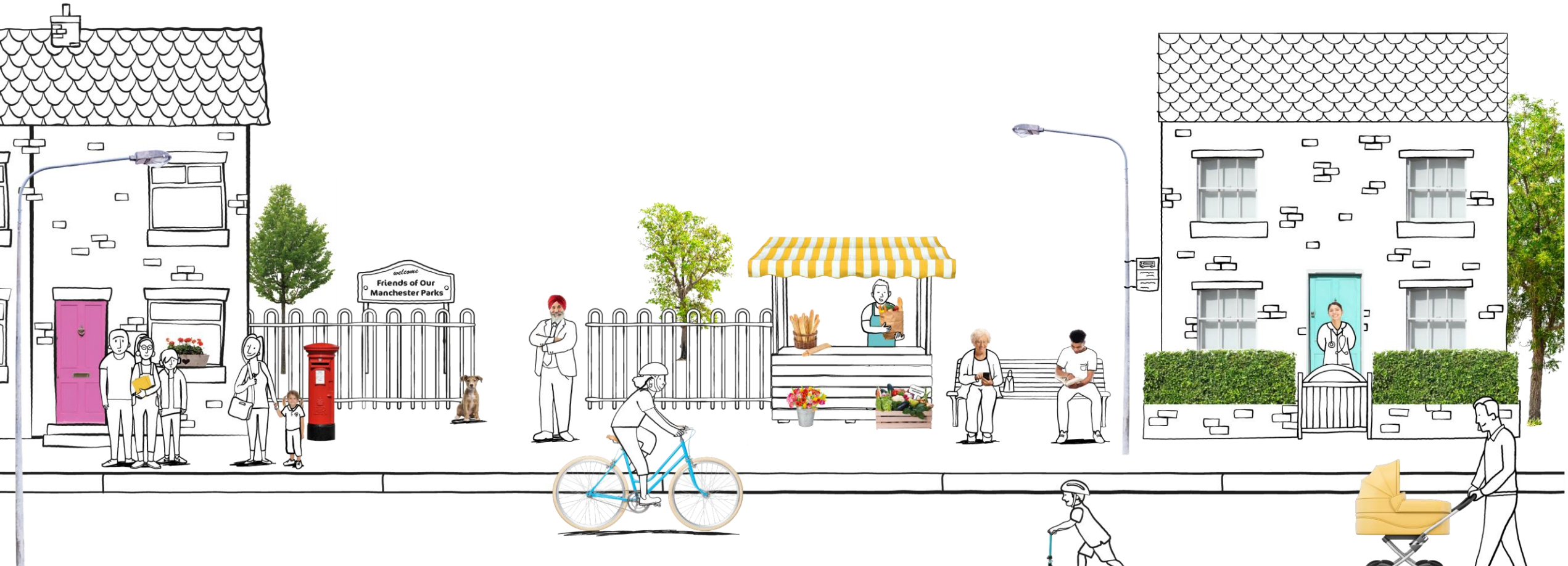
Our Manchester, Our Children

Our Child Friendly Manchester

SEND Parent Conference - 23rd June 2026



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National Ambitions for Children and Families

Best Start in Life

integrated and accessible health and family support through localised access through family hubs

10-Year Health Plan for England

ambitious reimagining of care with shift from treatment to prevention, from hospitals to neighbourhood, and from analogue systems to digital-first delivery

Family First Partnership Programme

transformation and rebalance of whole system approach to family help, support and protection so every family can access the right support at the right time

Education and Inclusion

access to high quality education

strengthening SEND support

Tackling child poverty

breaking the link between background and future success

National Framework Enablers for Multi-Agency Working

1. Children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need
2. Children and young people are supported by their family network
3. Children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes
4. Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving home

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Family First Ambition

All Manchester Children and their Families to:

thrive in the place they call home, with the people and things they love,

belong in inclusive communities that look out for them ,

feel secure, listened to and respected,

have access to support to do the things that matter most to their present and to their future.

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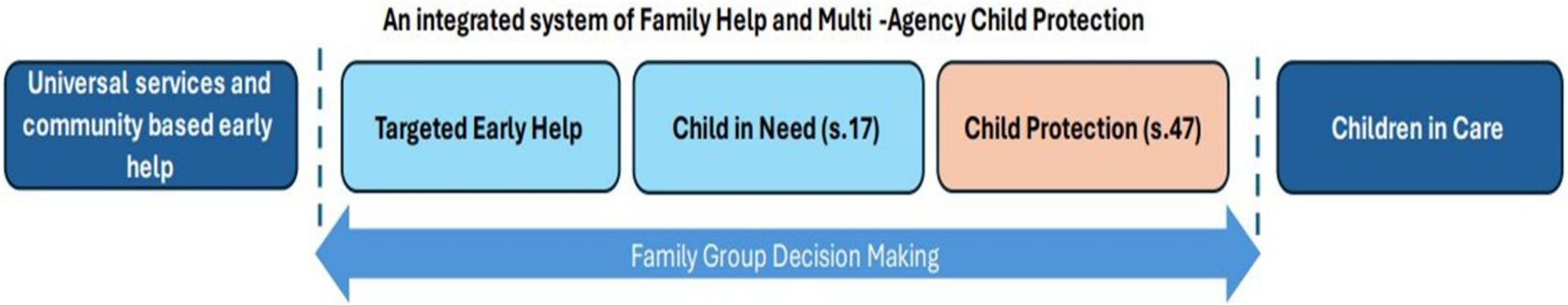
Families First Scope

Figure 1: Our vision for a reformed system



This is a reconfiguration to ensure that services wrap around families

An approach that tackle increased spending on statutory and acute services at the expense of investing in prevention

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Concilio et Labore - by wisdom and effort

- The Power of Why - we started as a partnership , collectively re-affirming our common sense of purpose with a focus on why we do what we do, not just what we do and how we deliver this – this has driven our approach to reform, developing innovative ways of working building to unlock deep and lasting change

- Determination to drive this reform through the lens of the family, responding to personal insight and experience so that through this transformation we will deliver services that enable children and families to feel seen, helped and supported and not just served

- Reframed approach to family help, recognising families as the experts in their lives and encouraging creative solution focussed approaches

- Mature understanding of risk management that moves beyond a fear of failure, seeing risk and opportunity as inextricably linked, not simply an avoidable burden to be minimised at all costs

What we have learnt to Date

- The ambition is not necessarily new – what needs to be different is the depth at which we plant it
- Change will be only be embedded when we remain true to our purpose and invest in our relational capability, personal insight and measure our success through meaning and emotional impact not simply throughput
- When families are recognised in ways that affirm their worth, we will have services that people want to be part of
- That our approach to reform needs to be grounded in the belief that neighbourhoods and communities have significant strengths that can be unlocked with the right supports

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Test and Learn 'Sprints' in South Locality

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1. **Reducing '*Hand Offs*'**
   Creating better conditions for relational practice

2. **Parental engagement in Strategy Discussions**
   Nothing about me, without me

3. **Family Network Support Plans (FNSP)**
   Supporting families at point of high need

4. **Family Group Decision making in Education**
   Using all the family's key resources

5. **Single Assessment and Family Plan**
   Designed with families to better reflect the support they need

1. Reducing ‘Hand Offs’

What we are doing:

- Implementation and design of new allocation system to create conditions for relational practice
- Integrating targeted Early Help practitioners into teams to develop the Family Help model
- Utilising existing family resource of Thriving Families at point of entry

Intended Impact:

- Improve continuity of relationships for families
- Create earlier, more joined-up and relational support
- Strengthen decision making at the point of entry
- Testing integrated working between alternatively qualified staff and Social Work teams

Next Steps:

- Evaluate Family Help model
- Seek families feedback about new ways of working
- Testing earlier shared decision making at the point of referral

2. Parental Engagement in Strategy Discussions

What we are doing:

- Invited parents to MFH and ROTH strategy discussions to improve openness and shared understanding while keeping children safe
- Prepared and supported parents before and after meetings
- Managed confidentiality appropriately, including use of professional-only discussions
- Supported professionals to share information sensitively and communicate clearly with partners

Impact:

- Parents are more involved in safety planning from the outset, with no delays and confusion about risks and exchange of information
- Improved parental understanding of concerns

Next Steps:

- Extend this approach to other areas of risk within strategy discussions
- Eventual inclusion in all Strategy Meetings

3. Family Network Support Plans

What we doing:

- Created an enhanced support offer to prevent admission to care through urgent family group decision making and Family Network Support Plans
- Coordinated immediate response from the FGC team, Kinship Team and Social Work team
- Tested eligibility for children aged 0–16

Impact:

- 10 families (13 children) supported to date
- 4 immediate accommodation requests avoided admission through urgent response, FGDM and FNSP
- 5 families from legal gateway and pre-proceedings supported to prevent further escalation
- 1 family in care proceedings avoided foster care, with SGO with kinship carers as an exit option if children do not return home

Next Steps:

- Continue targeting eligible families with urgent FGDM and FNSP support
- Review outcomes for children in legal gateway, pre-proceedings and care proceedings

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4. Family Group Decision Making in Education

What we are doing:

- Exploring wider family networks to support educational needs and wellbeing for children
- Targeting educational-based concerns – ie attendance, behaviour and building teams around children in school settings

Intended Impact:

- Preventative support for children and families within school settings and increased attendance
- To empower children, their wider family and their support networks to play an active role in decision making and keeping children safe in school settings
- Schools being able to offer the support and intervention at the right time for children
- Reduce need for escalation and referral to additional services

Next Steps:

- Gather feedback from schools and families to explore impact and agree future development
- Review examples of implementation across the network and develop bank of resources to utilise
- Identify learning and good practice to share and scale up across the partnership

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5. Single Assessment and Family Plan

What we are doing:

- **Bringing together Early Help and Child & Family Assessments**, including key messages, guidance, and legislative context
- **Targeted feedback** and consultation
- Emphasis on **family-owned and co-produced** approaches
- Identification of **key enablers**

Intended Impact:

- The single assessment and plan is designed to **replace fragmented, service-led processes with a unified, family-centred, multi-agency approach**, leading to **better experiences and better outcomes** while using resources more effectively.

Next Steps:

- Launch of an interim Single Assessment and Family Plan in June within South Locality Family Help test and learn
- Full implementation of the Family Help Assessment and Plan scheduled within scale up of Family Help across localities

Our Commitment to 2028

Fewer Children in Care	**Reduction by 1/3**
Reframed Approach to Risk	Shift of focus to risk management to risk awareness and family involvement.
Family Help Embedded in Communities	Family Hubs, acting as anchor points in local communities.
Reduced Child Protection Interventions	Fewer children experience periods of child protection
Social Inclusion, Anti-Poverty Strategy	Strengthened social inclusion and addressing the impact of poverty
Strong Relational Practice	Children and families respected as experts in their own lives with services working alongside them for as long as needed