

Briefing Paper: Families First – Key Messages for Partners

Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)

Date: May 2026

Audience: Statutory and relevant safeguarding partners across education, local authority services, health, police, voluntary and community sector

Purpose of this Briefing

This briefing provides an update for the Executive and wider safeguarding partners on progress towards the introduction of Families First in Newcastle. It summarises current position, key decisions, and what partners need to know as we move towards implementation.

Context and Rationale

Families First is Newcastle's approach to strengthening early help and family support, improving continuity for children and families, and aligning local practice with recent national reforms. The programme involves changes to service structures, workforce, systems, and ways of working, all designed to reduce fragmentation and ensure support is proportionate and timely.

Following early implementation planning, a decision was taken to move the implementation date to Monday 29 June 2026. This was to allow sufficient time for recruitment into new and revised roles, completion of system changes, and preparation of the workforce, with the aim of minimising disruption and safeguarding risk.

What This Means in Practice

- The Families First Partnership will formally **go live on 29 June 2026**. This date now underpins workforce, service, and system planning.
- Recruitment into key posts is underway, with appointments expected to be completed ahead of implementation to strengthen capacity and stability.
- Service structures and team arrangements are being finalised, with confirmation expected around late April and early May.
- A managed transition is in place, including changes to how Child in Need cases move between services during the lead-in period to reduce duplication and uncertainty.
- Practice tools, including the Family Help assessment, are being finalised and tested, alongside a training plan to ensure staff understand expectations and thresholds before go-live.
- System changes are being progressed to align Eclipse with the new model, supported by targeted caseload review and tidy-up activity.

Key Messages for Partners

- Families First is progressing as planned, with a clear and agreed implementation date of 29 June 2026.
- The additional preparation time is intended to support safe implementation and reduce unintended impact on children and families.
- There is no change to statutory safeguarding responsibilities; existing safeguarding thresholds and duties remain in place throughout transition.
- Partners may begin to see changes in service names and pathways from go-live, as part of improving clarity and consistency for families. The Front Door will be renamed Children and Families Newcastle Connect (CFN Connect) and the new Multi Agency Child Protection Team will be Children and Families Newcastle Protect (CFN Protect). The renaming of services will come into effect at the go-live date on 29th June.
- Clear communications for families and professionals are in development and will be shared ahead of implementation.

Engagement and Next Steps

- Regular updates and information from Children's Social Care will continue as part of implementation readiness.
- Feedback from consultation activity is being considered and reflected in final arrangements.
- Further partner communications will be shared before go-live, including clarity on pathways and contacts.
- Partners are encouraged to raise queries early to support shared readiness and assurance.