



## **Families First – Managing the Reduction in Budget: 2016-17**

### **Introduction and Context**

Monmouthshire County Council Families First Programme allocation for 2105-16 was £737,260 (inclusive of £50,937 for the support of families with disabled children and young people). This is the same amount as received for the previous financial year.

In December we received notification that our indicative budget for 2016-17 is £651,179, which is a £86,081 reduction in Families First funding. This includes the continued ring-fencing of £50,937 for disability support.

It is important to note that this is the final year of Families First funding. The programme runs until March 2017 and there is no guarantee that the funding will continue. If Families First funding does continue beyond 2017, we anticipate a further reduction in budget. Therefore, it is necessary that we use this final year to ensure that we have a sustainable Families First model beyond March 2017.

Welsh Government Communities and Tackling Poverty Division have recently outlined their intention to introduce flexibility across Communities First, Flying Start, Families First and Supporting People and highlighted the potential for joint commissioning of projects. Consequently, mapping existing provision across a range of funding streams will be important to the Authority as we further develop a joined up approach to strategic commissioning.

Bringing the tackling poverty programmes together is a key objective for the Division and Team around the Family (TAF) is being championed as the mechanism for identifying the needs of the individual and brokering appropriate provision.

### **Team around the Family (TAF)**

TAF is an integral element of Families First and is underpinned by an assessment of the needs of the family, a family action plan and co-ordinated support via a multi-agency approach. The TAF lead worker role is pivotal to this approach. Welsh Government has advised that we should prioritise the TAF model and continue to ensure multi-agency working remains an integral feature of Families First.

In Monmouthshire, we have a smaller proportion of the Families First budget allocated to TAF delivery in comparison to other local authorities. We have a small TAF team consisting of one co-ordinator and two project officers (one of which is an unfilled vacancy following our decision to appoint an additional TAF Project Officer from unallocated funds this year). We took this decision knowing that we would need to allocate an additional £9,000 from 2016-17 budget to fund the role.

Our model relies on multi-agency panels (at each of our secondary schools and at Acorn Centre) to identify 'volunteer' TAF lead workers who have capacity to take on the assessment and co-ordinating role for families who require multi-agency support. The panels also make referrals direct to Families First Projects.

## **Families First Funded Projects**

Families First Projects receive the majority of their referrals from partner agencies. At Quarter 3; 974 individuals had accessed Families First commissioned projects and 49 families were referred for TAF support.

82% of the Families First budget is currently allocated to commission projects that deliver preventative services (please refer to Current Provision 2015-16 on page 3). A half year review was undertaken with TAF and each project during November. During this process, actions were agreed with projects where improvements or changes are sought. In some instances discussions were held in relation to reducing the project's reliance on Families First funding.

## **Families First Priorities 2016-17**

During our review of our model, the main areas where need to improve are; the effectiveness of early intervention panels and the need to increase the number of TAF referrals. These two areas are integral our key priorities for 2016-17:

1. Increase our lead worker capacity to take on more TAF cases
2. Better support to partners and volunteer lead workers to develop greater confidence and consistency
3. Review and improve the effectiveness of Early Intervention Panels
4. Update our operational procedures in relation to referral, assessment, caseload review and recording distance travelled.
5. Develop a TAF module in PLANT Management Information Database (used by Social Services).
6. Further develop protocols with Children Social Services to ensure robust step-up and step-down arrangements.
7. Continue to work with commissioned projects to improve evaluation and impact measurement, along with the development of a shared referral form and distance travelled tool.

Another important consideration is the Social Services and Wellbeing Act which is likely to result in an increase in Children in Need being referred to Families First and TAF. So in this context, we face the challenge of managing the £86,081 reduction in Families First budget whilst finding additional savings to fund additional TAF worker resource. This paper aims to outline proposals for the allocation of Families First budget 2016-17, to ensure a sustainable model beyond 2017.

## Current Provision 2015-16

Project	Description	Budget
<b>FF Management and TAF</b>	Families First Programme Manager TAF Co-ordinator 2 x TAF Project Officers (incl. 1 x vacancy)* <i>*Vacancy agreed in November will require additional £9,000 for 2016-17</i>	134,771
<b>Acorn</b>	Multi-agency teams delivering parenting support, adult learning and advice, early years support (language and play and speech therapy), health and well-being services. Co-ordinated from Acorn Centre (Integrated Children's Centre) in Abergavenny, also delivered in other cluster locations.	£304,154  (Plus Inclusive Acorn below)
<b>Wait, Watch and Wonder</b>	Infant Mental Health project focussing on the quality of the relationship between parents and babies. Clinics held in the north and south of the county and on-going training in infant observation for all 0-3 TAF workers.	£21,500
<b>Face 2 Face Counselling</b>	Provides community based counselling for young people, school based counselling via therapeutic play for children and family system therapy for whole family groups.	£88,601
<b>Young Carers</b>	Young Carers are supported through targeted intervention (advocacy and support) to reduce gaps between themselves and universal cohorts of young people / and are supported to engage in education, employment or training.	£64,647
<b>School Family Support</b>	Social Inclusion Project Workers support primary and secondary pupils in terms of educational attainment and attendance. Work with family as well as the child, links to other agencies, explores underlying issues and takes pressure off Head teachers.	£32,650
<b>Families Matter (Home Start)</b>	Works to alleviate the pressures faced by families with low incomes and children under five by placing highly motivated/skilled volunteers who are usually parents themselves in to support them.	£40,000
<b>Disability Element</b>		
<b>Inclusive Acorn Project</b>	Supports children with disabilities to access the Acorn Project including working with portage workers, paediatricians, parenting programmes, visits and childcare. Provides a Child Development Crèche.	£25,843
<b>Inclusive Play and Leisure</b>	Enables access for children with support needs to access local authority play provisions in the summer holidays.	£20,037
<b>Inclusive Pre-School Play Project</b>	Enables access for children with support needs to pre-school play provision.	£5,057
Total		737,260

## Recommendations

### Families First Management and TAF

#### Recruitment of Additional Team around the Family (TAF) Project Officer

The recruitment of an additional TAF Project Officer will enable us to provide enhanced support to volunteer lead workers whilst increasing our capacity to take on more TAF cases. It will also enable the TAF Co-ordinator to focus on the implementation of our TAF priorities 2016-17.

Quarter 3 data shows that large numbers of individuals (974) have accessed Families First Projects and a smaller number of families (49) have received TAF support. However, the intention behind Families First and TAF is to develop a holistic approach which engages with the family, identifies their needs via an initial assessment and identify which agencies or projects can support the family to address their needs in a co-ordinated fashion. The TAF lead worker is integral in undertaking the assessment, agreeing support needs with the family, co-ordinating support and reviewing progress with the family and service providers. TAF Outcomes using Welsh Government's Outcomes Tool and reported annually.

Our volunteer model relies on partner agencies to take on the TAF lead worker role. However, busy professionals, whilst being committed to the multi-agency approach, don't always have the time to pick up lead worker caseloads to the extent which is required. Consequently, the number of families supported by TAF are low, our small TAF team is struggling to meet the demand and more families are receiving support outside of TAF.

Our main concern in relation to the current trends is that families are receiving support but in an uncoordinated manner, being passed between projects when work is completed. Consequently, families are missing out on holistic and co-ordinated support resulting in less robust outcome data (since WG reporting templates focus primarily on TAF Outcomes).

#### Quarter 3 2015-16 - Performance Data:

974 individuals accessing Families First commissioned projects  
49 families referred for TAF support

By facilitating a more effective TAF model in Monmouthshire, it is our intention that more families will be provided with a coordinated, structured support plan which will deliver appropriate support at the appropriate time. This will result in better co-ordinated services to support families and facilitate a greater understand how their service links with others across Monmouthshire.

Consequently, the need to increase our lead worker capacity has been the most pressing issue for Families First during 2015-16. In November, we took the decision to recruit an additional TAF Project Officer so we currently have 1 full-time vacancy. Whilst reviewing the finances in November, we identified the need to re-allocate £9,000 of the 2016-17 budget to fund this role.

#### Recommendation 2016-17: Increase allocation by £50,761

- Allocate funding to recruit an additional TAF worker in readiness for 2016-17. The two full-time vacancies will be ring-fenced for colleagues 'at risk of redundancy' in the first instance.
- The TAF Support Workers will carry a caseload whilst enhanced support to volunteer lead workers.

- This would increase the number of families supported under the JAFF project to 160. (71 families were supported within the financial year 2014-2015 / Quarter 3 2015-16: 49 families)
- It will also enable the TAF Co-ordinator to develop the strategic partnerships, implement the marketing strategy and update our operational procedures in relation to referral, assessment, caseload review and recording distance travelled.

## **Families First Projects**

### **School Family Support**

**(Richard Austin)**

**Funding 2015-16: £32,650**

School Family Support provides support to primary and secondary pupils in terms of educational attendance and attainment. Families First funding is used to employ a social inclusion project worker. The young people supported by the project generally present with engagement issues, are at risk of exclusion and some are vulnerable. Consequently, the project works with small numbers of young people (15-20 annually) who stay on caseload for a relatively long periods.

#### **Evaluation Data (SIP Quarter 2):**

12 pupils supported by the project  
 91.7% of pupils referred to the project engaged  
 58.3% of pupils arrested the decline in attendance  
 50% of pupils met their individual academic targets

As this work is an integral part of the Inclusion and Education Welfare team, it is felt that this work should receive core funding or be funded via other streams. The project has been unable to take on TAF cases and discussions have been held with the Project Manager, during which the possibility of de-commissioning the project has been raised

#### **Recommendation 2016-17:** De-commission project.

- The Project Manager is confident that he can secure funding (Aspire to Achieve) to fulfil this work from April 2016.
- However, should the project worker (who becomes 'at risk' of redundancy) not be re-deployed within the Social Inclusion team, she would be eligible for consideration for the ring-fenced TAF Project Officer vacancies.
- To minimise the impact of decommissioning the project, the Families First Programme Manager will work with the Social Inclusion Team to ensure we receive appropriate referrals for early intervention TAF support.

**Acorn**

**(Clair Evans)**

**Funding 2015-16: £304,154**

Acorn is an integral part of the Families First prevented provision which focuses on evidence-based parenting programmes and language, play programmes (not evidence-based) and childcare which enables parents to attend the sessions. Acorn receives over 45% of the FF budget (incl. Wait, Watch and Wonder and Inclusive Acorn). Consequently, it will be necessary for the project to submit a new delivery plan for 2016-17 reflecting a reduced budget.

**Quarter 3 2015-16 - Performance data:**

329 individuals have accessed the project

Over 3,000 client sessions delivered

131 cases closed. 69% with positive outcomes

**Main Referring Agencies:**

Health Visitors (179), Self-Referral (29), Other Primary Care (22), Children's Social Services (15), Schools (15), Families First Projects (12).

**Evaluation Data (SIP Quarter 2):**

86% of parents report an improvement in parenting skills / confidence as parent

100% improvement in child's development

92% report that they are supported to access services

78% improvement in their health and well-being

**Recommendation:**

Reduce allocation by £64,368 to £239,786

- Priority should be given to the evidence-based parenting programmes
- Acorn should continue to be a pan-county provision during 2016-17
- The FF Programme Manager will work with the Acorn Project Manager to agree performance targets for 2016-17.
- It is likely that the reduction in budget will result in the loss of 1 FTE support workers and a reduction in the childcare element of the project costs. Employees at risk of redundancy will be eligible for consideration for the ring-fenced TAF Project Officer vacancies.
- The FF Programme Manager has held discussions with the Acorn Project Manager to identify alternative sources of funding. For example, there may be the opportunity to develop programmes in conjunction with the social housing sector and / or Supporting People.

**Wait, Watch and Wonder (Aideen Naughton) Funding 2016-17: £21,500**

Wait, Watch and Wonder is a much-valued project which provides Infant Mental Health support focussing on the quality of the relationship between parents and babies.

The project receives referrals from Health Visitors, GPS, Primary Mental Health Workers, Social Workers, Acorn Project and Flying Start staff. Presenting concerns can be loosely classified as parental or child-based. During 2014-15, 41 people were supported.

- Parental concerns: mood disorder, low self-esteem, post-natal depression, antenatal concerns relating to early adverse childhood experiences / previous post-natal depression, history of domestic, alcohol or substance abuse. Relationship difficulties and lack of support from family members are seen in approximately 30%.
- Child based concerns include themes around relationship with baby or toddler (failing to bond and attach / feeling persecuted by the baby / issues of routine and control / or a belief that there is a physical or neurological problem with the infant or toddler.

**Evaluation Data (SIP Quarter 2):**

6 Families supported  
100% mothers showed significant improvement in their reflective function  
100% showed trend towards improvement in parenting stress

**Recommendation 2016-17:** Reduce allocation by £4,500 to £17,000

- The £4,500 is the cost of the Health Visitor who co-delivers sessions – previously provided by ABHB.
- The Project has agreed with Flying Start that they will Health Visitor time to Wait, Watch and Wonder from April onwards so there will be no adverse effects on the project.

**F2F Counselling****(Sarah Rogers)****Funding 2016-17: £88,601**

Provides community based counselling for young people, school based counselling via therapeutic play for children and family system therapy for whole family groups. F2F Counselling is an integral part of early intervention provision in Monmouthshire.

**Quarter 3 2015-16 - Performance data:**

195 individuals accessing the project  
102 one-to-one counselling  
35 Family Group Counselling

**Main Referring Agencies:**

GPs (41), Other Primary Services (27), Schools (25), Families First Projects (14), Youth Service / YOS (7), Self-Referral (7), Children's Social Services (3)\*

*\*Q2 and 3 data only*

**Evaluation Data (SIP Quarter 2):**

Family Well-being Questionnaire completed by families on completion of programme: Shows an average improvement from 25 to 15 - A significant improvement in well-being.

Young People CORE Outcome Measure: Average initial score of 24 compared to an average current score / score on leaving of 10. Indicating a significant improvement in well-being.

During a recent half year review (October 2015) we looked at the key areas that the programme should develop:

- Review waiting lists to ensure prioritisation of those who meet the eligibility criteria.
- Consider barriers to accessing the service i.e. location, transport, awareness and confidence.
- Further develop links with TAF and FF projects to ensure appropriate referrals.
- Consider what youth service support could be provided to support young people to take up the offer of counselling once it has been identified as a need.
- Review data and investigate trends in relation to leaver outcomes
  - Reduce the number of clients who fail to engage or opt-out of counselling
  - Increase the number and proportion of cases closed with a successful outcome.

**Recommendation 2016-17:** Reduce allocation by £12,041 to 76,560



Young Carers are supported through targeted intervention (advocacy and support) to reduce gaps between themselves and universal cohorts of young people / and are supported to engage in education, employment or training.

**Quarter 3 2015-16 - Performance data:**

187 individuals accessing the project (*\*currently being verified*)

**Main Referring Agencies:**

Schools (19), Children's Social Services (12), Self-Referral (7), Health Visitors (2) *\* most recent referrals*

**Evaluation Data (SIP Quarter 2): Outcomes - Attitudes towards Education, Employment and Training**

31 service reviews have been completed.

9 leavers, of these: 44% reported no change, 33% increase and 22% decrease.

22 remaining on project, of these: 14% increase, 45% no change and 35% decrease.

The majority of young carers on the programme currently remain on caseload for long periods. Consequently, referral and outcome data is not currently available in sufficient detail. The project is an integral part of the Families First Programme and during a recent half year review the project has been requested to undertake a review of its delivery model to ensure the provision of appropriate services which links with core services effectively.

**Half Year Review Action:** The project would benefit from reviewing its model to ensure:

- Appropriate diagnosis of need (a) the young carers and (b) the family where it is appropriate to refer to Carers Trust, Social Services / alternative sources of support.
- TAF is a central consideration in meeting the needs of young people and their families.
- Time-bound model(s) of delivery to meet the needs of the individual young carer.
- An appropriate balance where residential weekends play a role but not at the expense of assessment, advocacy, mentoring and support.
- A clear process for reviewing and reporting on the progress of individual young carers.
- Close links with other services to ensure young carers have equality of access to mainstream services and to avoid duplication.
- Clear measurement of the distance travelled by young carers which demonstrates the impact of the service. For example:
  - Distance travelled against the issues presented at initial assessment
  - Impact on attendance, qualifications and progression routes
  - Meeting Families First programme objectives
  - Access to mainstream services via referral to partner agencies

**Recommendation 2016-17:** Reduce allocation by £14,161 to £50,486

- This is likely to result in the reduction of staffing levels in the project. They currently have a vacancy for a Project Officer (26 hours).
- The proposed funding will protect the current Project Manager / School liaison posts and, coupled with the more targeted approach outlined below, will ensure the delivery of an effective Young Carers Programme.
- Young Carers also receive £15,000 from Bernard Boniface (Carers Funds) which currently funds leisure and respite activities.
- Young Carers have recently secured £43,000 funding for an Adult Young Carers Project.

**Home Start****(Pam Lloyd)****Funding 2015-16: £40,000**

Home Start works to alleviate the pressures faced by families with low incomes and children under five by placing highly motivated/skilled volunteers who are usually parents themselves in to support them.

**Quarter 3 2015-16 - Performance data:**

114 individuals accessing the project

25 new families accessing the project

**Main Referring Agencies:**

Health Visitors (9), Children's Social Services (5), Self-Referral (5), CAMHS (2), Other Primary Services (2), Adult Social Services (1).

**Evaluation Outcomes Reported 2014-15:**

- 33 indicated that they needed support with parenting skills
- 67 with their own well-being and isolation
- 19 with their children's well-being
- 45 with family management skills

Home Start provides good outcomes with the families it supports and as part of the Half Year Review we have discussed a number of areas for development relating to evaluation and impact measurement. As a small third sector organisation Families First funding is particularly important to Home Start. A reduction in budget above the recommended £9,000 might place the charity in difficulty. However, the organisation is aware that it needs to reduce its reliance on Families First funding.

**Recommendation 2016-17:** Reduce allocation by £9,000 to £31,000

## **Families First Disability / Additional Needs Focus**

This includes a minimum of £50,937 ring-fenced for the support of families with disabled children and young people.

### **Inclusive Pre-school (Sue Hall) Funding 2015-16: £5,057**

Inclusive Pre-school project provides support to children to enable them to access Monmouthshire County Council provision. Families First funding is a small contribution to its budget and we have been advised by Welsh Government's Families First Account Manager that they do not favour small-scale projects.

#### **Evaluation Data (SIP Quarter 2):**

7 children supported to attend childcare

322 hours of support provided

100% of parents who completed an evaluation reported that their child had made progress

**Recommendation 2016-17:** De-commission project.

### **Inclusive Play and Leisure Richard Simpkins Funding 2015-16: £20,037**

During 2015-16, the funding is used in quarter 2 to provide access to local authority play provisions in the summer holidays to children with support needs. 62 children with support needs attended the play schemes which amounted to 2117 client sessions.

The children attending the play schemes benefitted from a supportive environment, a varied programme and the opportunity to integrate with other children.

Monmouthshire County Council is currently reviewing its play and leisure provision. Providing access to the new provision for children with additional needs will be a key consideration of the new model. We propose we ring-fence the Inclusive Play and Leisure allocation pending proposals for disability play and leisure for 2016-17.

**Recommendation 2016-17:** Maintain allocation of £20,037

### **Inclusive Acorn (Clair Evans) Funding 2015-16: £25,843**

Supports children with disabilities to access the Acorn Project including working with portage workers, paediatricians, parenting programmes, visits and childcare. Provides a Child Development Crèche. All Referrals are from Health Visitors.

#### **Quarter 3 2015-16 - Performance data:**

22 children accessing the project (8 with ALN / Disability; 14 with Developmental Delay).

#### **Evaluation Data (SIP Quarter 2):** Of the 9 children who left the project:

100% of parents report an improvement in parenting skills / confidence as parent

100% improvement in child's development

100% report that they are supported to access services

**Recommendation 2016-17:** Increase allocation by £5,157 to £30,900.

## Summary of Recommendations: 2016-17

Project 14-15	Recommendation	Variance	Budget 16-17
<b>FF Management and TAF</b> 142,935	Families First Programme Manager TAF Co-ordinator 3 x TAF Project Officers (incl. 2 x vacancy)	(+ 50,761)	<b>185,410</b>
<b>Acorn</b> 304,154	Reduce by 21%	(- 64,368)	239,786
<b>Wait, Watch and Wonder</b> 21,500	Reduce by 21%	(-4,500)	17,000
<b>Face 2 Face Counselling</b> 88,601	Reduce by 13.5%	(-12,041)	76,560
<b>Young Carers</b> 64,647	Reduce by 22%	(-14,161)	50,486
<b>School Family Support</b> <b>32,650</b>	<b>De-commission Project</b>	<b>(-32,650)</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Home Start</b> 40,000	Reduce by 22.5%	(-9,000)	31,000
<b>Disability Element</b>			<b>50,937</b>
Inclusive Acorn Project	Increase	(+5,057)	30,900
Inclusive Play and Leisure	Pending Play Review Proposals		20,037
<b>Inclusive Pre-School Play Project</b>	<b>De-commission project</b>	<b>(-5,057)</b>	<b>Nil</b>
Total			651,179