered and supported and those care arrangements are long lasting.

Adoption

The adoption service for Blackpool is provided by the Regional Adoption Agency for Blackpool and Lancashire. They support families who wish to adopt through a rigorous assessment and suitability process, and help children who cannot return to their own families find a home for life.

What will they do?

- Support families who wish to adopt to understand the process and make informed decisions.
- Support families through a robust assessment process to make sure that they are able to provide great lifelong care for children.
- Support children and families through a careful matching process

Why will they do this?

- So that we can support our children and young people to leave care at the right time with an adopted family.



Safeguarding Quality And Review Service

Child Protection Conferences

The Child Protection Chairs work with children and families using the principles of Blackpool Families Rock. Child Protection Conferences are held in local Family Hubs wherever possible, to support a family and their family wider network to be able to attend.

We have co-produced a video with families in Blackpool who have experienced attending a Child Protection Conference. The families hoped that this would be shared with others to support them preparing to attend an Initial Child Protection Conference. This video can be accessed by the link below,

[Blackpool Families Rock! - Child Protection Conference - Parent version](#)

We have also co-produced a video with young people, specifically for children and young people, so they can understand what happens before and during a Child Protection Conference, what they can expect if they were to attend with their family and what a Child Protection Plan is. The video explains what happens if they are supported via a Child Protection Plan and how they can ask for support.

[Blackpool Families Rock! - Child Protection Conference - Young person version - YouTube](#)

Children, young people and their parents are offered Advocates, so they can be supported to share their feelings and views during a Child Protection Conference, and ensure that our partnership hear individual children voices and ensure the children are the central of a multi-agency plan of support.

Child Protection Conferences are facilitated to support families and professionals to be able to discuss and understand the concerns that have triggered the conference, the impact of these on the children and to recognise and build on the strengths of the family. We recognise that families are experts in their own lives and that we will always co-produce a Child Protection Plan with family members. Depending on the decision of the conference, the Chairs will then co-produce with the family and professionals a purposeful and meaningful Child Protection or Child in Need Plan, with a focus on securing positive outcomes for the children.

If a Child Protection Plan is agreed the partnership agencies become a Core Group which supports the family and meet on a monthly basis between Children Protection Conference Review Meetings which are held 3 months after the Initial Child Protection Conference, then they are held at least a 6 month basis. Review Child Protection Conferences are held timely and involve the family and the partnership Core Group, to consider if the plan has had a positive impact on the child's daily life experience and ensure the child is not experiencing significant harm.

To ensure that children will not be on plans for longer than they need to be, Child Protection Chairs review progress between conferences to prevent any drift and delay. Child Protection Chairs provide a consistent footprint on children's records, evidencing their work and the impact that this is having on the progression of the plan.

Our Children

The Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) are the champions of Our Children in Blackpool. They work with Our Children, their social workers and partner agencies to ensure that the care plan meets the individual child's needs and has high, achievable aspirations. The IROs oversee and review a child's My Plans through our children's 'My Review' meetings and review and quality assure the plan and support between meetings.

What Child Protection Chair and IROs will do:

- Build a relationship with children and families to encourage active participation in their meetings and co-produce their individual plans.
- Have high aspirations for the children and families of Blackpool, which is evident through their individual plans.
- Work with partner agencies to enable meaningful discussions within the Child Protection Conferences and My Reviews to resolve any barriers within partnership working for plans progressing.
- Maintain a consistent threshold of significant harm within child protection conferences and plans, supporting families' and partner agencies' understanding of the threshold.
- Be the champion for Our Children.
- If necessary if a child is experiencing a drift in their My Plan, use the Issues Resolution Procedure for children with Children's Social Care and partner agencies to support the progression of plans.

Adolescent Service: Youth Justice Team

The Youth Justice Service provides a multi-agency partnership whose aim is to prevent children from offending and to help them restore the damage caused to their victims. The team provides direct support to Victims as well as in-house Appropriate Adult for children detained at the police station or being interviewed by the police.

The vision for the Youth Justice Service is;

- Diverting children from the Youth Justice system where appropriate
- Preventing and reducing offending behaviour by children
- Promoting a pro-social identity that continues into adulthood
- Ensuring the safety, fair treatment, and care of children in the justice system.
- Always remember they are working with children.
- Providing high quality and responsive support to victims.

Tiered Intervention Panel

Offending behaviour by children should be viewed as part of adolescent development and considered in the context of the young person's social and psychological environment. Providing access to universal services – especially those focused on education and health – can prevent children coming into conflict with the law. An individualised, rights-based and child-centred approach is key to preventing young people from getting into further conflict with the law.

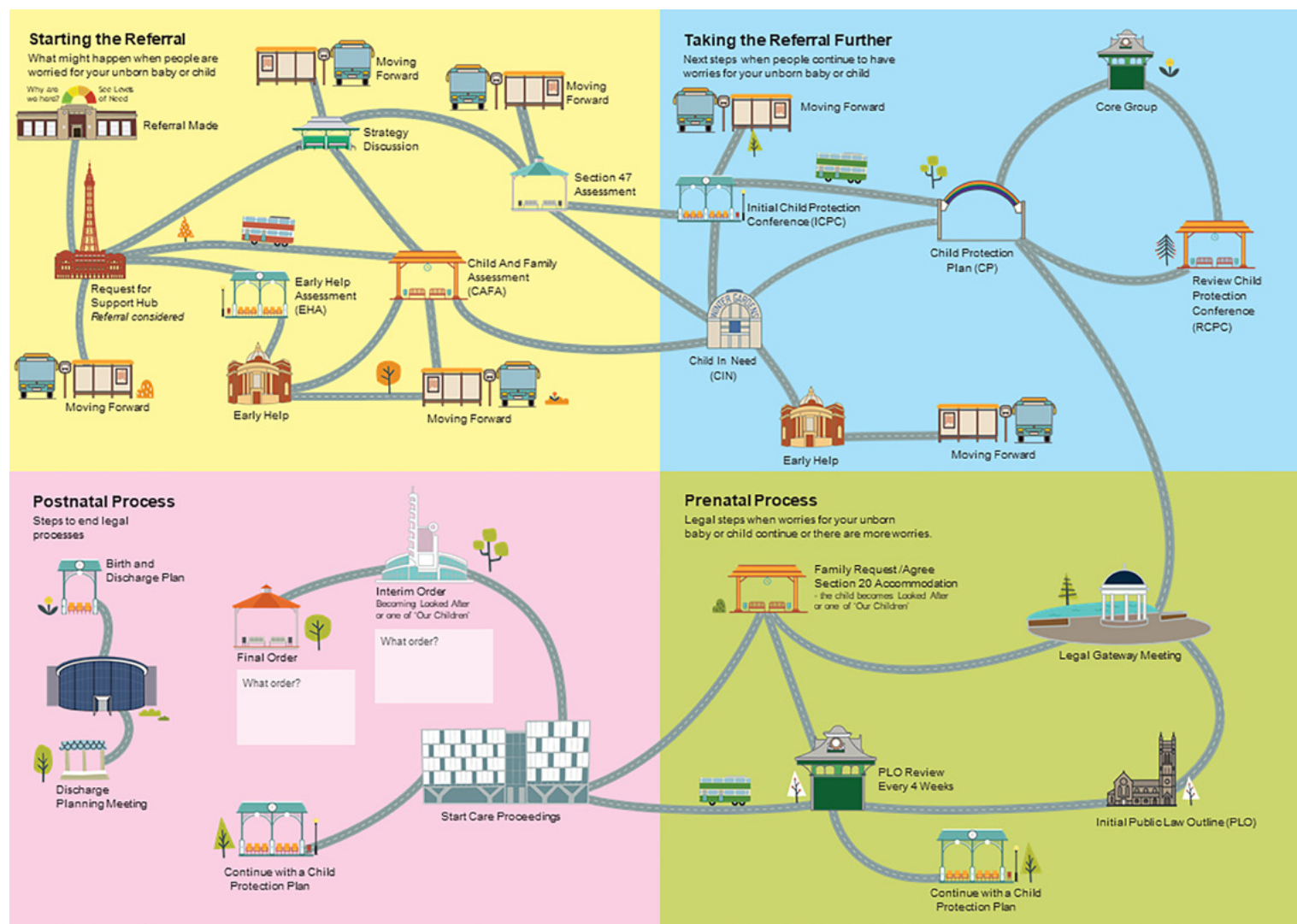
Multi-Agency panel lead by the Adolescent Service and Youth Services. Aims to intervene early to prevent children (10 to 17 years) entering the criminal justice system and becoming further involved in crime or anti-social behaviour to create safer communities. We aim to achieve positive change for children by offering voluntary support to young people and their families upon contact with the police and wider services.



How Our Blackpool Families Would Explain Children's Services To Other Families

In Blackpool we are committed to co-produce service developments with the children, families and carers we support. We have been working with parents who have experiences of our services working with them when they have had a baby who has come into our care. Parents have developed a map of their journey working through our services so this can be shared with other families, so they can understand what the services are and what happens.

Visit the Blackpool Council website to find out more about being [Born into Care](#).



Further service developments over the next year - Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme

In March 2025 the Department of Education published their Families First Partnership Programme Guide to support Local safeguarding partnerships to implement Families First in their area. FFP recognises that families' challenges vary widely depending on their local community, so each area needs to use a community centred approach to achieving a system that meets of local families and communities. Its success will rely on strong collaboration between local partnership agencies, such as; health, education, children's social care, police and wider voluntary organisations working together to create joined up, accessible support which is relevant to communities.

The FFP Programme is a government initiative, focused on supporting families promptly, with a clear focus upon helping them at the earliest level of intervention and includes 3 key priority focuses - implementing Family Help partnership support, developing Multi-agency Child Protection Teams and ensure we have a good Family Group Decision Making offer to support for families.

In Blackpool our leaders are working together to ensure:

- Family Help partnership support takes place at the heart of local communities. It will bring together local services to provide a combined, multi-disciplinary practice, offering support around the whole family at the earliest opportunity. Family Help will be focused on developing consistent relationships between lead practitioners and children and families, in order to offer the best possible help and support to families.

Multi-agency Child Protection Teams

- Multi-agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT's) will bring together key practitioners such as; police, education, health, children's social care and additional experts, to ensure that the right decisions are made at the right time for children. A key focus of the MACPT will be to work closely with parents and family networks in a transparent and compassionate way. These teams will support families and partners agencies when a child is experiencing significant harm.

Family Group Decision Making

- Family Group Decision Making will be central to supporting families. We know that families are experts in their own lives and by utilising the Family Group Decision making support we will enable a family network to come together and make a Family-Led Plan. The plan will also offer practical support to parents and carers in order to meet the needs and wellbeing of the child. We will make sure that the families plan is linked to all other plans we have in place for the child and their family, such as an Early Help Plan, Child in Need Plan, a Child Protection Plan or a My Plan for a child who is in our care.

In Blackpool we already have the building blocks to implement the Family First Programme. Over recent months Blackpool Safeguarding Partners have been working together to consider how Families First Programme should be integrated in to our local services, so we can offer the best possible support to Blackpool families.

In order to co-produce service change we will be continuing with this transformation activity and will be reaching out to the community as well as the partnership workforce, in order to further explore what this means for Blackpool. Our Working Well With Children And Families document will be further updated as these Family First Programme changes are implemented, so our families and partnership workforce can understand our offer of support.