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Ask for: Georgia Humphreys
Date: 07 July 2026

Dear Member

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET COMMITTEE - TUESDAY, 14 JULY 2026

Please find enclosed, for consideration at the Tuesday, 14 July 2026 meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, the following reports which were unavailable when the main agenda pack was published.

Agenda Item No

7 **26/00042 - Proposed Expansion of Oakwood Park Grammar School** (Pages 1 - 16)

9 **26/00029 - Implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme** (Pages 17 - 98)

Yours sincerely

Benjamin Watts
Deputy Chief Executive

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REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE

From: Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Christine McInnes, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Children Young People and Education Cabinet Committee –
14 July 2026

Subject: Proposed Expansion of Oakwood Park Grammar School

Decision no: 26/00042

Key Decision : expenditure of over £1m

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Oliver Bradshaw and Stuart Jeffery - Maidstone Central

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This report seeks the allocation of the capital funds needed to expand Oakwood Park Grammar School.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or make RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision as set out in the attached PRoD (Appendix A) to secure funding approval to expand Oakwood Park Grammar School by 1FE (increasing PAN from 160 to 190 by September 2027) to meet rising demand for boys' places in Maidstone and Malling

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC), as the Local Authority (LA), has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30 (KCP) is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent. A copy of the plan can be viewed from this link:

[Commissioning Plan for Education Provision - Kent County Council](#)

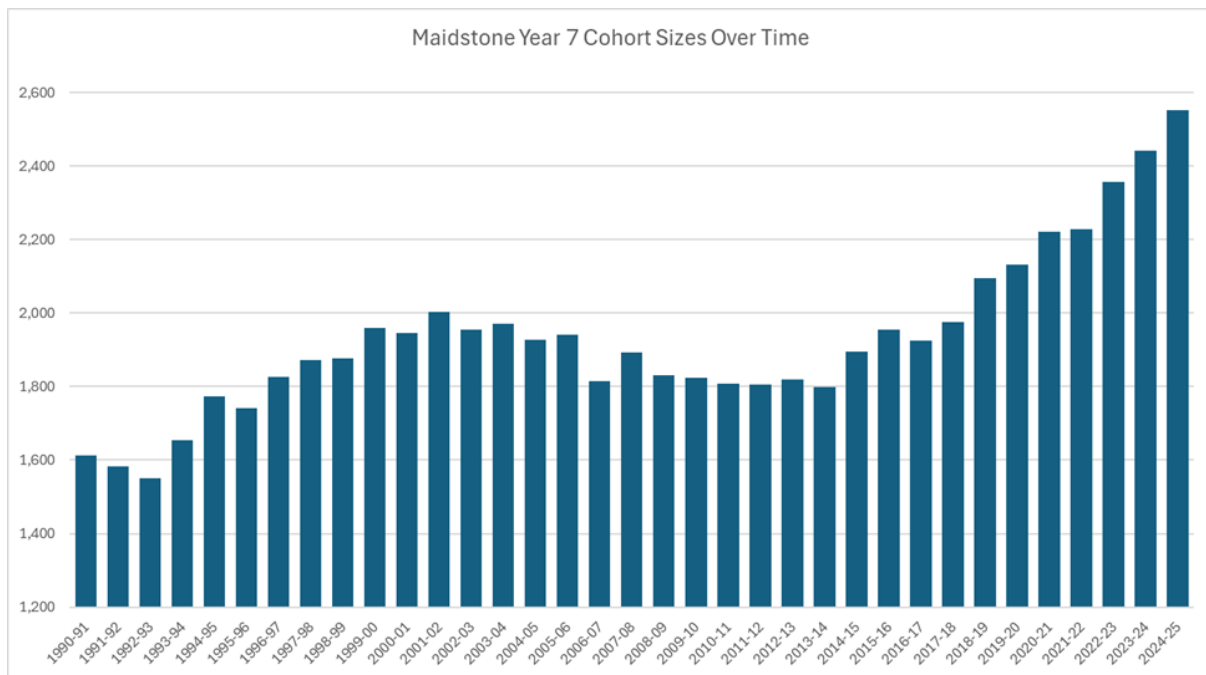
- 1.2 For provision planning purposes KCC's produces forecasts according to planning groups. These planning groups are nationally recognised by central Government.
- 1.3 The KCP identifies the need for additional selective Secondary provision to serve the Maidstone and Malling planning group.
- 1.4 To meet the identified demand for additional selective Secondary provision within the Maidstone and Malling planning group, we propose to permanently expand Oakwood Park Grammar School by 1 FE, increasing its PAN from 160 to 190 places in September 2027.

2. Background and Analysis of Demand:

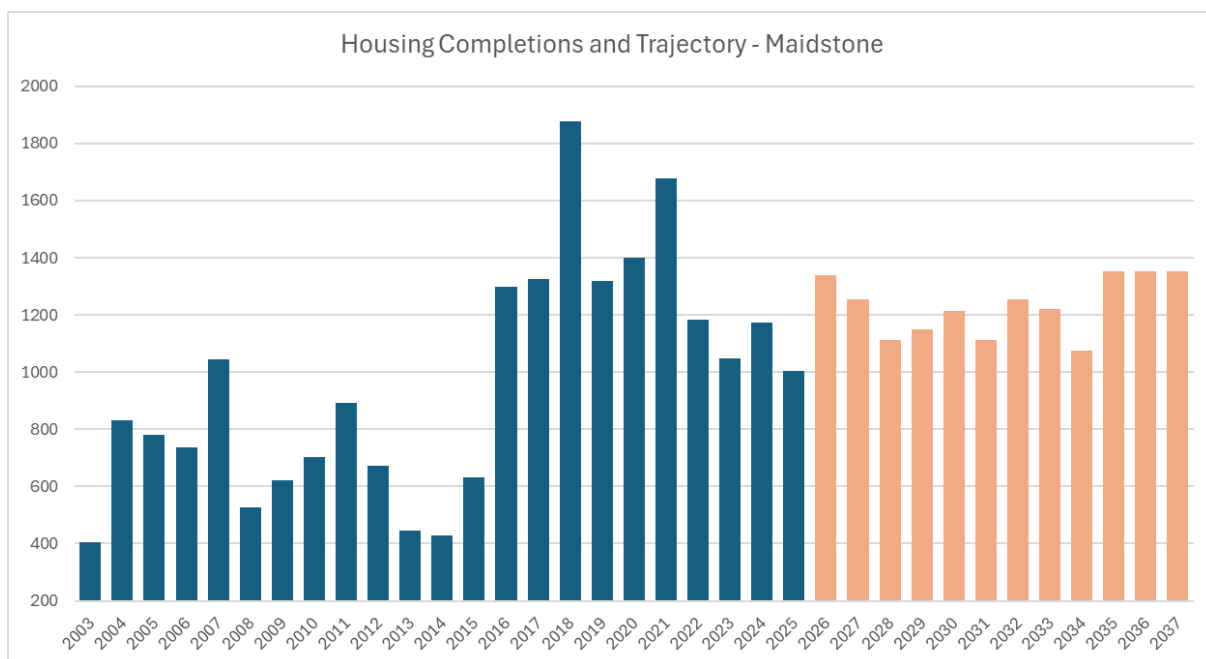
- 2.1 The schools in the Maidstone and Malling Selective Planning Group are all single-sex providers (for compulsory school-aged children). In September 2023 Maidstone Grammar School for Girls was expanded by 1 FE which provided additional provision for girls.
- 2.2 The current PANs of the four grammar schools in the Borough are shown below:

			Current PANs	Total Places Sex	Y7 by	% of Total Places
Girls	4058	Invicta Grammar School	240	450		55%
	4523	Maidstone Grammar School for Girls	210			
Boys	4522	Maidstone Grammar School	205	365		45%
	5422	Oakwood Park Grammar School	160			
				815		

- 2.3 Since 2021 the percentage of the Year 6 cohort resident in the planning area assessed as eligible for Grammar through the Kent Test has remained stable at around 25%, however the total cohort has grown in size and is anticipated to continue to do so. In 2021, 749 pupils were grammar eligible but in 2025 780 were, with the same proportion of pupils taking the test and a similar proportion achieving grammar eligibility.
- 2.4 As the proportion of pupils taking the test and passing has remained stable, the change is due to the underlying increase in the total size of the pupil population; this increase is expected to continue over the next decade due to the significant housebuilding that has taken place in Maidstone Borough.
- 2.5 The chart below shows the total Year 7 cohort sizes of Maidstone resident pupils from 1990 to 2024. This strong upward trend in the last decade is mainly due to housebuilding:



2.6 The total number of dwellings completed within the Borough increased significantly in 2016 and this increase has been sustained over successive years. The forecast housing trajectory, based on the Borough Council's adopted Local Plan, is set to continue at current levels or greater well into the 2030s – see table below:



2.7 The KCP forecast show that the increase in secondary aged children resident in Maidstone Borough has not yet peaked and Year 7 cohorts are forecast to grow each year for the rest of the decade and then settle at larger sizes than they currently are. If PANs remain as they are, the forecast future deficit of around 1 to 2 FE places for the remainder of the Plan period:

Planning Group name	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)
Maidstone and Malling Selective	-8	-32	-56	-27	-32	-20	-52	-21

- 2.8 The split between girls and boys achieving Grammar eligibility in the Kent Test has remained stable in Maidstone, with 52% passing the test being boys each year, in 2025 that represented 401 boys achieving eligibility. Boys' places currently represent 45% of the total Year 7 places available in the grammar schools. On average each year group of the current primary school aged population of pupils resident in the planning area is 51% boys.
- 2.9 With boys making up 51% of the pupil population and also representing a similar proportion of pupils achieving eligibility through the Kent Test, but with 45% of existing places being available to boys, it is considered necessary to increase the number of boys' places as the total cohort grows.
- 2.10 As of 30/1/2026 Oakwood Park had no spare places in their current Year 7 and Maidstone Grammar School were 6 pupils over its PAN. The 2027 Year 7 cohort is forecast to be larger than both the current 2025 cohort and the 2026 cohort.
- 2.11 Around 90% of Grammar Eligible boys resident in the planning area attend one of the two schools (335 in 2025), with the majority of those attending schools elsewhere typically attending grammars in Tonbridge (30 in 2025). Oakwood and MGS also typically have around the same number on their roll who reside outside of Maidstone; this is due to geography and admission criteria; that pattern is not expected to change in future.
- 2.12 Therefore, to meet the forecast need identified in the KCP, and to ensure equality of girls and boys provision, KCC has asked Oakwood Park Grammar School to provide 30 additional boys selective places from September 2027.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The proposed expansion scheme is intended to provide equality of selective provision for boys and girls within the Maidstone and Malling area.
- 3.2 In order for the scheme to progress, a successful planning permission application is required to provide the new accommodation needed for the expansion.
- 3.3 The academy is required to follow the Statutory Guidance 'Making significant changes to an academy', to gain approval from the Department for Education (DfE) for the expansion.

4. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

- 4.1 There are only 2 boys' grammar schools within the planning group, Oakwood Park and Maidstone Grammar School and therefore the options for expanding

boys' grammar provision are limited to these schools. Maidstone Grammar School was expanded previously and would be more challenging to expand further than Oakwood Park.

5. Financial Implications

Capital

- 5.1 Comprehensive feasibility and design work have been completed as part of the on-going planning application process. From these works, the total scheme cost is estimated to be £7.3m that will be funded from the Basic Need Capital Programme.
- 5.2 The scheme incorporates 3 additional general teaching classrooms, a 3-court sports hall and a science classroom extension. This will be achieved via the provision of a new building, internal remodelling of existing accommodation and improvements to facilities.
- 5.3 Capital Costs for mainstream provision are funded through the Basic Need Capital Programme, which is made up from a range of sources including the Basic Need Grant, Developer Contributions, Prudential Borrowing (originally agreed to fund shortfalls in historic schemes) and other specific grants (such as schools rebuild programme). The Basic Need Grant is the largest contributor to the programme and is provided by the DfE to support local authorities fulfil their statutory duty to ensure there are enough school places for children aged 5 to 16 in their area. The Education capital programme is continuously reviewed, with projects entering and leaving the programme regularly in response to demand and project completions. The 2026-27 Basic Need Budget, agreed at County Council in February, of £148 million included an allowance for the estimated cost of this scheme and the updated costing is expected to be accommodated following changes to other projects. This project is partly expected to be funded from developer contributors of £ £411,502.
- 5.4 In addition, an allowance of up to £2,500 may be payable to outfit each new teaching room with appropriate ICT equipment, such as touch screens or projection equipment.

Revenue

- 5.5 Should the scheme not proceed through to completion, any costs incurred at the time of cessation would become abortive costs and are likely to be recharged to Revenue. This would be reported through the regular financial monitoring reports to Cabinet. This will be a cost to the General Fund.
- 5.6 Should the scheme progress, £6,000 per new learning space would also be provided towards the cost of furniture and equipment (in addition to allowance for ICT specific expenditure). This would be provided to the school to purchase required equipment. The school would receive funding for the additional pupils that it admits in line with the funding allocated to special schools through KCC's funding formula. All school related revenue costs highlighted will be met from the Dedicated Schools Grant, a ring-fenced grant from the Department of Education.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 Planning permission will be required for expansion and the application process is ongoing.
- 6.2 The proposed decision requires the award of a contract for works. The Council proposes to utilise its existing Property Construction Partnership Framework Agreement. The framework was procured in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("PCR 2015") and remains valid and compliant. The Council is able to award contracts under that framework without the need to conduct a separate procurement process, provided that the call-off is undertaken in accordance with the terms of the framework agreement and the provisions of the PCR 2015. The proposed award will be made in compliance with those requirements, including the applicable call-off procedure set out in the framework.
- 6.3 Local authorities must plan for and secure sufficient school places for their area in line with their duties under section 14 of the Education Act 1996.
- 6.4 All individual proposals to either establish new, expand current or cease current provision will be required to go through the DfE process of making significant changes to an academy (non-statutory guidance on collaborative school place planning and making organisational changes to academies, August 2025).

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed for the proposed scheme. The screening found no evidence that the KCP will impact negatively on pupils from Protected Groups or lead to them being treated less favourably.

8. Data Protection Implications

- 8.1 There are no data protection implications.

9. Other corporate implications

- 9.1 Support from the Capital and Strategic Programmes team will be required to deliver the project. KCC Highways and Planning colleagues will be consulted, as appropriate, throughout the planning process.

10. Governance

- 10.1 This decision delegates authority to the Director of Infrastructure to take relevant actions including but not limited to negotiating, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts, contract variations or other legal agreements. This includes the granting of leases for utility installations for over 20 years, if necessary, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, as required, to implement the decision

10.2 Implementation of the expansion is subject to securing approval from the DfE under the 'making significant changes to an academy' process, and will only be progressed should that approval be granted

11. Consultation

11.1 In accordance with the DfE's Statutory Guidance 'Making significant changes to an academy', the academy is required to carry out a public consultation with stakeholders as part of their funding application process.

11.2 The KCC Members for Maidstone Central, Oliver Bradshaw and Stuart Jeffery, have been consulted on this proposal.

12. Conclusions

12.1 This report sets out the need for additional boys selective provision in the Maidstone and Malling planning group. It proposes the expansion of Oakwood Park Grammar School by 1 FE from September 2027 to meet this demand for places. The proposed expansion would ensure that there is an equitable split of boys and girls selective places within the Maidstone and Malling area.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or make RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision as set out in the attached PRoD (Appendix A), to secure funding approval to expand Oakwood Park Grammar School by 1FE (increasing PAN from 160 to 190 by September 2027) to meet rising demand for boys' places in Maidstone and Malling

13. Background Documents

- Equality Impact Assessment
- Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30

14. Appendices

- • Appendix A – ProD

15. Contact details

Report Author: Nick Abrahams Assistant Director Education (West Kent) 03000 410058 nicholas.abrahams@kent.gov.uk	Director: David Adams Interim Deputy Director - Effectiveness, Sufficiency and Skills 03000 414989 david.adams@kent.gov.uk
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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education
and Skills

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00042

Executive Decision – key

26/00042– Proposed Expansion of Oakwood Park Grammar School

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I agree to:

- 1) APPROVE the allocation of £7.3m from the Children, Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget to permanently expand Oakwood Park Grammar School by 1 FE, increasing its PAN from 160 to 190 places in September 2027.
- 2) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Infrastructure to take relevant actions including but not limited to negotiating, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts, contract variations or other legal agreements as required to implement the decision, including the granting of leases for utility installations for over 20 years, if necessary, in consultation with the Deputy Leader.
- 3) AGREE for the Director of Infrastructure, to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements, with authority to enter variations as envisaged under the contracts. Variations to contract value to be no more than 10% above the capital funding agreed by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills without requiring a further Key Decision.

Reasons for decision:

Kent County Council (KCC), as the Local Authority (LA), has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30 (KCP) is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent.

For provision planning purposes KCC's produces forecasts according to planning groups. These planning groups are nationally recognised by central Government.

The KCP identifies the need for additional selective Secondary provision to serve the Maidstone and Malling planning group.

To meet the identified demand for additional selective Secondary provision within the Maidstone and Malling planning group, we propose to permanently expand Oakwood Park Grammar School by 1 FE, increasing its PAN from 160 to 190 places in September 2027.

Financial implications:

Capital

Comprehensive feasibility and design work have been completed as part of the on-going planning application process. From these works, the total scheme cost is estimated to be £7.3m that will be funded from the Basic Need Capital Programme.

The scheme incorporates 3 additional general teaching classrooms, a 3-court sports hall and a science classroom extension. This will be achieved via the provision of a new building, internal remodelling of existing accommodation and improvements to facilities.

Capital Costs for mainstream provision are funded through the Basic Need Capital Programme, which is made up from a range of sources including the Basic Need Grant, Developer Contributions, Prudential Borrowing (originally agreed to fund shortfalls in historic schemes) and other specific grants (such as schools rebuild programme). The Basic Need Grant is the largest contributor to the programme and is provided by the DfE to support local authorities fulfil their statutory duty to ensure there are enough school places for children aged 5 to 16 in their area. The Education capital programme is continuously reviewed, with projects entering and leaving the programme regularly in response to demand and project completions. The 2026-27 Basic Need Budget, agreed at County Council in February, of £148 million included an allowance for the estimated cost of this scheme and the updated costing is expected to be accommodated following changes to other projects. This project is partly expected to be funded from developer contributors of £411,502.

In addition, an allowance of up to £2,500 may be payable to outfit each new teaching room with appropriate ICT equipment, such as touch screens or projection equipment.

Revenue

Should the scheme not proceed through to completion, any costs incurred at the time of cessation would become abortive costs and are likely to be recharged to Revenue. This would be reported through the regular financial monitoring reports to Cabinet. This will be a cost to the General Fund.

Should the scheme progress, £6,000 per new learning space would also be provided towards the cost of furniture and equipment (in addition to allowance for ICT specific expenditure). This would be provided to the school to purchase required equipment. The school would receive funding for the additional pupils that it admits in line with the funding allocated to special schools through KCC's funding formula. All school related revenue costs highlighted will be met from the Dedicated Schools Grant, a ring-fenced grant from the Department of Education.

Legal implications:

Planning permission will be required for expansion and the application process is ongoing.

The proposed decision requires the award of a contract for works. The Council proposes to utilise its existing Property Construction Partnership Framework Agreement. The framework was procured in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("PCR 2015") and remains valid and compliant. The Council is able to award contracts under that framework without the need to conduct a separate procurement process, provided that the call off is undertaken in accordance with the terms of the framework agreement and the provisions of the PCR 2015. The proposed award will be made in compliance with those requirements, including the applicable call off procedure set out in the framework.

Local authorities must plan for and secure sufficient school places for their area in line with their duties under section 14 of the Education Act 1996.

All individual proposals to either establish new, expand current or cease current provision will be required to go through the DfE process of making significant changes to an academy (non-statutory guidance on collaborative school place planning and making organisational changes to academies, August 2025).

Equalities implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed for the proposed expansion. The screening found no evidence that the KCP will impact negatively on pupils from Protected Groups or lead to them being treated less favourably.

Data Protection implications:

There are no data protection implications.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 14 July 2026

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

There are only 2 boys' grammar schools within the planning group, Oakwood Park and Maidstone Grammar School and therefore the options for expanding boys' grammar provision are limited to these schools. Maidstone Grammar School was expanded previously and would be more challenging to expand further than Oakwood Park.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....

Signed

.....
...

Date

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Proposed Expansion of Oakwood Park Grammar School

Responsible Officer

Paul Wilson - CY EDSSEN

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqlA must be completed within the EqlA App)

Nicholas Abrahams - CY EDSSEN

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

Project/Programme

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Children Young People and Education

Responsible Service

Education, Planning and Access

Responsible Head of Service

Nicholas Abrahams - CY EDSSEN

Responsible Director

David Adams - CY EDSSEN

Aims and Objectives

Kent County Council (KCC), as the Local Authority (LA), has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30 (KCP) is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent.

For provision planning purposes KCC's forecasting methodology produces forecasts according to planning groups. These planning groups are nationally recognised by central Government.

The KCP identifies the need for additional selective Secondary provision to serve the Maidstone and Malling planning group.

To meet this demand for selective Secondary provision within the Maidstone and Malling planning group, we propose to permanently expand Oakwood Park Grammar School by 1 FE, increasing its PAN from 160 to 190 places in September 2027.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?
Yes
It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?
Yes
Is there national evidence/data that you can use?
Yes
Have you consulted with stakeholders?
Not Applicable
Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?
As this is an academy expansion, the academy has the responsibility for consultation as part of their application to the DfE.
Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?
No
Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?
Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?
Service Users/clients
Service users/clients
Staff
No
Residents/Communities/Citizens
No
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
Yes
Details of Positive Impacts
The proposed expansion of Oakwood Park Grammar School will enable more local boys to access places at a successful selective school in the Maidstone area. The expansion will ensure that there is a parity of girls and boys selective places.
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity

Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

From: Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Christine McInnes, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 14 July 2026

Subject: Implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme

Decision no: 26/00029

Key Decision:

- It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions
- It involves expenditure or savings of maximum £1m

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 15 July 2025

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: All

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This report seeks approval to implement the Target Operating Model for the Families First Partnership Programme in Kent.

The report sets out the proposed high-level model for integrating Family Help and child protection services, including the introduction of Family Help Lead Practitioners, Lead Child Protection Practitioners, and the establishment of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs) in line with requirements in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

It describes how these roles and structures will operate in Kent to deliver a more coordinated, consistent, and effective system of support, safeguarding and intervention for children and families.

The report also outlines how Family Group Decision Making will be embedded across the system of help, support, and protection, in line with expectations set out in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026. This includes strengthening the role of families in decision-making and ensuring that practice reflects a whole-family, strengths-based approach.

The proposed model represents a strategic shift from a fragmented and reactive system to a more integrated, preventative, and family-centred approach. It is

designed to improve outcomes for children and families, strengthen multi-agency accountability, and ensure more timely and effective safeguarding responses.

This report presents the high-level Target Operating Model and associated practice approach, co-designed with operational staff, partner agencies, children, and families.

Detailed organisational structures, workflows, and supporting operational frameworks are not included at this stage and will be developed during the implementation phase, supported by appropriate governance and programme management arrangements.

The report seeks approval to proceed with implementation of this model.

Recommendation(s):

The Children's Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A) in relation to the implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme Target Operating Model in Kent

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Families First Partnership Programme is a national strategic transformation programme designed to improve outcomes for children, young people, and families. It is intended to shift the system from a reactive, crisis-led approach to one that prioritises earlier intervention, prevention, and whole-family support. The programme aligns with the reforms set out in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, which received Royal Assent on 30 April 2026.
- 1.2 The programme brings together early help and statutory children's social care into a more integrated and coherent system. It introduces a high-level Target Operating Model that strengthens coordination across services, clarifies accountability, and ensures that children and families receive the right support at the right time. Central to this approach is closer multi-agency working across children's services, education, health, and policing, particularly in relation to safeguarding and child protection. Further detail is set out in Appendix F and G.
- 1.3 This report sets out the proposed implementation of the Target Operating Model in Kent, including the introduction of the Family Help model, the establishment of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams, and new practice roles such as Family Help Lead Practitioners and Lead Child Protection Practitioners. It also outlines how Family Group Decision Making will be embedded across the system in line with the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026. The report focuses on the overall model and approach to delivery and seeks approval to proceed with implementation.

2. Key Considerations

- 2.1 The Families First Partnership Programme is a national reform programme that requires local authorities and partners to redesign how support is delivered to children and families. It focuses on earlier intervention, stronger multi-agency

working, and improved outcomes for children. Kent has already accepted the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and completed initial design and co-production work (as agreed in Key Decision 25/00047) and is now seeking approval to implement its Target Operating Model ahead of the Government's April 2027 deadline.

- 2.2 The proposed model aligns with the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, which received Royal Assent on 30 April 2026. The Act places emphasis on earlier intervention and prevention, stronger multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and increased involvement of families in decision making. The Families First Partnership Programme positions Kent to meet these expectations and adopt emerging best practices in advance of further national policy and regulatory changes.
- 2.3 A key consideration is the integration of early help and statutory children's social care into a single, coherent system. The proposed Family Help model creates a unified structure that improves coordination across services, reduced duplication and handoffs between teams and ensures families experience a more consistent and seamless service. The introduction of a Lead Practitioner role provides a single, accountable professional to coordinate support and maintain relationships with families. Further detail is set out in Appendix D and E,
- 2.4 The establishment of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams represents a significant shift in how safeguarding responsibilities are delivered. By bringing together professionals from children's social care, police, health, and education ensures decision making will be timelier and more informed, accountability for safeguarding activity will be clearer and professional oversight will be strengthened. Further detail is set out in Appendix B and C.
- 2.5 The model embeds Family Group Decision Making as a core element of practice across early help and child protection. This reflects both legislative expectations and evidence that involving families in decision-making in turn improves engagement and ownership, leads to more sustainable outcomes, and reduces the need for statutory intervention. Appendix H is attached for a summary related to Family Group Decision Making.
- 2.6 Successful implementation will require significant workforce and cultural change. The model introduces new roles, responsibilities, and ways of working, and will require training and development for staff, stronger leadership and oversight and effective engagement with partners across the system. This represents a shift towards a more collaborative, strengths based and relationship focussed approach to practice.
- 2.7 This decision seeks approval of the high-level Target Operating Model. Detailed operational design, including structures, workflows and processes, will be developed and implemented following co-production and endorsement by Divisional Management Team with oversight by the Directorate Management Team. Implementation will need to be carefully managed to maintain service continuity, minimise disruption to children and families and ensure partner organisations are aligned and fully engaged.
- 2.8 Failure to implement the model would result in the Council being non-compliant with national requirements, jeopardise access to future funding, and increase the likelihood of enhanced scrutiny from Central Government, including the

potential for formal improvement intervention. In addition, not proceeding would maintain the current fragmented system, limiting the Council's ability to improve outcomes for children and families and increasing ongoing pressure on statutory services.

3. Background

- 3.1 Central Government has committed total of £2.4 billion over a 3- year period in the Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme to support local authorities and their partners to deliver system-wide reform. The programme focuses on implementing Family Help, Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams, and Family Group Decision-Making, in response to recommendations from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.
- 3.2 The Families First Programme aims to deliver a fully integrated, family-centred system of support, underpinned by strong partnership working and shared accountability. It is expected families will receive the right help at the right time from practitioners who understand their circumstances, coordinate support effectively and provide consistency throughout their journey. The Government is also expecting the programme to support greater financial effectiveness by ensuring resources are used more efficiently to deliver long-term value.
- 3.3 These reforms represent a significant shift in how services support children and families, with a stronger emphasis on early intervention, multi-agency working and better outcomes.
- 3.4 The programme aligns with the Government's vision for transforming children's social care and is expected to deliver the four outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care national framework:
 - Outcome 1: children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need.
 - Outcome 2: children and young people are supported by their family network.
 - Outcome 3: children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes.
 - Outcome 4: children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes.

4. Options considered and dismissed and associated risk.

- 4.1 The alternative option would be to not proceed with the implementation of the Families First Model. However, the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act, which received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026, and the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 make these reforms a statutory requirement.
- 4.2 Failure to implement the model would result in the Council being non-compliant with national legislation and statutory guidance, jeopardise future funding, and increase the likelihood of enhanced scrutiny from Central Government, including the potential for formal improvement intervention.

5. How the proposed decision supports the Council's Strategic Statement

- 5.1 Approval of the implementation of the Families First for Children Target Operating Model aligns directly with Aim 3 of the [Reforming Kent 2025–2028 Strategy](#). It strengthens the Council's ability to prioritise prevention and early intervention, ensuring that families receive timely and coordinated support. The programme supports the Council's strategic priorities by enabling families to access the right support at the right time, helping them to stay together wherever possible, and reducing the need for more intensive statutory interventions. It also promotes effectiveness through investing in preventative services and empowering families to improve their own outcomes.
- 5.2 The programme will be delivered in the context of planned Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The Families First model has been designed to be flexible and transferable, enabling it to be readily implemented within future organisational arrangements, if required, while maintaining continuity of service delivery and compliance with national requirements.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The Families First model directly impacts the Children's Social Care and Early Help services of the Council with a total net revenue budget of £297 million in 2026-27 of which £193m relates to children's placements/support, and £104m to staffing. This budget is funded from the Council's General Fund. The revenue staffing budget lines mainly affected by this proposal are "Early Help and Preventative Services," "Children Social Work Services – Assessment & Safeguarding Service (Operational Teams)" and "Disabled Children and Young People Service (0-17) – Assessment Service". The Council has received funding towards implementing the Families First Partnership Programme, known as the Children's, Families and Youth Grant, totalling £21.7 million for 2026/2027, £21.7 million for 2027/2028 and £18.5 million for 2028/2029. This ring-fenced grant replaces funding previously received separately in 2025-26, through the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant (£6.7m) and Children's and Families Grant (Supporting Families, £6m), along with additional new investment of £8.9m. The funding is ring-fenced for the direct investment in new and updated services to deliver family help, multi-agency protection teams, and support for family networks along with the funding transformational activity. Failure to implement the Families First model in line with Government expectations may result in the potential loss of government funding.
- 6.2 Approximate spending categories for the £21.7m grant are set out below. In 2028-29 the grant is set up to reduce to £18.5m reflecting the expectation the model will be implemented from April 2027, and transformation activities will no longer be required:

	£'s
Transformational Activities	1,100,000 - 1,959,000
Existing services aligned to Family First Pillars	4,800,000
Ongoing delivery of services previously	6,012,700

funded from Supporting Families Grant	
Delivery of new and updated services	8,838,900 – 9,697,900
Total Grant	21,712,500

- 6.3 The delivery of this new targeted operating model will involve both the reorganisation of existing children services and the introduction of specific new posts, as set out in the Government policy, by creating additional duties to roles that are currently in place. Examples include the Local Child Protection Practitioner and Education Lead, which are currently estimated to cost in region of c£4.5m. The final cost of the model is yet to be determined but will be designed to be affordable within the existing staffing budget and additional grant funding.
- 6.4 The government expects new posts arising from implementation of this new model to be fully funded from the grant. The Government has only confirmed grant funding for 3 years initially (up to end March 2029) and reducing in the third year by £3.2m. Therefore, there is risk, the funding could cease or reduce further after this time, and the Council will still be required to deliver and fund the new legislative duties arising from the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and associated guidance. The Government has stated it expects this new model, with its enhanced focus on prevention, to reduce the number of children entering care and along with the improved use of kinship and fostering, to generate better outcomes and further savings from reducing the use of residential placements for reinvestment. However, the scale of the financial benefit in a local authority, such as Kent, that already has an established kinship model and lower numbers of looked after children per head of the population is yet to be fully evidenced. Therefore, there is less confidence that the long term sustainability of the new model can be achieved through this route, to mitigate the risk of their being a shortfall in future funding if the grant ceases or reduces further after March 2029. The Council will need to plan in future for either ongoing investment (through Council tax or savings generated from the model) or for a further reorganisation of services after this point. The later will be considered when the final structure is agreed and kept under review and informed by future government announcements.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The Corporate Director of Children's Services (DCS) at Kent County Council has statutory duties outlined in Section 18 of the Children Act 2004. These duties involve ensuring the delivery of Local Authority Social Care functions for children and young people. This includes, but is not limited to, providing services that meet the needs of all children, youth, including the most vulnerable, and their families. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 legally obliges Kent County Council to comply with the delivery requirements.
- 7.2 Given that the funding agreement extends beyond the anticipated "go live" date for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in 2028, legal consideration has been given to the continuity of statutory duties and the future governance arrangements required to maintain compliance. The obligations attached to the grant will continue to apply regardless of structural changes arising from LGR.

- 7.3 Once the preferred LGR model is confirmed in July 2026, the programme will be aligned with the agreed transition arrangements to ensure that grant conditions, accountability for spend, and decision-making responsibilities may transfer lawfully to any successor body or bodies. This will include mapping statutory functions, review governance frameworks, and establishing clear mechanisms for continuity of service delivery during and after the transition. The Executive decision now being sought to be made will therefore establish a secure basis for implementation, whilst noting that formal variation or transfer arrangements may be required once LGR outcomes are confirmed.

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1 Future operations and activity will be designed to complement, develop, and build on established family support services, including supporting diverse families that are seldom heard, which aligns Aim 3 of our Reforming Kent Strategy, 'Supporting residents That Need Help'. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed for the Families First Partnership Programme, considering potential impacts on individuals and families with protected characteristics. While the reforms introduced through Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 may increase early identification, information-sharing and multi-agency involvement for some groups, no disproportionate negative impacts have been identified that cannot be mitigated.
- 8.2 Mitigating actions are embedded within the programme design, including the consistent application of relational, trauma-informed practice; proportionate use of Family Help plans to support rather than penalise families; transparent and lawful information-sharing practices; and strengthened expectations around anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice across agencies. The reforms also enhance family and community involvement, particularly through Family Group Decision-Making, to ensure plans are co-produced and culturally responsive, and that caring responsibilities are shared appropriately.
- 8.3 Specialist roles and multi-agency structures are designed to improve professional oversight, reduce bias, and support consistent, timely decision-making, while system design and practice guidance emphasise privacy, dignity, and inclusion for all families. Equality impacts will continue to be monitored through implementation, supervision, data analysis and ongoing programme governance, and mitigations will be strengthened where required.

9. Data Protection Implications

- 9.1 A Data Protection Impact assessment (DPIA) has been completed and the following risks and mitigations have been identified.
- There is a risk that information may be shared or accessed by parties who do not need to access it. Mitigation - Access to systems will be based on level of need and individuals will only have access to information relevant to their role. When partners have access to The Liberi/ Liquid Logic Case Management System they will be signed up to the appropriate access policy and will have specific user profiles which will limit their access and require extra justification around accessing KCC information.

- There is a risk that information relating to the wrong child is accidentally shared. Mitigation – The implementation of a unique, universal identifier across all organisations will ensure each organisation is referring to the same child is to be rolled out nationally.

10. Governance

- 10.1 This decision approves the high-level Target Operating Model, with detailed operational design (including structures, workflows, and processes) to be developed and implemented following co-production and endorsement by the Divisional Management Team with oversight by the Directorate Management Team. Implementation will be carefully managed to maintain service continuity and effective partner alignment.
- 10.2 Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, to take all necessary actions to utilise and allocate the Children, Families and Youth Grant and to implement the Families First Partnership Programme Target Operating Model in Kent in line with Government expectations including, but not limited to, determining the expenditure of the grant.
- 10.3 Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Head of Law to negotiate, finalise the terms of, and enter into any contracts or other legal agreements required to implement this decision.
- 10.4 The programme will be delivered in the context of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), with the model designed to be flexible and transferable to future arrangements while maintaining continuity and compliance with national requirements.

11. Conclusions

- 11.1 The Families First Partnership Programme represents a significant opportunity to transform how support is delivered to children, young people, and families in Kent. The proposed Target Operating Model brings together early help and statutory services into a more integrated, coherent, and effective system, with a clear focus on earlier intervention, improved multi-agency working, and better outcomes for families.
- 11.2 The introduction of the Family Help model, Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams, and new practice roles, alongside the embedding of Family Group Decision Making, will strengthen coordination, accountability, and consistency across the system. This will enable children and families to receive the right support at the right time, reduce escalation into statutory services, and improve safeguarding responses.
- 11.3 The model has been designed to align with the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, which received Royal Assent on 30 April 2026, and positions Kent to meet statutory requirements and national expectations. It also supports the Council's strategic priorities by promoting prevention, improving outcomes, and contributing to long-term financial sustainability.

11.4 Approval of this decision will enable the Council, working with its partners, to proceed with implementation of the agreed Target Operating Model. This will support the delivery of a more joined-up, family-centred system that is better equipped to respond to need, manage demand, and deliver improved outcomes for children and families across Kent.

Recommendation(s):

The Childrens Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Childrens Services in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A) in relation to the implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme Target Operating Model in Kent.

10. Background Documents

10.1 [Families First Partnership Programme Guide.](#)

10.2 [Children's Social Care National Framework](#)

10.3 [Delivering the children's social care reset](#)

10.4 Equality Impact Assessment

10.5 Data Protection Impact Assessment

11. Appendices

- A. Proposed Record of Decision
- B. Combined Multi Agency Child Protection Team Roles
- C. Multi Agency Child Protection Team Duties
- D. Family Help Model
- E. Family Help Lead Practitioner Model
- F. Target Operating Model case flow
- G. Target Operating Model Cabinet summary
- H. Family Group Decision making Cabinet summary.

12. Contact details

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Integrated
Childrens Services

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00029

Executive Decision – key**26/00029- Implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme**

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Children's Services, I agree to:

- (a) Approve the implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme Target Operating Model in Kent;
 - (b) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, to take all necessary actions to utilise and allocate the Children, Families and Youth Grant and to implement the Families First Partnership Programme Target Operating Model in Kent in line with Government expectations including, but not limited to, determining the expenditure of the grant.
 - (c) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Head of Law to negotiate, finalise the terms of, and enter into any contracts or other legal agreements required to implement this decision
-

Reasons for decision: To ensure the Council is fully compliant with national requirements and to support the prioritisation of prevention and early intervention, ensuring families receive the right support at the right time.

The decision is sought to approve the implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme in Kent. This includes:

- approval of the Family Help model,
- the introduction of Family Help Lead Practitioners,
- the establishment of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs),
- the introduction of Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCCP),
- the creation of an Education Lead role,
- the embedding of Family Group Decision Making in line with the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.

Under Key Decision 25/00047, Kent approved acceptance and deployment of the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant, development of the Families First model

and delegated detailed design and future grant acceptance to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education. Kent has since completed initial design and co-production work and now seeks approval to implement its Target Operating Model ahead of the Governments April 2027 deadline.

How the proposed decision supports the Council's Strategic Statement: This decision supports the Council's strategic priority to focus on prevention and early intervention, ensuring that children and families receive the right support at the earliest opportunity. It contributes to *Reforming Kent* by strengthening multi-agency working, improving outcomes for vulnerable children and families, and delivering more integrated, efficient, and sustainable services. The proposed model also aligns with the Council's ambition to support residents who need help, enabling a more coordinated and proactive approach to safeguarding and family support.

Financial implications:

Kent County Council has received funding towards implementing the Families First Partnership Programme, known as the Children's, Families and Youth Grant, totalling £21.7 million for 2026/2027, £21.7 million for 2027/2028 and £18.5 million for 2028/2029. This ring-fenced grant replaces funding previously received separately in 2025-26, through the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant (£6.7m) and Children's and Families Grant (Supporting Families, £6m), along with additional new investment of £8.9m. The funding is ring-fenced for direct investment in new and updated services to deliver the Families First Model: family help, multi-agency protection teams and support for family networks along with associated transformation activity. Failure to implement the Families First model in line with Government expectations may result in the potential loss of government funding. The delivery of this new targeted operating model will involve both the reorganisation of existing children services and the introduction of specific new posts. The final cost of the model is yet to be determined but will be designed to be affordable with the existing staffing budget and additional grant funding. The grant funding has only been confirmed for 3 years (ending in March 2029), therefore there is a risk there could be a shortfall in future funding of this service if sufficient savings cannot be delivered from the impact of these reforms. It is recognised the Council will need to keep this under review and further plans will be informed by future government announcements.

Legal implications: The Corporate Director of Children's Services (DCS) at Kent County Council has statutory duties outlined in Section 18 of the Children Act 2004. These duties involve ensuring the delivery of Local Authority Social Care functions for children and young people. This includes, but is not limited to, providing services that meet the needs of all children, youth, including the most vulnerable, and their families. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026' legally obliges Kent County Council to comply with the delivery requirements.

Given that the funding agreement extends beyond the anticipated "go live" date for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in 2028, legal consideration has been given to the continuity of statutory duties and the future governance arrangements

required to maintain compliance. The obligations attached to the grant will continue to apply regardless of structural changes arising from LGR.

Once the preferred LGR model is confirmed in July 2026, the programme will be aligned with the agreed transition arrangements to ensure that grant conditions, accountability for spend, and decision-making responsibilities may transfer lawfully to any successor body or bodies. This will include mapping statutory functions, review governance frameworks, and establishing clear mechanisms for continuity of service delivery during and after the transition. The Executive decision now being sought to be made will therefore establish a secure basis for implementation, whilst noting that formal variation or transfer arrangements may be required once LGR outcomes are confirmed

The implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme and associated Target Operating Model supports the Council in meeting these statutory duties and ensures alignment with national reform requirements. The delegation of authority to the Director of Operational Integrated Children's Services enables the Council to take all necessary operational, contractual, and partnership actions required to implement the approved model in compliance with relevant legislation and governance requirements.

Equalities implications: Future operations and activity will be designed to complement, develop, and build on established family support services, including supporting diverse families that are seldom heard, which aligns Aim 3 of our Reforming Kent Strategy, 'Supporting residents That Need Help'. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed for the Families First Partnership Programme, considering potential impacts on individuals and families with protected characteristics. While the reforms introduced through Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 may increase early identification, information-sharing and multi-agency involvement for some groups, no disproportionate negative impacts have been identified that cannot be mitigated.

Data Protection implications: A Data Protection Impact assessment (DPIA) has been completed and the following risks and mitigations have been identified.

- There is a risk that information may be shared or accessed by parties who do not need to access. Mitigation - Access to systems will be based on level of need and individuals will only have access to information relevant to their role. Where partners have access to The Liberi/ Liquid Logic Case Management System (to be determined) they will be signed up to the appropriate access policy and will have specific user profiles which will limit their access and requires extra justification around accessing KCC information.
- There is a risk that information relating to the wrong child is accidentally shared. Mitigation – The implementation of a unique, universal identifier across all organisations to ensure each organisation is referring to the same child is to be rolled out nationally.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 14 July 2026.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The alternative option would be to not proceed with the implementation of the Families First Model. However, the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act, which received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026, makes these reforms a statutory requirement.

Failure to implement the model would result in the Council being non-compliant with national legislation and statutory guidance, jeopardise future funding, and increase the likelihood of enhanced scrutiny from Central Government, including the potential for formal improvement intervention

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

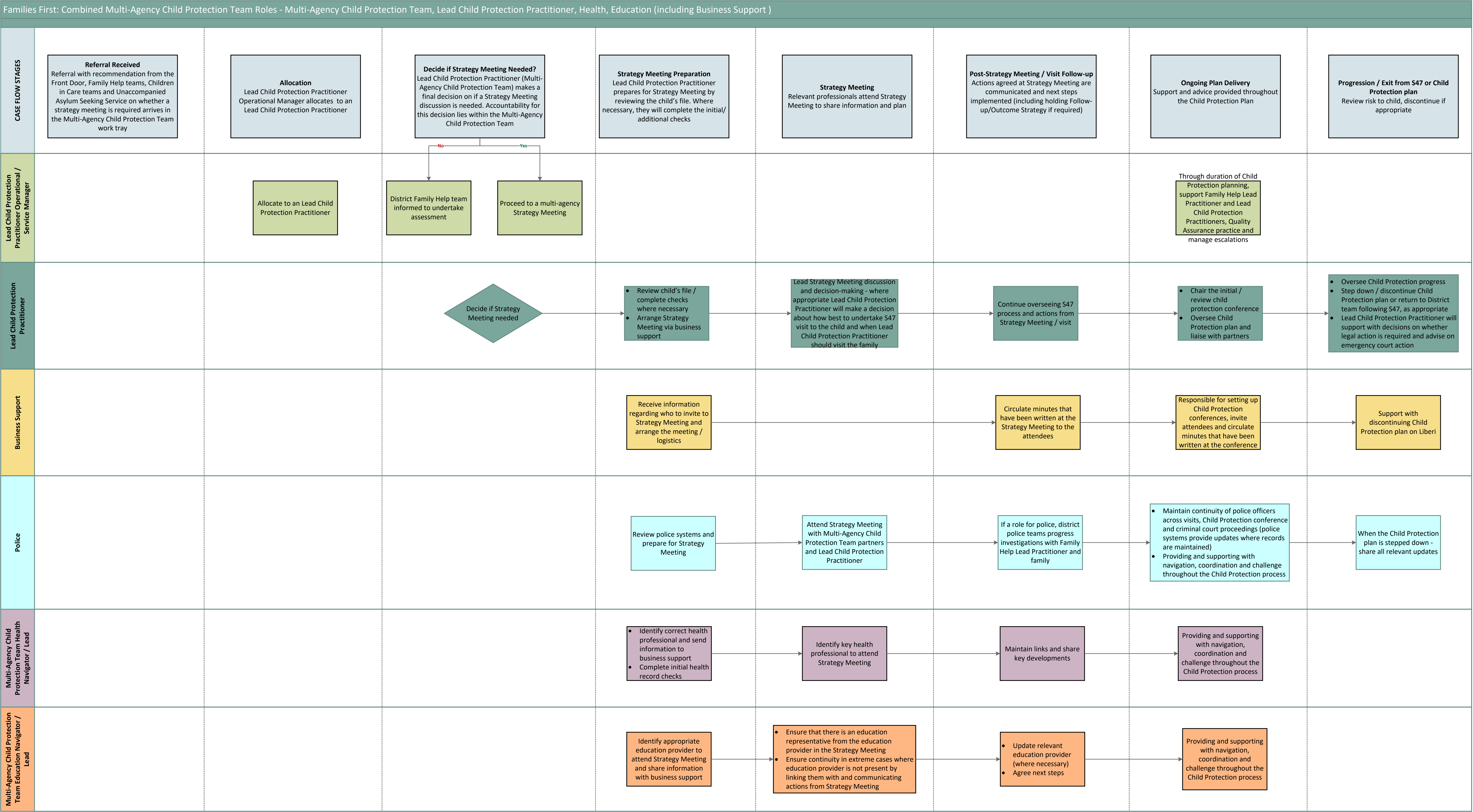
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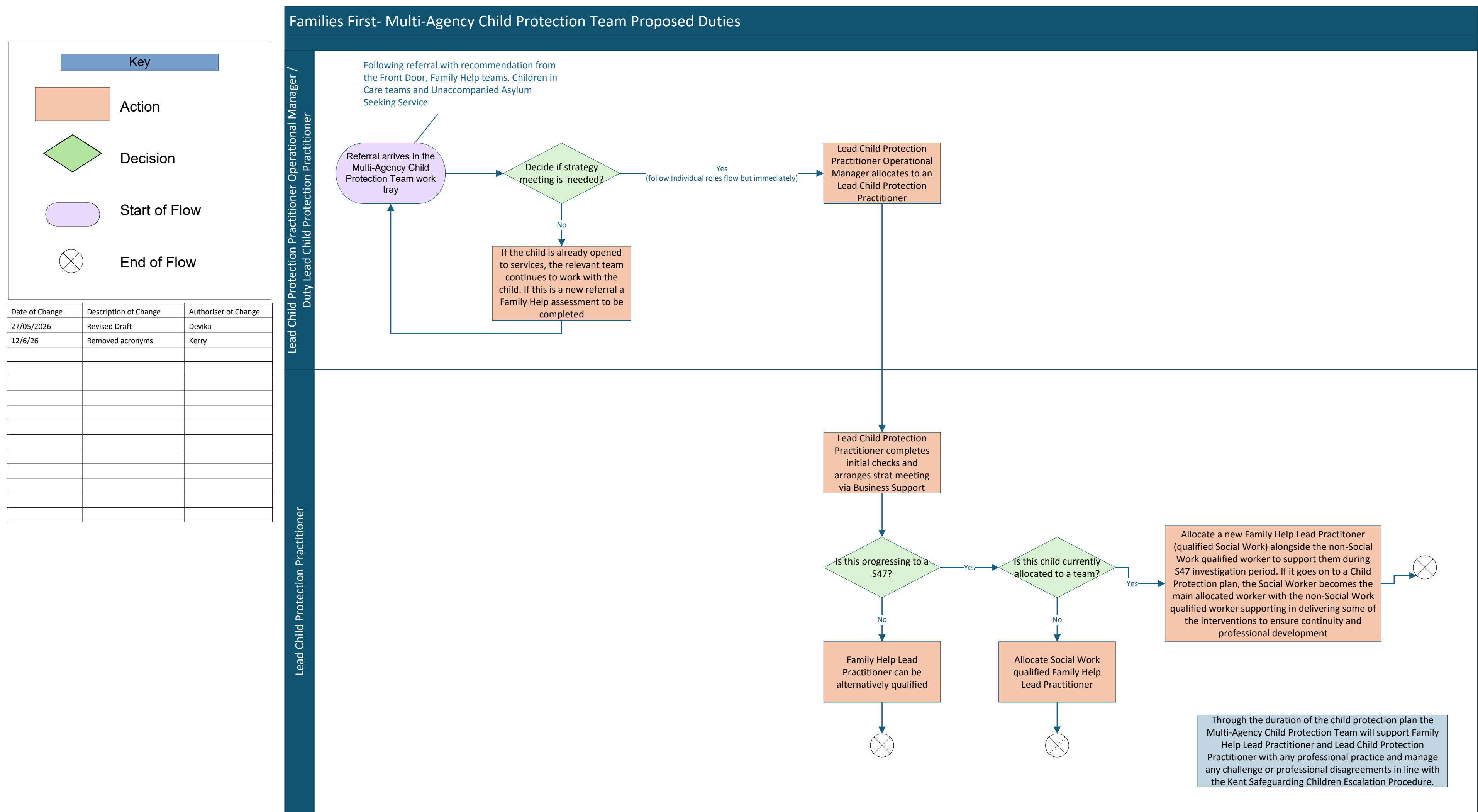
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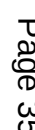
Date of Change	Description of Change	Author
18/05/2026	Revised Draft	Deviya
12/6/26	Removed acronyms	Kerry



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Families First Partnership Programme – Target Operating Model (TOM) Cabinet Summary

Purpose of the Proposal

This paper seeks approval for a new Target Operating Model that will bring services supporting children and families into a more joined-up and effective system.

The model is designed to improve outcomes for children, strengthen safeguarding, and ensure support is provided earlier this in turn will help to reduce pressure on statutory services over time.

What Will Change

The proposed model will move services towards a more coordinated, family-focused approach by:

- Providing families with a single, consistent point of contact
- Joining up services across social care, police, health and education
- Strengthening early intervention to prevent children's needs and risks escalating
- Ensuring clearer and more consistent decision-making and accountability

Key Roles

Three key roles will underpin the new way of working:

Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLP) – the main professional working with the family, coordinating all support and ensuring a single assessment and plan is in place

Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCPP) – a specialist safeguarding role providing oversight and expert advice where risks increase

Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) – a dedicated team bringing together professionals from different agencies (such as social care, police, health, and education) to make shared safeguarding decisions and ensure risks are managed effectively.

These roles ensure clear responsibility, stronger oversight of risk, and better coordination between agencies.

What This Means in Practice

Families will experience:

- One joined-up assessment and plan and a clearer, more straightforward journey through services
- Support that adapts as needs change, without unnecessary handovers
- Greater involvement in decisions, including through use of wider family networks
- More timely decisions, supported by professionals working together

Benefits

The model is expected to deliver a range of improvements:

For children and families

- Children are safer sooner, with risks identified and acted on earlier
- Families receive help at the right time, reducing crisis intervention
- Improved stability and resilience, with more sustainable outcomes
- A better overall experience, with clearer communication and involvement

For the system

- Reduced duplication of assessments and processes
- More efficient use of professional time, allowing greater focus on direct work with families
- Stronger multi-agency working, with shared responsibility for safeguarding
- Improved quality and consistency of decision-making

For the council and partners

- Reduced demand on high-cost statutory services over time
- Better use of resources through earlier intervention and prevention
- Greater oversight of risk and performance through clearer roles and accountability
- A more sustainable model aligned to national direction and best practice

Governance and Decision-Making

The Cabinet Committee is being asked to approve the overall approach and the proposed model of Families First for Children in Kent.

Operational delivery, including detailed processes, will sit at a delegated level, with appropriate governance arrangements in place to provide oversight, assurance, and accountability.

Summary

This model represents a shift to a more preventative, joined-up and family-centred system. It simplifies how services work together, strengthens safeguarding, and focuses resources where they will have the greatest impact—improving outcomes for children while creating a more effective and sustainable system.

Family Group Decision Making – Cabinet Summary

Family group decision-making (FGDM) is an umbrella term for voluntary, family-led decision-making forums in which a child's family network has all the resources, adequate preparation, relevant information, and a safe and appropriate environment to make plans in response to concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing, working alongside skilled professionals. Family Group Conference (FGC) is the only evidence-based model of Family group decision-making. In both domestic and international studies, family group conferences have been shown to be highly effective in supporting families, improving decision-making processes, and diverting children from care.

Working Together to Safeguard Children updated in 2026, the Families First Partnership Programme and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 all emphasise the importance of involving families in decision-making whilst the latter legislation mandates the offer of family group decision-making before a Local authority issues care proceedings.

Kent has over 20 years' experience in delivering family group conferences. With the support of the Family Rights Group and their national accreditation standards, Kent has built a service that is embedded into all areas of children's services. We currently offer family group conferences for families accessing Early Help services, Child in Need, Child Protection, children at the edge of care and children in care. Kent's policy on family group conferences has long included the offer of a Family Group conference prior to the Local Authority issuing care proceedings. We also offer family group conferences to support reunification, for children who go missing, unborn children and community-based conferences addressing contextual risks. In addition, the service offers 'Lifelong Links' support with a focus on promoting relationships for children in care with their family and friends to support identity and belonging. Kent has a nationally accredited Family Group Conference and Lifelong Links service.

Over the past 18 months the service has developed an early intervention offer with the introduction of 12 Social Connections Assistants. An evaluation of this new role in October 2025 highlighted that children were less likely to enter care when a rapid response family meeting was convened.

Since January 2026, the family group decision making Task and Finish Group has supported Kent's Family First Programme by developing the practice model, guidance, and training, while gathering feedback from families and practitioners. It has also widened the offer through national collaboration and exploration of parental advocacy.

Kent is in a strong position to develop further its family group conference offer and be a national example in this area. To fully meet the requirements set out in the Families First Partnership Programme and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 Kent will launch a training module for practitioners and managers, develop a communications strategy for family group decision-making, pilot a peer parental

advocacy service to ensure family experiences are at the heart of the way we practice.



DPIA Project Information

Title:

Families First Partnership Programme

Project ID:

606

Project Timeframe for Data Collection:

In 6+ months

DPIA Screening Questions

Question Number	Question	Answer
1	I understand that, by selecting Yes, I am confirming I am the project manager for the project or activity for which this DPIA screening tool is being carried out.	Yes
2	I understand that by ticking this box I am confirming that I have undertaken the Data Protection Essentials training module on delta.	Yes
3	Is this project a change to an existing process, or is it a new processing activity?	Change to an existing process
4	Has a DPIA for this been previously submitted?	No
5	If a DPIA was submitted - Was legal advice recommended?	No
6	When did the planning stage of this project begin?	02/06/2025
7	Is this screening tool for the use of a surveillance camera, including CCTV, dash cam and body worn cameras?	No
8	If Yes - Is this DPIA a proposal for a new deployment, or the expansion of an existing surveillance system?	
9	Which data protection regime will you be processing under?	UK GDPR
10	Please outline the project including the types of data, software, processors, and how the data will be used	The Families First Partnership Programme aims to implement key reforms including the development of targeted, multi-disciplinary Family Help services for children and families eligible for receiving targeted early help and/or Child in Need services, the establishment of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs) including lead child protection practitioners (LCPPs), strengthening Family Group Decision Making practices, incorporating the voices of

		children and families throughout their journey, and improved data sharing through a new legal information-sharing duty and a consistent Single Unique Identifier. The Programme will process personal data including child and family identifiers (e.g. names, dates of birth, addresses), case history (e.g. assessments, referrals, outcomes), health and education records, safeguarding information (e.g. risk indicators, child protection status), and practitioner notes. Data from existing case management systems Liquid Logic EHM and Liberi will be used to support the implementation of targeted Family Help services, through the development of a Single Family Help Assessment to be used for families eligible for Targeted Early Help and/ Child In Need Services. Data from existing data integration and information sharing databases (e.g. SingleView, Kent & Medway Care Record, the SF Module) will be used to support Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs) though enabling proportionate multi-agency access to improve information sharing and embedding the use of a Single Unique Identifier in line with the Children’s Wellbeing Bill.
11	Within your project are you planning to:	Process special category data or criminal offence data on a large scale? Combine, compare, or match data from multiple sources? Process personal data which could result in a risk of physical harm in the event of a personal data breach?
12	Or are you planning to:	Process sensitive data or data of a highly personal nature? Process personal data on a large scale? Match or combine datasets? Process data concerning vulnerable data subjects?



13

Additional Information

N/A

DPIA Core Questions

Question Number	Question	Answer
3	What are the categories of data subjects whose data will be processed?	The Families First Partnership Programme will process personal data relating to the following categories of individuals: 1. Children and Young People: These are the primary service users of the programme. Includes children receiving: - Targeted Early Help - Child in Need services - Child Protection services Children are considered vulnerable data subjects under UK GDPR and ICO guidance due to their age and safeguarding context. KCC recognises its statutory duties under the Children Act 1989 and 2004, and ensures that all processing is lawful, proportionate, and in the best interests of the child. 2. Parents, Carers, and Family Members: Data will be processed to support whole-family approaches, including Family Group Decision Making. Vulnerability may arise due to: - Socioeconomic disadvantage - Mental health needs - Domestic abuse - Substance misuse - Criminal history - Involvement in care proceedings etc. KCC applies enhanced safeguards when processing data relating to vulnerable adults, in line with the Care Act 2014 and Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance. 3. Professionals and Practitioners: Includes KCC employees and staff from partner agencies (e.g. health, education, police, VCS). Data may be processed for coordination, accountability, and safeguarding purposes. While generally not vulnerable, employee data is subject to employment-related protections under the Employment Practices Code and internal KCC HR policies. 4. Wider Community Members: This may include

		extended family or individuals involved in referrals or support networks. Data processing is limited to safeguarding-related purposes and subject to strict minimisation and access controls. KCC acknowledges that many data subjects within this programme are vulnerable, particularly children and families in crisis. As such: - Consent is not relied upon as the lawful basis for processing, in line with ICO guidance and the new statutory information-sharing duty. - Privacy notices are tailored to different audiences, including child-friendly formats where appropriate (Is this the case?) - Data will be access on a role-basis with data minimisation, and regular reviews Legal bases for processing are clearly defined under UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, including: Article 6(1)(e) – public task Article 9(2)(g) – substantial public interest Schedule 1, Part 2, Paragraph 18 – safeguarding of children and individuals at risk.
2	Are all of the categories of personal data identified in the data question necessary for you to achieve this aim?	Yes, all the categories of personal data identified: basic, special category and criminal data, are necessary to achieve the aims of the Families First Partnership Programme. The Programme is designed to deliver targeted, multi-disciplinary support to children and families, which inherently requires a comprehensive understanding of their circumstances, needs, and risks. Most of this information as it pertains to families eligible for Targeted Early Help and Child in Need services, is currently held within existing systems (EHM and Liberi), therefore as it is required that the two services are joined within the new Family Help Service, this data will be processed internally. There are also existing multi-agency databases whereby information is shared externally. The Programme aims to extend and improve this, thus processing of a larger volume of personal data is required. Justification for Each Data Category: Basic Data: This is essential for identification, communication, and coordination across



services. It is anticipated that the NHS number will represent the Single Unique Identifier across services therefore this will ensure accurate data linkage and avoid duplication or fragmentation of records.

Special Category Data:

Understanding health, racial, religious, and sexual orientation factors is vital for delivering culturally competent, inclusive, and needs-based support. These data points help tailor interventions, ensure equity, and uphold safeguarding responsibilities. As aforementioned, this data is already held and improvements will take place in terms of where it is moved and how it is shared externally.

Criminal Data:

Criminal history or involvement is directly relevant to safeguarding and risk assessment. It informs the work of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams and supports early intervention strategies aimed at preventing escalation into Care proceedings.

To ensure that only the minimum necessary data is collected and used:

Purpose-driven collection:

Data is only collected where it directly supports the programme's objectives; such as improving safeguarding, enabling earlier intervention, and reducing the need for care proceedings.

Role-based access controls:

Access to sensitive data is restricted to professionals with a legitimate need, such as Lead Child Protection practitioners, Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams or Family Help workers/ Lead Practitioners assigned to specific families.

Data governance oversight:

The programme includes a governance strand that reviews data flows and ensures compliance with data protection principles, including necessity and proportionality.

Legal basis and safeguards:

The Families First Partnership Programme is underpinned by the Children's Wellbeing and

		Schools Bill, which introduces a statutory duty for multi-agency information sharing. This provides a clear legal basis for processing personal, special category, and criminal offence data for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting child welfare. Review and audit: Data categories and usage are subject to regular review to ensure ongoing relevance and necessity. Any data that is no longer required is securely deleted or anonymised Further clarification as per questions left 14/04: The 'other' data processed will be information surrounding social care involvement with the family and general family circumstances. Clarification surrounding the identifier - the guidance refers to a universal identifier across organisations which is likely to be the NHS number however, this is yet to be confirmed. As a local authority, KCC is in a position of power compared to data subjects
4	What is the nature of the relationship with the individual?	
28	Is there a KCC privacy notice for this use of personal data?	There is a published KCC privacy notice for this use of personal data
13	How will the data be shared with your team securely?	Referrals will be made through the Front Door Service for Early Help/Social Work teams as is the existing process in the current iteration of Integrated Children's Services. There are existing data sharing agreements in place for data sharing between partners where regular data sharing takes place.
16	Where are the servers for the system(s) located?	UK US EU
21	Please tick to confirm the following statement is true:	I am assured that the personal data being processed in this project is protected in transit and at rest from unauthorised access and loss.
31	How will you ensure data subjects read the privacy notice and understand how their data will be used at the point of data collection?	We will read a script and inform them of where to access the privacy notice online We will link to the privacy notice on our webpages We have an easy read privacy notice

39	Are you signed up to any approved code of conduct or certification scheme?	
23	How long will the data be retained for?	This programme involves the wider Family Help team which will comprise of the targeted Early Help, Child in need and Child protection functions that are currently carried out across the present delivery model. Depending on the nature of the information there will be different policies which may apply which currently sit under sections CS1 and CS2 of the retention schedule. Notable entries which will commonly apply are CS1.1.1 Looked After Children: Records on children who are in the care of KCC (i.e. subject to an Order under the Children Act or who are accommodated by KCC) (DOB+75 years), CS1.4.1 All Other Records relating to Children and Young People Records of children and young people who don't fall into any of the above categories, including Children in Need, and general papers where a file has not been opened (DOB+25 years) and CS2.1.1 Child Protection Records of children who have been the subject of a Child Protection Conference whether or not they are placed on the Child Protection Register (DOB+40 years) Following central government's independent inquiry into child sexual abuse, there is currently a moratorium on files relating to child sexual abuse and a decision remains outstanding as to the new retention policies. DPIA 416 refers however once a decision is made, any new retention policies will be retrospectively applied
32	How will you support data subject rights	For KCC controlled data, there are established teams within the Information Governance team who are dedicated to facilitating subject rights requests. All staff are trained on how to identify subject rights requests and what to do when they receive one to ensure that these can be dealt with expeditiously. There are dedicated teams within CYPE Management Information and Intelligence who QA data held as part of Integrated Children's Services who ensure the accuracy of data
11	Do you have a copy of the privacy notice that data subjects will be provided	Yes

	with at the point their data is collected?	
40	When is the processing of personal data for this project due to begin?	In 3 - 6 months
37	Consultation: Please summarise the Caldicott Guardian's response and any recommendations	The Caldicott Guardian's response: "Currently, as the DPIA is still fairly high level, I don't have any Caldicott concerns as whilst services may be delivered differently, data about children and families is still flowing in the same way and being stored in the same way".
9	How will the personal data be collected from the individual?	Other Online survey/form Phone call Personal data directly from individuals for the programme's core delivery or transformation work will be collected from operational KCC teams through the Front Door Service as per existing children's services referrals (e.g. Early Help, Children's Social Work) and external partners (e.g. NHS, Police, schools) during service delivery, and then processed via case management and information systems by the Management Information Team.
7	Tick to confirm which of the following you have in place with the organisations	Data Sharing Agreement Article 28 compliant contract Strategic Commissioning's annex 1 Legal advice sought on documentation
24	Is the same retention period cited in all documentation?	Yes
35	Consultation: Please summarise the responses of data subjects you have consulted with on the topic of this project.	N/a
14	What steps will you take to ensure the data you collect and/or use is accurate?	Data will be subject to existing QA processes that already exist in the wider children's services. There is a dedicated QA team within Children's Management Information and Intelligence to ensure data quality.
20	Are there any prior concerns over this type of processing or any security flaws	No

8	How will the personal data be collected?	Collected from the individual by another KCC team Collected by an external organisation Collected directly from the individual by your team
5	Are there any other organisations other than KCC who will be involved in this project?	Processor Joint Controller
15	In what system(s) will the data be stored?	SharePoint Liberi
33	What measures will you put in place to prevent data being used beyond the purposes outlined in your privacy notice?	Limit access to the storage location to only those who require access for specified purposes Ensure those with access to the data have read the privacy notice and are aware of the purposes it has been collected for We have an unauthorised access policy
34	Are there any current issues of public concern that you should factor in?	No
38	Consultation : please summarise the responses and recommendations of any other individuals or organisations you have consulted with.	This has come from National Government Guidance, it is a statutory reform. Have had conversations with pathfinder local authorities to learn best practice. Numerous Task and Finish Groups happening with membership from differing services: - Family Help Model - Children's Social Care (KCC) - Front Door (KCC) - Adolescent Services (KCC) - Early Help (KCC) - Management Information (KCC) - Strengthening Independence Service (KCC) - HR (KCC) - Police - Health - Research & Analytics (KCC)

Commissioning Service (KCC)

Social Connections (KCC)

KPAS (KCC)

Education Psychologists (KCC)

Occupational Therapy (KCC)

Child Protection Chair (KCC)

- Family Help Lead Practitioner

Children's Social Care (KCC)

Front Door (KCC)

Early Help (KCC)

Workforce Development (KCC)

HR (KCC)

Strengthening Independence Service (KCC)

Management Information (KCC)

Adolescent Service (KCC)

Fostering Service (KCC)

Education

Police

Health

VCSE

- Family Help Single Assessment

Will be an extension of the Family Help Model

T&F group so will have membership of same services listed

- Family Help Revised Threshold Document

Front Door (KCC)

KSCMP (KCC rep)

Quality Assurance (KCC)

Corporate Policy (KCC)

Early Help (KCC)

Children's Social Care (KCC)

Health

Police

Family Hubs (KCC)

Education

VCSE

Management Information (KCC)

Domestic Abuse (KCC)

Commissioning (KCC)

Housing

- Family Group Decision Making

Social Connections (KCC)

Children's Social Care (KCC)

Front Door (KCC)

Early Help (KCC)

Participation and Engagement Team (KCC)

Strengthening Independence Service (KCC)



Child Protection Chairs (KCC)
Family Hubs (KCC)
Quality Assurance (KCC)
Education
Management Information (KCC)

- Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams
Children's Social Care (KCC)
Quality Assurance (KCC)
Public Health
Education
Police
Health
Front Door (KCC)
Adolescent Services (KCC)
Child Protection Chairs (KCC)
HR (KCC)
Safeguarding (KCC)
Strengthening Independence Service (KCC)
Youth Justice
MARAC
Information Governance (KCC)
Management Information (KCC)

- Lead Child Protection Practitioner
Quality Assurance (KCC)
Child Protection Chair (KCC)
Workforce development (KCC)
Children's Social Care (KCC)
HR (KCC)
Front Door (KCC)
Adolescent Services (KCC)
Information Governance (KCC)
Management Information (KCC)

- Workforce Development
HR (KCC)
Workforce Development (KCC)
Business Learning and Development (KCC)
Children's Social Care (KCC)
Quality Assurance (KCC)
Family Hubs (KCC)
Early Help (KCC)
Police
Health
KSCMP
Front Door (KCC)
Education
Information Governance (KCC)
Management Information (KCC)

Policy & Strategy (KCC)

This project has been discussed with CYPE IG lead and the service manager for the Integrated Children's Services systems team (Maureen Robinson).

1

What is your project aim?

The Families First Partnership Programme aims to implement key reforms including the development of targeted, multi-disciplinary Family Help services for children and families eligible for receiving targeted early help and/or Child in Need services, the establishment of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs) including lead child protection practitioners (LCPPs), strengthening Family Group Decision Making practices, incorporating the voices of children and families throughout their journey, and improved data sharing through a new legal information-sharing duty and a consistent Single Unique Identifier.

From the perspective of KCC, the Programme aims to improve information sharing between agencies, offering a more seamless approach to child wellbeing and safeguarding services. It also aims to reduce costly Care proceedings through earlier intervention, contributing to better outcomes for children and families. Children and families will also avoid the repetitive and often traumatic experience of having to retell their stories multiple times throughout their journey across services, resulting in an overall much more positive experience.

29

Please link to the draft/
published privacy notice

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/access-to-information/gdpr-privacy-notices/integrated-childrens-services/childrens-social-care-privacy-notice>

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/access-to-information/gdpr-privacy-notices/integrated-childrens-services/early-help-and-preventative-services-privacy-notice>

These are the current privacy notices covering the elements of Children's Services that will be covered by this project. The ultimate aim of this

		project is to bring these service areas together and therefore the structure of privacy notices is likely to change as the programme is implemented, however, the processes and activities will be fundamentally the same.
30	Is there an easy read privacy notice for this use of personal data?	There is a published easy read privacy notice for this use of personal data
12	Does the privacy notice state that data will be shared with your team for the purpose you will be using it for?	Yes
17	What is the current state of technology in this area?	Technology in this area is well established, we are using existing software and not using any new software or re-purposing existing software.
25	At the end of the retention period will the data be:	Deleted Returned to KCC by processors
10	Will the data be shared with:	A contracted service provider Other Your KCC team
27	Please tick to confirm the following statement is true	Data may be processed by third-party systems (e.g. Microsoft, case management platforms) I am assured that there are adequate processes in place to ensure retention periods are adhered to, in line with the Article 5 principle of storage limitation in the UK GDPR
6	Please name the organisations and their roles.	1. Joint Controllers These organisations work with KCC to jointly determine the purposes and means of data processing, particularly in the context of Family Help (where the FHLP sits outside of KCC) and Multi-agency Child Protection Teams - Kent Police: involved in safeguarding and risk assessment. - NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB): contributes health data and supports integrated family help. - Education settings (schools, academies): provide data and participation in safeguarding and Family Help processes. Joint Controller Agreements will be developed in line with Article 26 of UK GDPR to clarify roles and responsibilities.

		2. Processors These organisations process personal data on behalf of KCC, under instruction and without determining the purpose: - Microsoft (Teams, Forms, SharePoint, OneDrive) – used for communication, collaboration, and data collection as it pertains to the management of the programme - Case management systems (e.g. Liquidlogic - EHM/ Liberi, Mosaic etc.) – used to record and manage case data. - Shared databases (e.g. KMCR, SF Module, SingleView) - Data analytics platforms used for performance monitoring and reporting (e.g. PowerBI).
26	What processes do you have in place to ensure that the retention period is adhered to?	We will have a record of the locations where the data is stored We will have a process in place to ensure we know when the retention period ends We will keep a record of what happens to the data at the end of the retention period We will make sure a member of the team has responsibility for the steps to be followed Our contract with our processor(s) include a requirement for the processor to return the data to KCC at the end of the contract
19	How will the security of the data be ensured in transit and at rest?	ICT Compliance and Risk have carried out a technical risk assessment for the software we are using There is an Article 28 compliant contract in place with the data processor Users will have different levels of access to ensure only people who need to access the data have access to it
22	Describe how the personal data will be used to achieve your project aim	Data will be used by the KCC Research and Analytics Manager to help determine the new Family Help Model, and Multi-agency Child Protection Teams and to identify the level of

		need for team quantity. The data used will be quantitative and will have no identifying factors. CaRT risk assessment not applicable.
36	Consultation: ICT Compliance and Risk	Liberi has been used for many years within KCC and has previously been risk assessed for this purpose.
18	How will the security of the data be ensured when it is transferred outside of the UK?	There are Standard Contractual Clauses in place and we have carried out a transfer risk assessment
		Other
		There is an Article 28 compliant contract in place with the data processor
		ICT Compliance and Risk have carried out a technical risk assessment

Data Collection

Data Category	Data being Collected
Basic Data	Identification number
	Other
	NHS number
	Postcode
	Address
	Telephone/mobile number
	Email address
	Date of birth
	Name
Basic Data	Identification number
	Other
	NHS number
	Postcode
	Address
	Telephone/mobile number
	Email address
	Date of birth
	Name
Basic Data	Identification number
	Other
	NHS number
	Postcode
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	Telephone/mobile number
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Basic Data	Identification number
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	NHS number
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	Telephone/mobile number
	Email address
	Date of birth
	Name
Basic Data	Identification number
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	NHS number
	Postcode
	Address
	Telephone/mobile number
	Email address
	Date of birth

	Name
Basic Data	Identification number Other NHS number Postcode Address Telephone/mobile number Email address Date of birth Name
Basic Data	Identification number Other NHS number Postcode Address Telephone/mobile number Email address Date of birth Name
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	Telephone/mobile number
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Basic Data	Identification number
	Other
	NHS number
	Postcode
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	Telephone/mobile number
	Email address
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	Date of birth
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Basic Data	Identification number
	Other
	NHS number
	Postcode
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	Telephone/mobile number
	Email address
	Date of birth
	Name

Special Category Data	Racial or ethnic origin Religious or philosophical beliefs Physical or mental health Sexual orientation or sex life
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Special Category Data	Racial or ethnic origin Religious or philosophical beliefs

	Physical or mental health
	Sexual orientation or sex life
Criminal Offence Data (UK GDPR)	Criminal Data will be collected
Criminal Offence Data (UK GDPR)	Criminal Data will be collected
Criminal Offence Data (UK GDPR)	Criminal Data will be collected
Criminal Offence Data (UK GDPR)	Criminal Data will be collected
Criminal Offence Data (UK GDPR)	Criminal Data will be collected
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Criminal Offence Data (UK GDPR)	Criminal Data will be collected
Criminal Offence Data (UK GDPR)	Criminal Data will be collected
Criminal Offence Data (UK GDPR)	Criminal Data will be collected
Criminal Offence Data (DPA Part 3)	No data is being collected under this category
Surveillance Camera	No data is being collected under this category

Data Collection Questions

Data Group	Question Number	Question	Answer
Basic Data	1	The Article 6 lawful basis for this processing activity is:	(e) Necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller. Please note you will be required to state the name and section of the legislation which gives you the power.
Basic Data	2	Please outline which element of the project relies on the identified lawful basis	This processing is necessary to carry out the local authority's public tasks around safeguarding of children at risk of harm and to promote the welfare of children within its boundaries. These duties are imposed by Children Act 1989, Working Together to safeguard Children (2023 and 2026). There are further public tasks anticipated to be imposed by the Children's Wellbeing and Schools bill however this legislation is yet to be enacted and is subject to change.
Special Category Data	1	Please identify the Article 9 basis being relied upon for the processing of special category data	(h) Necessary for the purposes of preventative or occupational medicine, for the assessment of the working capacity of the employee, medical diagnosis, the provision of health and social care or treatment or the management of health or social care systems and services (subject to a DPA 18 condition) or pursuant to contract with a health professional and subject to the conditions and safeguards in Article 9(3)–(g) Necessary for substantial public interest (on the basis of a DPA 18 condition) and which shall be

			proportionate to the aim pursued, respect the essence of the right to data protection, and provide for suitable and specific measures to safeguard the fundamental rights and interests of data subjects
Special Category Data	2	If you are relying on condition (a) please state which element of the project relies on explicit consent, and outline the process you have for collecting, recording, and withdrawing consent	This condition is not being relied upon
Special Category Data	3	If you are relying on condition (b), (h), (i), and/or (j) you must also identify at least one of the additional conditions from Schedule 1, Part 1 of the DPA 2018	(2) Health or social care purposes
Special Category Data	4	If you are relying on condition (b), (h), (i) and/or (j) you must outline which element of the project relies on this condition	This programme relates to the operational delivery by Social Workers of the local authority's Children's Social Care duties imposed by the Children Act 1989 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and 2026
Special Category Data	5	If you are relying on condition (g) you must identify at least one of the additional conditions from Schedule 1 Part 2 of the DPA 2018	(18) Safeguarding of children and individuals at risk
Special Category Data	6	If you are relying on condition (g) (substantial public interest) you must outline which element of the project relies on this condition	This processing is necessary for the operational delivery of the Children's Social Care service in order to safeguard children through Front Door Service referrals, Child Protection Conferences and other information processing and sharing necessary to safeguard children at risk of serious harm in accordance with the local authority's responsibility under the Children Act 1989
Special Category Data	7	If you are relying on condition (c), (d), (e), and/or (f) you must	Not applicable to this project

		outline which element of the project relies on this condition	
Criminal Offence Data (UK GDPR)	1	Where you are processing criminal offence data under the UK GDPR, you must identify at least one of the additional conditions from Schedule 1, Part 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018	(36) Extension of conditions in Part 2 of Schedule 1 referring to substantial public interest

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Families First Partnership Programme

Responsible Officer

Kerry Turner - DCED PMO

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)

Ingrid Crisan - CY OICS

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

Service Redesign

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Children Young People and Education

Responsible Service

CYPE

Responsible Head of Service

Ingrid Crisan - CY OICS

Responsible Director

Christine McInnes - CY CDO

Aims and Objectives

With a focus on strengthening multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and information sharing processes, the Families First Partnership programme aims to:

1. establish targeted, multi-disciplinary Family Help services for children and families eligible for receiving targeted Early Help and/or Child in Need services.
2. introduce dedicated Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs), including lead child protection practitioners (LCPPs) and expand the parental support offer within Child Protection processes.
3. strengthen Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) practices, incorporating the voices of children and families throughout their journey, and providing financial support for family networks throughout the reformed system.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA):

This EQIA is intended to assess the potential impact of our decisions on persons with different protected characteristics. In particular, this EQIA has been prepared to help us to have regard to the need to: (i) eliminate discrimination; (ii) advance equality of opportunity; and (iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, in the exercise of our public

functions. These issues are relevant considerations to be taken into account whenever a new policy, function, or system change is being proposed in the exercise of our public functions. This EQIA is also intended to evidence that these considerations have in fact been taken into account, and the weight given to them as part of our decision-making process.

Case for change :

The Families First Partnership programme was developed in response to recommendations from: The Independent Review of Children's Social Care and The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report on child protection in England. These reforms bring a significant shift and refocus on how we help, protect and support children and families. Central government invested £853.1 million funding for the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme to support local authorities and their partners to deliver a system reform. This investment is intended to support local authorities and their partners to design and implement end-to-end system reform focused on providing effective early help, family support and child protection services. Kent County Council has received funding for the Families First Partnership Programme totalling £21.7 million for 2026/2027, £21.7 million for 2027/2028 and £18.5 million for 2028/2029. This ring-fenced grant replaces funding previously received separately in 2025-26, through the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant (£6.7m) and Children's & Families Grant (Supporting Families, £6m), along with additional new investment of £8.9m. This funding provides a critical opportunity to implement the Families First transformation model, which aligns with national reform priorities and KCC's strategic objectives for children's services.

Summary of proposals:

A successful Families First programme in Kent will deliver a fully integrated, family-centred system of support for children aged 0-18 or 0-25 for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in line with the National Children's Social Care Framework. Built on strong multi-agency collaboration and shared accountability, the programme will ensure that families receive and access the right help at the right time from trusted practitioners who understand their story, coordinate support and provide consistent presence throughout their journey. Children and families will only have to tell their story once and the lead practitioner will remain involved with them and will advocate for and secure the help that the parents need. Service design across the journey of support for a family Children and families will no longer need to repeat their stories multiple times, as practitioners will access a shared case management system with a single case summary and chronology. This transformation will make services more responsive to individual needs and inclusive of the wider support network with meetings held in accessible and family-preferred venues. Statutory services will become a trusted system that has the best interest of the child at the centre of its work. The stigma often associated with statutory services will be replaced by trust, with families seeing services as support rather than threat. There will be a shift in our workforce, roles will evolve to empower and equip alternatively qualified workers to assess and respond to the needs of children and families. The introduction of Family Help Lead Practitioners will reflect a shift from rigid role definitions to valuing a range of experience and skills. We aim to reduce staff turnover and support stronger relationships with families and more effective multi-agency working. Kent's strong foundation of collaboration and a shared commitment to reform means change will be driven with partners, with the voices of children and families at the forefront to create a system that works for children. By engaging early and listening throughout, the system will shift towards prevention, consistency, and better outcomes, ensuring families stay together, thrive, and feel supported.

The changes to how Children Services are delivered is mandated through the Children Wellbeing and Schools bill 29 April 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. Every Local Authority is expected to implement these reforms. Formally approving the implementation of the Families First for Children Target Operating Model design, aligns directly with Aim 3: Supporting Residents That Need Help in the Reforming Kent 2025-2028 Strategy, as it strengthens Kent's ability to embed a greater focus on prevention and early intervention and empower residents to take responsibility for improving their own outcomes. The grant directly supports our priorities to give families timely access to the right support so

they can stay together wherever possible, to invest in prevention where financially viable and to put in place practical measures that empower families to make sensible life choices.

The Corporate Director of Children's Services (DCS) at Kent County Council has statutory duties outlined in Section 18 of the Children Act 2004. These duties involve ensuring the delivery of Local Authority Social Care functions for children and young people. This includes, but is not limited to, providing services that meet the needs of all children, youth, including the most vulnerable, and their families.

Summary of Options for Consideration:

Option 1: Do not Implement the Families First for Children Model.

Through the Children Wellbeing and Schools Bill (date TBC) and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the implementation of these reforms is a legal requirement. Failure to implement the model would leave the Council non-compliant with national practice expectations, and jeopardise future funding arrangements, leading to increased scrutiny from Central Government and potential formal improvement intervention. The financial implications of not implementing the Families First model include the potential loss of government funding and the requirement to repay any unspent funds. This would put pressure on the Council's base budget for children services. The Council would therefore be required to identify funding from within existing budgets to pay for Early Help Services and to implement the Families First model, which would place additional pressure on already constrained resources. Without the programme's intended investment in preventative services, demand is likely to escalate, increasing the risk of more costly care placements and higher levels of statutory intervention. This would further destabilise the children's services budget.

Option 2: Deploy the accepted funding for the Families First Programme and implement the First for Children Target Operating Model design - This is the preferred option.

Formal deployment of the funding for the implementation of the Target Operating Model for Families First for Children, enables the Council to fulfil its statutory obligations and meet the associated grant conditions:

- Strengthen the Family Help offer in collaboration with safeguarding partners, by bringing together local services under a combined, multi-disciplinary practice team and seamless offer. This means ensuring join up between the non-statutory (targeted early help) and statutory components of Family Help (Section 17 of Children Act 1989) to wrap support around the family at the earliest opportunity, streamline re-assessment points and ensure consistency of relationships by establishing the role of the Family Help Lead Practitioner.
- Work with safeguarding partners to deliver multi-agency child protection reform, including through establishing multi-agency child protection teams, with embedded social worker Lead Child Protection Practitioners, health, police and education practitioners and other agencies according to local needs.
- Incorporate systemic use of family group decision-making and family network support packages to make greater use of family networks. Where it is in the best interests of the child, local partnerships should ensure that the offer of family group decision-making is made as early as possible and repeat the offer as a child's needs and the support they receive changes.

Summary and justification:

Formal approval of the implementation of the Families First for Children Target Operating Model design enables the Council to achieve its statutory obligations, meet the Central Government imposed

implementation deadline of April 2027 and provide the right support and intervention for families at the right time. This also aligns with the Council's Reforming Kent 2025–2028 Strategy, as it strengthens Kent's ability to embed a greater focus on prevention and early intervention and empower residents to take responsibility for improving their own outcomes.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Kent County Council has received funding for the Families First Partnership Programme totalling £21.7 million for 2026/2027, £21.7 million for 2027/2028 and £18.5 million for 2028/2029. This was accepted by the Corporate Director and a Record of Decision was produced in March 2026.

In March 2026, DfE released the updated Guidance document for the Families First Programme and the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, which underpin the Families First for Children reforms.

The Families First Programme has prioritised engagement through direct and regular meetings with key stakeholders and core partners across several strategic boards to gather qualitative insights that reflect the current realities and lived experiences of services and communities in Kent and co-design a model that meets both statutory obligations and is responsive to local arrangements.

Since May 2025, the Families First Programme team has participated in key discussions across boards including Strategic Reset Programme Board, the Families First Programme Multi-agency Forum, Kent safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership, Families First Partnership Programme Board and relevant governance groups supporting the development of the Families First Programme. These meetings and workshops have helped shaped the programme's design and implementation plan.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

Yes

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

Residents/communities/citizens

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

The programme guidance includes important elements that are expected to have a positive impact on both

service users and the wider children's social care system.

Implementation of the Families First for Children model will have positive impacts for service users/communities/residents with protected characteristics as outlined below:

- Strengthened expectations for practitioners (including multi-agency partners) to challenge racism and discrimination, improving fairness for families from global majority backgrounds and other protected groups.
- Stronger focus on anti-discriminatory, inclusive cultures, improving trust and access to support across protected characteristics.
- Enhanced assessment and planning for disabled children and their ,-agency support. - Clearer guidance on supporting unborn babies and infants, strengthening early safeguarding where pregnancy-related vulnerabilities exist.
- Multi-disciplinary Family Help Teams providing streamlined, whole-family support benefiting families with disabilities, long-term conditions or complex needs.
- Strengthened focus on domestic abuse, coercive control and teenage relationship abuse, enhancing protection particularly for women, girls and pregnant mothers.
- Family Help model promoting consistent practitioner relationships, reducing re-traumatisation for victims of abuse and those with protected characteristics. - Recognition of and tailored support for children in kinship care, extended family arrangements and care settings, improving outcomes for groups over-represented in care, including those from global majority backgrounds and disabled children.- Embedding Family Group Decision Making, empowering culturally diverse family networks to shape plans and reducing unnecessary statutory intervention.
- Earlier identification and seamless support through integrated Family Help pathways, reducing escalation for families who historically face barriers to accessing support.
- The integration of MACPTs with Family Help pathways strengthens whole-family, relational practice, improving trust and engagement among families who historically mistrust statutory services (e.g. families from global majority ethnic backgrounds, LGBTQ+, young people, disabled carers).- Strengthened Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCP) roles results in faster, more consistent and culturally competent safeguarding responses, benefiting children and families with protected characteristics by reducing inconsistent or biased decision-making.

Implementation of the Families First for Children model will have positive impacts for staff with protected characteristics as outlined below:

- The model offers career development opportunities which may particularly benefit staff who experience barriers to career advancement (i.e. women, global majority backgrounds, faith groups etc). This has additional benefits in diversifying, upskilling and strengthening the workforce. - The introduction of a more seamless case management system and single unique identifier creates opportunities for staff to spend less time seeking information or navigating barriers to information sharing, thus potentially benefitting staff who require more flexible working patterns (i.e. parents, those with disabilities or health conditions), enabling them to work more efficiently.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

Yes

Details of negative impacts for Age

Increased scrutiny for some age groups (e.g. unborn babies, infants, teenagers) due to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 strengthened focus on early identification of harm, domestic abuse, online

harms and teenage relationship abuse.
Mitigating Actions for Age
Embed relational, trauma-informed practice.
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Ingrid Crisan
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
Yes
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Data sharing across agencies may raise privacy concerns for disabled parents or carers who rely on multiple services.
Mitigating actions for Disability
Ensure transparency about how information is used and stored under strengthened data-sharing expectations
Responsible Officer for Disability
Ingrid Crisan
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
Yes
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Heightened safeguarding focus on domestic abuse and coercive control may lead to increased service intervention for women, who are statistically overrepresented in victim groups.
Mitigating actions for Sex
Promote consistent use of Family Help plans to ensure proportionate rather than punitive intervention.
Responsible Officer for Sex
Responsible Officer for Sex
Ingrid Crisan
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Yes
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Multi-agency data sharing could raise concerns for trans individuals about privacy around gender history or previous names, impacting their sense of safety when accessing services.
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Ensure system design and information-sharing practices respect privacy, minimise unnecessary disclosure of gender history, and involve the individual in decisions about what is shared
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Ingrid Crisan
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
Yes
Negative impacts for Race
Strengthened focus on hidden harms and earlier risk identification may unintentionally heighten statutory involvement for those from global majority families, who are already overrepresented in safeguarding systems. Cultural misunderstanding could worsen if workforce diversity is not improved in line with system

expectations.
Mitigating actions for Race
Working Together 2026 mandates explicit anti-racist practice and analysis of disproportionality, helping identify and address biases. Diversify workforce through opportunities created by MACPTs, LCPP roles and FFP professional pathways. Ensure culturally competent Family Group Decision Making to empower families.
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Ingrid Crisan
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
Yes
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Strengthened data analysis and safeguarding against forms of harm (e.g. honour-related abuse, faith-based abuse) may lead some religious communities to fear stereotyping or disproportionate scrutiny
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Embed Working Together 2026 anti-discriminatory expectations to avoid cultural stereotyping. Ensure Family Help Teams are trained in faith-sensitive practice and engage local community leaders where appropriate. Transparency in assessment pathways reduces mistrust.
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Ingrid Crisan
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Yes
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Strengthened focus on overlapping harms (e.g. online abuse, exploitation, domestic abuse) may increase intervention for LGBTQ+ young people who face higher risk of certain harms.
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Embed Working Together 2026's expectations on anti-discriminatory practice across agencies
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Ingrid Crisan
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Yes
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Working Together 2026 increased focus on monitoring unborn babies may feel intrusive for pregnant women, particularly those already experiencing socioeconomic or racial inequalities
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Apply trauma-informed relational practice within Family Help, ensuring early support rather than punitive approaches.
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Ingrid Crisan
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Yes
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Whole-family approaches may feel intrusive for couples undergoing relationship stress or separation. Strengthened focus on domestic abuse, coercive control and relationship-based harms may lead to

increased statutory involvement in households where relationships are unstable; married or civil-partnered couples may perceive this as stigmatising or threatening to family stability.
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Apply trauma-informed relational practice within Family Help, ensuring early support rather than punitive approaches.
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Ingrid Crisan
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Yes
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
The stronger emphasis on family networks, including kinship care and Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), may place additional expectations on carers, particularly older carers or those balancing caring roles with disabilities or employment. Increased multi-agency assessments and earlier identification of needs may unintentionally increase pressure on carers if services expect rapid involvement.
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Use FGDM to share caring responsibilities across wider family and community networks, reducing individual burden. Ensure carers receive clear, accessible information about safeguarding pathways and expectations. Provide tailored support for kinship and parent-carers through Family Help Teams and multi-disciplinary working, ensuring carers' needs are considered alongside the child's.
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Ingrid Crisan