

Family Safeguarding Model: Communications Briefing

We are nearing our launch of the Family Safeguarding Model in Telford and Wrekin and there is a great deal of excitement about working in a new way and being able to support families through the delivery of a more joined up approach. We are looking forward to seeing examples of the positive impact this new way of working, you can read an example of this further down in the newsletter.

For now, I'll leave you to read more about the exciting progress we've made in the last few months.

Background

In 2019, Telford & Wrekin and its partners were successful in a £2m bid to implement the Family Safeguarding Model within children's services through the DfE's Strengthening Families, Protecting Children Programme.

The Family Safeguarding Model was designed by Hertfordshire County Council to tackle some of the challenges within Children's Safeguarding; in particular the compounding factors to risk of harm known as the 'trio of vulnerabilities' (domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health).

After a slight pause in the rollout of the programme due to the CV-19 pandemic, a significant programme of activity has been taking place across the breadth of the partnership in readiness for the eagerly anticipated launch of Family Safeguarding in our borough.

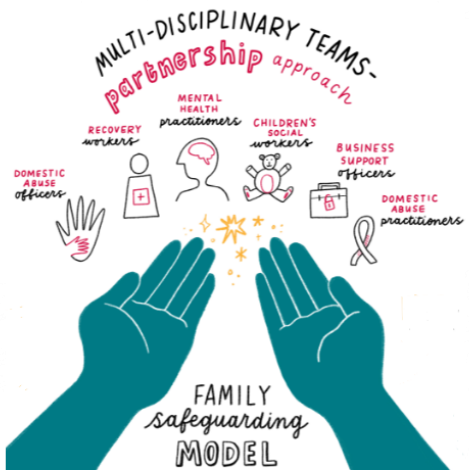
So... what is Family Safeguarding?

EMPOWERING

Family Safeguarding is a model of whole-system change to a local authority's child protection approach for children up to adolescence, focusing on supporting the needs of children and adults in order that children can safely remain within their families. The model involves five core components:



Multi-disciplinary skill sets working together



Establishing multi-disciplinary teams where specialist adult practitioners in domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse are co-located with children's social workers under a unified management structure. It is this which has expedited families' access to specialist services and has instilled a strong belief in the approach amongst practitioners, senior stakeholders and families. This approach enables a multi-disciplinary whole family response through direct assessment and support from specialist adult practitioners and sharing of knowledge and skills across disciplines.

Family Safeguarding Group Discussion

Group discussion is a central tenet of Family Safeguarding with monthly supervision meetings for each family, allowing multi-professional group discussions to review progress, discuss outcomes and agree next steps.



We want to hear from you! How are you finding the family safeguarding model and our new way of working with families? We'd love to hear your feedback, ideas on how we can support you further or just examples of how it has improved the work that we are doing with families. Please email familysafeguarding@telford.gov.uk with your feedback.

Family Safeguarding Model: Communications Briefing

A new way of recording

Using an electronic assessment workbook which provides a single data tool for all professionals and links to the work programme. The Workbook links into the Liquidlogic Children's Social Care System and consists of a number of summaries - "chapters"- one for each worker role involved with the family. Each worker is able to record their work and write a monthly summary, which is openly shared with the other workers in the team.



Because all staff in Family Safeguarding Teams are using the Workbook, the information can be combined to form an integrated family assessment. This is used to inform progress and help to direct their intervention. To support this new approach, workers are also asked to focus much more on recording significant information and to summarise activity rather than record every single contact. This, in turn, has freed up staff to spend more time working directly with children and families.

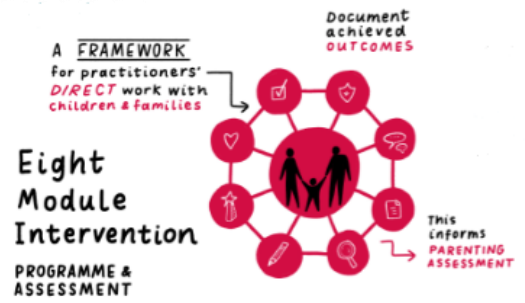


Motivational Interviewing Use of Motivational Interviewing (MI) as a framework for practice for all staff. Family Safeguarding staff undergo training and ongoing skills development workshops and follow a structured solution-focussed intervention programme with families which aims to work collaboratively with families and increase engagement.

Using a clear, strengths-based practice framework MI (a strengths-based approach to working with families) has been well-received in all adopter local authorities. There is widespread agreement that family engagement and outcomes have improved as a result of MI.

Eight Module Intervention Programme & Assessment

The intervention programme provides a framework for practitioners' direct work with children and families through Family Safeguarding. The assessment enables practitioners to capture the work completed through the intervention programme and document the outcomes that have been achieved.



Update on Family Safeguarding Implementation

The challenges in 2020-21 have impacted on everyone; with lockdown restrictions, increased pressure on workforces, the need to find creative solutions to safely support families - and we have continued to still successfully deliver safeguarding services in Telford and Wrekin.

In spite of these difficulties (and with only a short pause from the DfE), the implementation of Family Safeguarding has also continued by adapting to virtual support for training, meetings & events. There has been a positive approach shown by all involved and the part that both children's services staff and partners have played in helping us to carry on delivering the programme has been absolutely brilliant! By the end of May we will have delivered over 28 virtual programme of change workshops and 34 motivational interviewing training sessions as well as numerous events and presentations to 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 following our launch.

Family Safeguarding Model: NEWSLETTER: May 2021

The DfE criteria to meet in order to launch Family Safeguarding are:

- 70% of Family Safeguarding Adult Specialist Workers in post
- 70% of Family Safeguarding staff trained in Motivational Interviewing
- 70% of Family Safeguarding staff attended the FS Practice and Change Workshops

WHAT IS MI?

MI has been defined as “a client-centered, directive method for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence”

Motivational interviewing: training update

MI training has now been provided to staff across the five family safeguarding teams and the required 70% attendance has been met!

Training has covered:

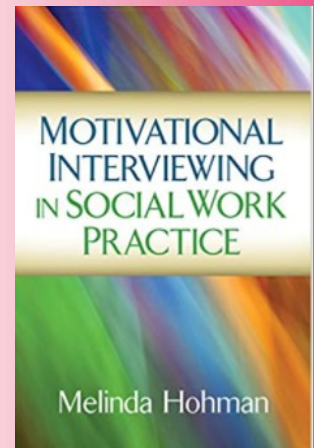
- What motivational interviewing is, the style and the basic principles that underpin it.
- Practising using open questions, affirmations, reflective listening and summaries, considering why these are important in motivational conversations.
- Understanding and assessing stages of change.
- Identifying DARN (desire, ability, reason and need to change).
- Encouraging clients to consider CAT (commitment, activation and taking steps).
- Exploring uncertainty and developing discrepancy.
- Practising making change plans and goal directed work.
- Practising 'rolling with resistance'.

Participants were also encouraged to think about how to prepare for sessions and how to embed motivational interviewing into work going forward. We saw practitioners working together and reflecting, using peer observations while practicing and watching video reflection exercises.

Staff members who have attended training have shared enthusiasm for the approach and have put their learning into practice by using these skills and techniques with families.

Further resources have also been purchased for our teams to use to embed MI which will shortly be on the way to our FS teams.

We are committed to using the approach with children, young people and families across our partnership. There will be more training and opportunities to develop learning later on in the year...



This was a very motivating training session. I enjoyed every minute.

Thank you for the past 2 days of training, I found this really relevant and expanded my knowledge and skills in respect of MI. I feel much more confident now I have attended these sessions and would fully support everyone to attend. Facilitator has been brilliant leading these two days, interactive tasks were useful to implement MI 'bag of tricks' and getting everyone to contribute online which is a very difficult task.

Thank you!

I plan to use MI in many different areas of practice, I look forward to using some of the techniques with the families I support.

I found this training really helpful and believe it will benefit my practice going forward.

Family Safeguarding Model: Communications Briefing

Family Safeguarding Programme of change workshops

Eight workshops have been delivered by the Hertfordshire FS Programme team to support implementation:

What is Family Safeguarding? (Including Intro to MI) - Session Aim: **Provide those attending with an introduction to the Family Safeguarding Model and MI.**

Thresholds, Duties and Family Rights - Session Aim: **Provide those attending with a greater understanding of thresholds, duties and family rights when implementing the Family Safeguarding Model.**

Leading Multi-Disciplinary Teams & Leading Change - Session Aim: **Equip Managers with knowledge and skills to lead the new Family Safeguarding Teams.**

Reflective Auditing (for Managers) - Session Aim: **Understand the technique and use of Reflective Auditing when implementing the Family Safeguarding Model.**

IT Workbook and Recording - Session Aim: **To introduce new staff to the Family Safeguarding Model, FS ways of working including FS Case Supervision.**

Family Safeguarding Parenting & Intervention Programme - Session Aim: **To know how to use the FS direct work modules and parenting modules in practice.**

Combined IT Workbook & Family Programme - Session Aim: **To help introduce Assessment Teams to the Family Safeguarding Model and way of working including: a brief overview of the Workbook, FS Case Supervision and parenting modules.**

Administering & Providing Support to Family Safeguarding Teams - Session Aim: **To familiarise support workers with the type of work in FS and how-to self-care.**

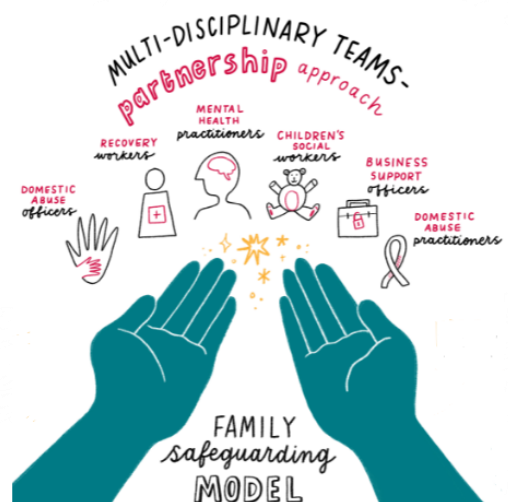
The relevant workshops have been attended by staff across the five family safeguarding teams and the required 70% attendance has been met!

There are further sessions specifically for the specialist adult practitioners which will take place following commencement in post.

Recruitment

There has been continued activity across the partnership to recruit the posts required for the Family Safeguarding Model.

- Recruitment is complete in respect of the additional Family Safeguarding Social Work Team with all posts having now been recruited to and start dates agreed.
- We have successfully recruited to all but one of our Recovery Workers. A further post is currently out to advert.
- Domestic Abuse Practitioner interviews are taking place this week.
- Domestic Abuse Officers are being recruited through the Probation Service - Midlands Region.
- Mental Health Practitioners - two Band 7 posts have been recruited to with start dates agreed. Adverts are going live for a Band 4 post. Recruitment for the Clinical Psychologist is ongoing.
- Business Systems Support Officer has commenced in post.
- Insight Officer is currently being recruited to.
- Business Support Officers will support each of the five FS teams.



NB. Although the adult practitioners will be based in specific Family Safeguarding teams they will work across the Family Safeguarding Service, undertaking work as and where needed.

Family Safeguarding Model: Communications Briefing

Practice and Tools Development



Key Areas of focus:

- ◆ Quality Assurance
- ◆ Policy and Procedures
- ◆ Practice, culture and learning

- Conversations have taken place with other adopter authorities to share good practice around Quality Assurance activity that will support implementation of FS.
- All relevant policies and procedures are being revised to ensure that they are aligned to the FS approach.
- In order to understand the impact our support is having on the families that we work with, work is underway to develop tools to measure outcomes and impact. This has been shared with partners for further consideration across all disciplines.
- Community of Practice Sessions have been established within children's social care.
- We are also working on a language campaign to support practitioners to think about the language we use when taking to and with families and how this features in our recording. This really supports our commitment to strengths based, relational practice and links to the '...with kindness' work that we are also progressing. We are keen that this work is progressed with our partners as it underpins the values of Family Safeguarding.

Evaluation

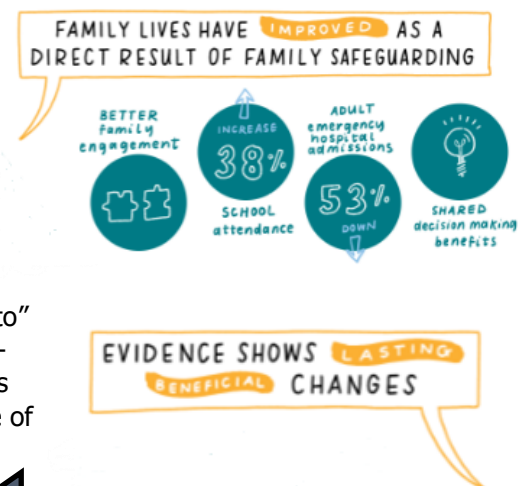
The most recent DfE evaluation of the Family Safeguarding Model (published 4th November 2020) demonstrated the model's effectiveness at keeping more children safely within their families and helping parents to achieve lasting change. Following the adoption of the model in Hertfordshire and evaluation of its impact, the DfE made additional funding available to review the evidence base of the model in four further authorities. These authorities 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.

Local Authorities currently adopting the model have seen repeat domestic abuse call-outs by Police to the homes of the families involved 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 2020 evaluation can be accessed to read [HERE](#)



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More Information:

Click on the following links to learn more about Family Safeguarding:

VIDEO: [Hertfordshire Family Safeguarding - A Problem Solved](#)

VIDEO: [Family Safeguarding in Surrey](#)

VIDEO: [Hertfordshire Family Safeguarding Service case study](#)

[Local Government Association - Pioneering changes to child protection services - Hertfordshire County Council](#)

[Community Care: Family safeguarding model 'replicable and effective' in cutting care numbers and protection plans](#)

[Community Care: How Hertfordshire's family safeguarding model is helping to transform practice](#)

[DFE 2017 evaluation: Family Safeguarding Hertfordshire: an evaluation](#)



How will we be evaluated ?



The [What Works Centre for Children's Social Care](#) are overseeing the evaluation of the roll-out of the Family Safeguarding model in five local authorities in England who are implementing as part of the Department for Education (DfE) funded Strengthening Families, Protecting Children (SFPC) programme. The local authorities are Walsall, Lancashire, Wandsworth, Swindon and **Telford and Wrekin**.

The evaluation of the roll-out includes an impact evaluation of the model and an implementation and process evaluation.

This evaluation process has commenced in Telford and Wrekin and will continue over the next three years.

Final Note!

We are now awaiting final confirmation of our Family Safeguarding 'Go Live' date from the DfE but are still aiming for June 2021!

Key Contacts:

If you have any questions or would like to know anything more about Family Safeguarding, please do get in touch by emailing familysafeguarding@telford.gov.uk Or by contacting:

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[Louise Spragg, Practice Lead/Principal Social Worker](#)

[Laura Moore, Group Specialist/Project Manager](#)