



# Family Help

## IOW Children's Scrutiny Committee

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# Context

The publication of the **Independent Review of Children's Social Care (IRCSC)** report in May 2022 marks a significant and landmark point in time as it seeks to create generational change across children's social care.

The government's response entitled '**Stable Homes, Built on Love**' has **6** key pillars for areas of change. One of these areas being a catalyst for a '*revolution in family help*'.

Whilst awaiting responses to government consultation and a timetable for legislative changes local authorities are charged with commencing the work to develop and implement a new model of Family Help.

A phased and iterative approach is being adopted on the IOW to developing and implementing Family Help.



**Family Help brings together targeted early help  
and children in need**





**Pillar 1**

**Family Help provides the right support at the right time so children can thrive with their families**

- Consult on a wider range of professionals to hold cases alongside a knowledge and skills statement for Family Help workers
- Law commission review of disability legislation

**Pillar 2**

**A decisive multi-agency child protection system**

- Consult on new National multi-agency child protection standards as part of 2023 update of Working Together
- Test and introduce new pathways to protect children from harms outside of the home
- Set clear roles and responsibilities for Safeguarding partners and increase the role of education

**Pillar 3**

**Unlocking the potential of family networks**

- £9m to provide training and support to Kinship carers
- Commitment to National Kinship Care Strategy by end of 2023

**Pillar 4**

**Putting Love, stable relationships and care at the heart of being a child in care**

- Over £27m for foster care recruitment and retention programme
- Introduce a financial oversight regime and develop a programme to support children's home sector
- Over £30m to expand Family Finding programmes and Lifelong Links
- Strengthen and extend corporate parenting responsibilities to a wider range of public bodies

**Pillar 5**

**A valued, supported and highly skilled Social Worker for every child who needs one**

- 5 year early career framework to support social workers at start of their career
- Support the recruitment of up to 500 additional child and family social work apprentices
- Consultation on national use of agency workers

**Pillar 6**

**A system that continuously learns and improves and makes better use of evidence and data**

- Introduce National Children's Social Care Framework, data dashboard and practice guides
- Long term strategy for transforming use of data by end 2023
- Improve evidence base for what works to support persistently 'requires improvement' authorities



# What is Family Help?

## The IRCSC defines Family Help as:

- 'support that aims to improve children's lives through supporting the family unit and strengthening family relationships, **to enable children to thrive and keep families together**, helping them to provide the safe, nurturing environments that children need'
- Being built in **partnership** with the families and communities it serves
- Is **high quality and evidence led**. It should be delivered by **skilled professionals from a range of disciplines** who have the time and capability to build trusting and supportive relationships
- Being available to any family facing significant challenges that could pose a threat to providing their child with a loving, stable, safe family life. This ranges from families who currently receive **targeted early help to those who are on a child in need or child protection plan**
- Seeking to understand and respond to **the whole range of challenges** that children and families face, bringing in and coordinating wider services and partners to support families and avoid them falling between services
- Support offered at the level a family needs in order for them to function well with the aim, where possible, of avoiding ongoing service involvement. It should build on a **wider offer of support and early intervention in communities** that is available to all families.



# Our vision for Family Help



## Outcomes

Improving outcome for children and families

Keep more children safely at home (with needs met)

Reducing demand for level 4 services

Increase recruitment and retention

Locally based FH teams aligned to local resources (hubs)



## Children & Families will ...

Be able to access support easily in their local community

They will be pro active and empowered to seek support

Have an improved experience with less transition points

Build trusting and supportive relationships with a range of agencies

Have their needs met at the lowest level to reduce escalation



## We will ...

Reduce transition points

Improve community links

Foster Multi Agency working

Be responsive to the dynamic nature of families

We will use local resources to facilitate positive outcomes



## We need to be good at ...

Aligning workers skills to meet the needs of the family eg: IW workers

Using skills set of differently qualified staff

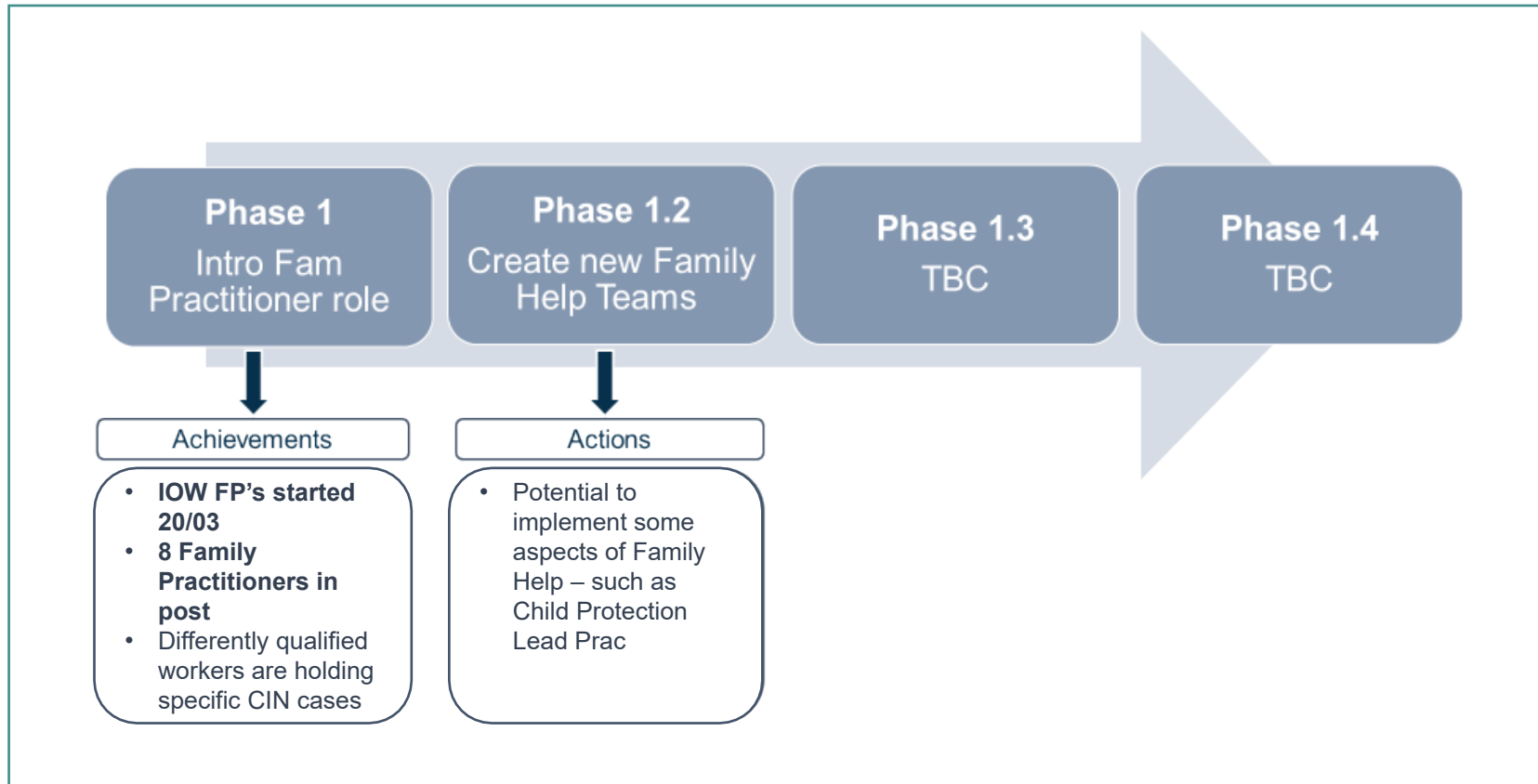
Linking and building relationships with local community resources

Establishing a flexible workforce

Adopting and implementing a whole family approach



# Family Help - Context and approach





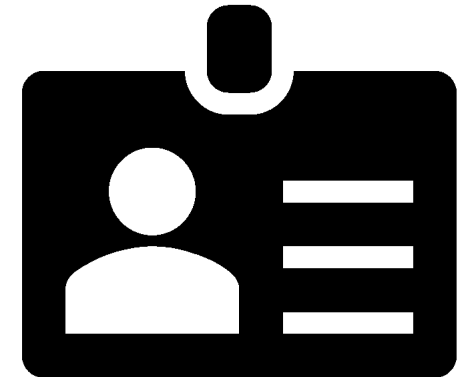
# Phase 1: Family Practitioner role

This role has been developed within the context of statutory and legal requirements but also a desire, as an Outstanding authority, to lead in new and innovative ways of working.

## Overview of role:

These new posts will be deployed within our Childrens Assessment and Safeguarding Teams (CAST), two per team.

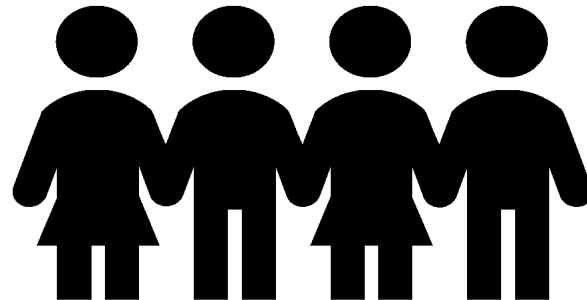
- A new **role profile** has been developed for the Family Practitioner – based on those of Child Practitioners and RAFT family workers.
- These staff will **case hold specific families** who have met the threshold for receiving statutory services, thus social workers will no longer be the only role who can case hold statutory level families
- These practitioners will **ONLY** case hold specific Children in Need case types where there is a lower level of risk
- Social Workers will have statutory case holding responsibility across a mix of case types but will exclusively case hold children on child protection plans and looked after children
- For families allocated to a Family Practitioner for a Child & Family assessment a Social Worker will **always** jointly visit and be part of the assessment. Depending on the outcome the Team Manager will review allocation decision
- For some families it will be appropriate for a Social worker and Family Practitioner to co-work a family





# Early Help on the IOW

- There is a small central coordinating team within the IOW CSD who QA all early help assessments and plans
- Part of the wider early help offer is commissioned to Barnardos (0-19 family Centre offer)
- The majority of families are held by partner agencies (primarily schools and health colleagues)







# Child Protection Lead Practitioner

The CPLP is a newly created role proposed as part of the IRCSC

The expectations set out are that they will:

- Be an experienced/Advanced Social Worker
- Co-work and work alongside Family Help Teams and have responsibility for making key decisions
- Chair Child Protection conferences
- Hold their own caseload within Family Help

Several options have been explored in relation to this new role, option 5 has been agreed as the option to be implemented.





# Opportunities for IOW

- The current commissioning arrangements for early help on the IOW are a significant factor which will impact and influence the development of a new Family Help model
- However, there are some potential **opportunities** that do exist for some elements of Family Help to be implemented more quickly, such as:
  - The Child Protection Lead Practitioner role
  - Localising CAST to align with Family Hub boundaries



Any questions?