

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.