

Families First

North Yorkshire

Newsletter

September 2026



What is Families First?

Families First is a national reform programme led by the Department for Education. It is about changing how we work together with children, their families and their networks, so that support:

- Is built around strong relationships
- Includes the family's support networks
- Offered at the earliest opportunity

Families First brings together Targeted Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection into a single, connected Family Help system, so families experience fewer changes in practitioners and clearer support plans.

What is this means for North Yorkshire Practitioners?

In North Yorkshire, Families First will build on what already works well, while addressing duplication, delays and gaps in how families experience help.

Families First is designed to help practitioners by:

- Reducing repeat assessments and multiple referrals
- Improving clarity about thresholds and decision-making
- Strengthening multi-agency working
- Keeping the same practitioner relationship with families wherever possible
- Supporting family-led solutions, not just professional plans

What practitioners can expect?

Over the coming months in North Yorkshire, practitioners can expect:

- Ongoing engagement and co-design
- Clear communication about local arrangements
- Updates on thresholds, pathways and roles
- Opportunities to shape how Families First works in practice
- Training and workforce development linked to new ways of working

This is a phased transition, not an overnight change.

What will change?

A Joined-Up Family Help Approach

Families First brings together Targeted Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection support into a single Family Help pathway.

Families will have:

- One evolving assessment
- One plan
- One lead practitioner wherever possible



Stronger Multi-Agency Child Protection Arrangements

Where child protection concerns arise, North Yorkshire's Multi-Agency Child Protection Team, (MACPT) will:

- act as the local centre of excellence for multi-agency practitioners, offering information, advice and support on child protection concerns
- provide oversight and consultation to the Family Help Lead Practitioner for children where risk is increasing
- convene and lead on strategy meetings and conferences when required
- support the development and review of child protection plans when required

Family-Led Decision Making

Families First places a strong emphasis on Family Group Decision Making. This means:

- Families and their networks are involved early
- Wider family and community strengths are recognised
- Plans are built with families, not just professionals

A Consistent Lead Practitioner

Families will be supported by a Family Help Lead Practitioner, who:

- Builds and maintains the relationship with the family
- Coordinates the multi-agency team around the family
- Leads assessment and planning
- Retains their role if child protection concerns arise

What will stay the same?

- Safeguarding responsibilities remain unchanged
- Statutory duties under Working Together still apply
- Child protection thresholds and legal frameworks remain
- Professional judgement remains critical

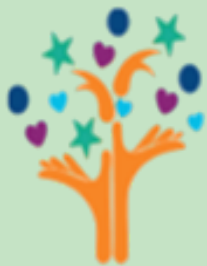


Families First is about enhancing how we work as multi-agency partners with children and their families.

Our Practice Model

The ways of working being introduced through the Families First programme strongly complement our existing, well-embedded and successful Strength in Relationships practice model. Families First builds on what we already do well in North Yorkshire, reinforcing our strengths in relationship-based practice, early and coordinated help, and strong multi-agency collaboration.

By aligning Families First with our established model, we are strengthening, not replacing our practice. This approach enables us to enhance what is already effective, reduce duplication, and improve the experience for families and practitioners, while remaining firmly rooted in our local context, strengths, and learning.



Strength in Relationships

Families First is about building on what already works well in North Yorkshire, not removing valued roles, experience or practice.

Being Young in North Yorkshire



The strategic priorities in the Being Young in North Yorkshire strategy also remain the same, we want all our children to be **Happy**, **Healthy**, **Safe**, and **Achieving**.

For more information on Being Young in North Yorkshire and to access policies, procedures and practice guidance please visit the [NYSCP Website](https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/nyscp)

This is an exciting opportunity to consider how we work with children and their families, building on the strengths that already exist across the service and ensuring we are well placed to deliver the ambitions of the Families First reforms.

We are committed to being as open and transparent as possible as the proposals develop, and to ensuring staff are kept informed, supported and given opportunities to ask questions and share their views throughout the process.

Newsletters will be circulated monthly via the Business Unit of the Safeguarding Children Partnership and line managers across the NYSCP. October's newsletter will have a spotlight on Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams and November's will focus on Family Group Decision Making and Kinship Care arrangements.

The Families First Partnership Programme inbox is monitored and we would encourage you to use this space to ask questions and share your best ideas about how the new service can work for children and their families.

For further information about the national programme please visit the link below and do book onto information events when they become available via the Learning Zone (for NYC staff) and the NYSCP website (dates and links will be shared in future editions of the newsletter).

[Families First Partnership Programme Guide](#)

