

CARDIFF FAMILIES FIRST PROGRAMME: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

Executive Summary

Cardiff Families First programme made a great deal of progress during 2015-16:

- Families First providers delivered support and services for 22,681 children, young people and families, almost 2000 more than in the previous year.
- Over 300 of the families accessing Families First services benefited from support to complete a Joint Assessment Family Framework (Family Plan) and build a Team Around their Family.
- The generic and disability TAF teams are supporting the JAFF pilot to start to train practitioners in other services to work with families to complete a Family Plan. This is part of the implementation of Cardiff's Early Help Strategy.
- The Families First Freephone service continued to be an important central point of information and support to access services, which was used by professionals and families. Around half of calls came from families themselves. Of the services that called, Health Visitors were the ones that used the Freephone service most.
- One of the services in greatest demand was parenting. Parenting Services implemented a new triage system to ensure that families receive the right kind of service to meet their needs.
- Cardiff Parenting Directory was updated. This provides information about the validated parenting services available across the city.
- Young people carried out inspections of two Families First packages, Healthy Lifestyles and Disability Focus, as well as of the TAF team – these inspections concluded that they were all meeting the National Participation Standards in the way in which they deliver their services.
- The Families First programme introduced Time Credits and helped to take the Time Credits scheme right across Cardiff. Families First participants earned over 3000 hours of credits.
- Towards the end of the year, Welsh Government gave notification that there would be a reduced budget for 2016-17. The guidance said that the TAF team and the Disability work should be maintained. However, the central Families First team worked with providers to incorporate the reduced budgets with as little impact on services to families as possible.
- At the same time, senior managers within City of Cardiff Council decided that management of the Families First programme should move to Children's Services. This move recognises the importance of the role of Families First in early intervention and prevention.



Putting Families First
in Cardiff

Next Steps

2016-17 is going to be a year of significant risks but also of new opportunities.

- The risks arise from the fact that this year is the last year in the current commissioned programme. The original contracts run until the end of March 2017. As a result, there is uncertainty about the future. This could lead to experienced staff moving to more secure employment. Further, providers may experience difficulty filling posts where they are only able to offer very short contracts.
- Staff vacancies might also mean that providers accrue underspend. Welsh Government are monitoring spend very closely. They want any underspend from unfilled staff vacancies to be returned to them, rather than used for other purposes.
- However, at the beginning of August 2016, the Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for Families First in Welsh Government confirmed that there would be another programme. National evaluation of Families First has confirmed the importance of Team Around the Family working and support for families with a disabled child. The new programme will retain both of these elements. However, the strategically commissioned projects will need to have a much clearer focus on support for parenting and young people. Certain types of service, such as childcare or support to deal with worklessness, will be delivered via other routes and not by Families First.
- Welsh Government have confirmed that, although they do not want to use a Combined Outcome Framework, they do want greater alignment of the Tackling Poverty programmes. In Cardiff, there will be a new group which will bring together the old strategic group for Families First, Communities First and Flying Start, with the group set up to minimise the impact of Welfare Reform, and the Supporting People programme. This new group could identify areas of joint working or even joint commissioning when the new programme is commissioned.
- Commissioning of the new Families First programme is also taking place in the context of implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the Wellbeing of Future Generations. Both Acts emphasise the importance of preventative services. Public Health are leading a population needs assessment that will form part of the 'analyse' stage of the commissioning process for the new programme. This will enable Families First to have a clearer role as part of the provision of Information, Advice and Assistance. It could also lead to opportunities for joint commissioning with the Vale of Glamorgan.



Putting Families First
in Cardiff

11.2 Next Steps continued

- The central Families First team have already started stakeholder engagement as part of a review of the current programme, to prepare for commissioning of the next. The Families First programme has delivered some excellent services, as outlined in these annual reviews. However, there are also things that could be done better, particularly the arrangements that we have in place for identifying when families need additional help and making sure that they get the right level of support. We also need to respond to the changing context. The aims of the next round of commissioning process will be to retain what has worked well and to introduce new arrangements and services that will help us to respond to families' needs even more effectively.
- Welsh Government have confirmed a 'transition' period for the move to the next programme. This will be taking place in 2017-18 and will give us an opportunity to work with providers and families to make sure that it is as smooth as possible. Commissioning plans will be taken to scrutiny and to Cabinet as soon as there is confirmation of the final guidance and funding levels for the new programme.



Children taking part in the SHEP programme at Hywel Dda Primary, with their parents