

Think Family Pathfinders

Research Update



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Think Family Pathfinders – Research Update

This is the first in a series of updates from the Think Family Pathfinders Evaluation.

This update provides:

- background information on Family Pathfinders' Programme;
- an overview of families the Pathfinders are working with, their needs and levels of risk;
- the models of delivery that have been adopted and common approaches to delivery;
- examples of the new ways of working with families at risk of poor outcomes;
- emerging evidence of impact.

Children experiencing very poor outcomes often come from families who face multiple and complex problems, such as poverty, domestic abuse, poor mental health, substance misuse. Co-ordinated, multi-agency interventions can be a cost-effective way of improving outcomes for both the children and adults within these families, whilst reducing the burdens they often place on a large number of local services and, potentially, the care system.

The £16m Family Pathfinder Programme, announced in the Children's Plan (2007), aims to test and develop the 'Think Family'

model, which was set out in the Cabinet Office's Report 'Think Family: Improving the Life Chances of Families at Risk'¹. In addition to the core Family Pathfinder model, six local authority (LA) areas, 'Extended Family Pathfinders'², are extending their work to include systems and support services to address the needs of families with young carers.

The emerging findings of this programme provide practical examples of how local authorities from across the country are restructuring service provision and developing new working practices in response to the challenges of improving outcomes for these families.

The report is of particular relevance to senior managers and commissioners seeking more effective and cost-effective models for delivery. It also provides practical examples of how local arrangements have been established between a wider range of children's and adult services reflecting the new duties set out in the **new statutory Children's Trust Guidance and Children and Young People's Plan Regulations** published in November 2009 and due to come into force on 1 April 2010. The findings will also be of value to LAs considering Total Place style approaches to turning around the lives of vulnerable families in their area.

¹ The Pathfinders are: Blackpool, Bolton, Brighton and Hove, Durham, Gateshead, Islington, Leeds, Salford, Somerset, Southampton, Southend, Sunderland, Walsall, Warrington and Westminster.

² The Extended Pathfinders are: Bolton, Gateshead, Islington, Leeds, Somerset and Sunderland.

Think Family Pathfinders Evaluation: Aims and Objectives

In 2008, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) commissioned York Consulting LLP to undertake a three-year evaluation of the Family Pathfinders.

The evaluation has three broad aims:

Aim 1: Process: to describe and assess the effectiveness of structural and service delivery changes in improving services for families at risk, i.e. assessing performance of Pathfinders; identifying best practice and the extent to which each local model is sustainable and can be mainstreamed.

Aim 2: Outcomes: to measure improvements in outcomes for families at risk and explain the key system and service changes which have led to the improvements; measure the effect of system changes implemented as part of the Pathfinder or service interventions on improving outcomes; and measure and collect user perspectives on impact.

Aim 3: Economic evaluation to assess the costs and benefits to the public sector of implementing each Pathfinder; and estimate the monetary value of the change in long-term well-being, resulting from improved outcomes for families at risk in the Pathfinder areas.

Background to Think Family Pathfinders and the Think Family Approach

Under funding provided as part of the Youth Crime Action Plan every Local Authority is now being provided with funding to implement Think Family services and system reforms.

Fifteen Pathfinders are leading the implementation of Think Family, bringing together tailored services and systems reform to ensure that families at risk receive a whole family package of support. A key component of their work is bringing together adult and children's services. The Pathfinders are intended to reach the most vulnerable families currently not being helped by services, as well as carry out more preventative work aimed at those whose situation may escalate without preventative support. The approaches are building on the successes of existing whole family approaches, such as Family Intervention

Projects (FIPs). 'Families at risk' is a shorthand term for families who face multiple and complex problems. Local areas are expected to target families who are, or are at risk of, experiencing multiple risks, which are resulting in poor outcomes for children and families.

The overriding priority for the six Extended Family Pathfinders is to develop and test more effective forms of support around the person cared for and the family as a whole to prevent inappropriate caring from a young person. There are a further 12 new, two-year, Young Carer Pathfinders which started in November 2009³.

The next stage of the evaluation is focusing on providing further evidence of changes to working practices and how these changes are impacting on outcomes for families. We are planning to provide a series of thematic updates over the next 12 months. The next update will focus on whole family assessment models being developed by the Pathfinders.

³ The new Young Carer Pathfinders are Blackburn with Darwen, Cornwall, Hartlepool, Hull, Luton, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Norfolk, Reading, Suffolk, Telford and Wrekin and Wigan

Overview of the evaluation

Key Stage 1: Planning and Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Steering groups● Project management● Attendance at, and contribution to, events
Key Stage 2: Delivery Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Pathfinder consultations (strategic and operational)● On-line surveys
Key Stage 3: Family Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Family Pathfinder Information System (FPIS)● Family Assessment Device (FAD)● Family follow-up
Key Stage 3: Economic Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Theory of change workshops● Identification and estimate of costs, outcomes & benefits● Social Return on Investment (SROI)

Progress to date

Evaluation activity to date has focused on:

Aim 1: Process – developing a detailed understanding of the delivery models established by each of the Pathfinders. We are currently developing an online survey to assess wider systems change.

Aim 2: Family impact – an online Family Pathfinder Information System has been developed (FPIS) and tested with Pathfinders. We are also using the Family Assessment Device (FAD) to assess family functioning.

Aim 3: Economic Evaluation – initial consultations and theory of change workshops have been undertaken with relevant Pathfinders.

Addressing need

Family characteristics and risk factors

Pathfinders work with families with multiple and complex problems. Common risk factors include:

- substance misuse;
- mental health issues, particularly adult mental health;
- domestic violence;
- anti-social behaviour;
- housing issues;
- adult learning difficulties and disabilities;
- worklessness;
- school attendance and behaviour.

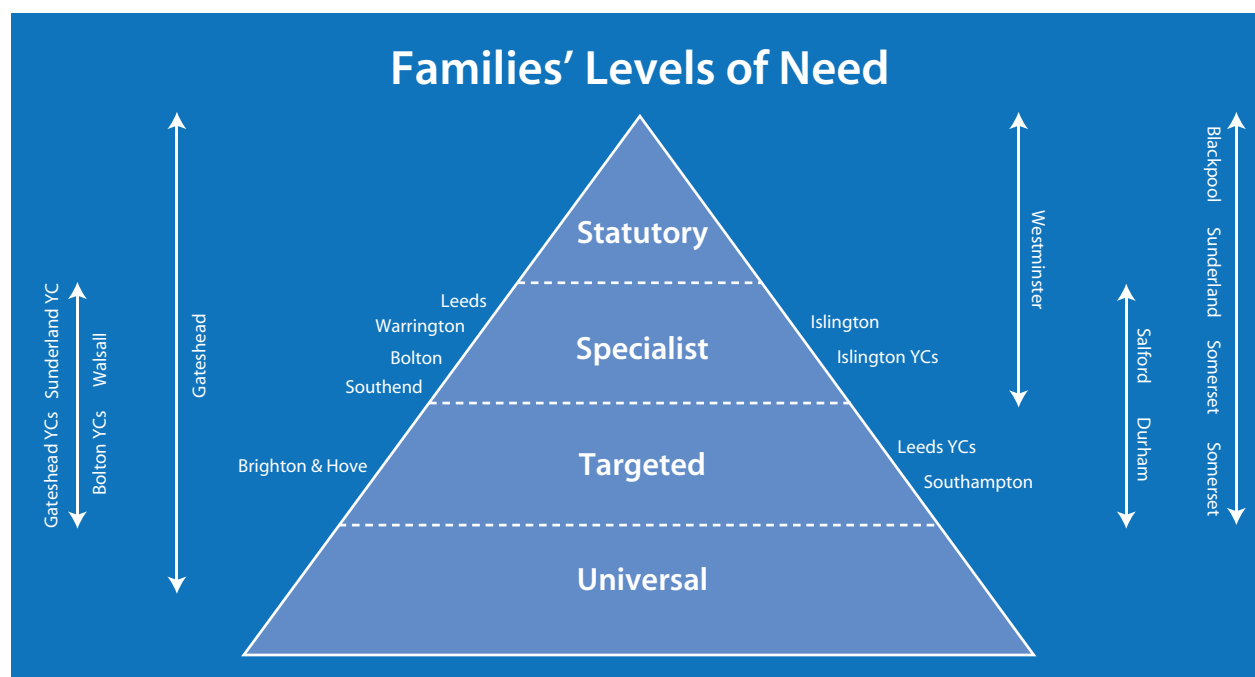
Pathfinders are working with families:

- **with high levels of need**, who are at risk of referral to statutory services. The aim is to try and prevent escalation of those needs so families do not meet the thresholds for statutory intervention. In particular, the Pathfinders are trying to address the needs

of those families who 'yo yo' in and out of statutory services. A number of Pathfinders are working with families with higher levels of need than they at first anticipated.

- **where existing interventions have been unsuccessful**, or families have refused to engage.
- **who fall below existing thresholds for intervention**, e.g. adult mental health and social care: *'If it's child protection everyone knows what to do, everyone is round the table and there is a whole family approach. But below that there's a problem and people don't engage with each other. That's where we now want to focus' (Pathfinder Manager).*

The diagram below provides an overview of the families Pathfinders are working with and shows that they are predominantly working with families with high levels of need. Extended Pathfinders are working with families with lower levels of need/risk factors, or a greater range of need.



Models of delivery:

The three models

We have identified three generic aspects of delivery across the 15 Pathfinders. Most areas are delivering more than one of these models in their overall approach. All are focusing on systems change (i.e. changing local systems to improve integrated governance, strategy and processes, such as commissioning, assessment and information sharing):

- **Model 1: New practitioner-based delivery teams** were established in seven areas. In this model the Pathfinder has been used to establish a multi-disciplinary team with a specific remit to work in an 'assertive' and family focused way. Most of these multi-disciplinary teams have practitioners from both adult and children's services. The size of the teams varies from four to twenty (full-time equivalent) members of staff.
- **Model 2: Extension of a pre-existing and tested model of working** – four areas have focused most of their resources on adding practitioners and/or developing new ways of working within existing teams. Here LAs are using the Pathfinder to extend a model that has already been trialled, for example extension of a FIP model.
- **Model 3: Systems change** – three Pathfinders have focused their resources on appointing staff to embed systems change across the LA. These Pathfinders are focusing on developmental work to establish integrated working practice across adult and children's services, ensuring that all services take a 'Think Family' approach to delivery.

The **Extended Young Carers' Models of Delivery** reflect those of the main Pathfinders with a particular focus on:

- **systems change** (reflecting the need to raise awareness of young carers within both adult and children's services);

- **earlier intervention/prevention** (developing more preventative, family focused models of working); and
- **extending the remit** of existing young carers' provision to work with children and young people who previously did not meet their criteria for support.

Characteristics of delivery common to most areas

Assessment and Identification:

- use of **family based assessments**;
- a **consent based approach** to engaging families and use of family action plans, clearly outlining the roles and responsibilities of both family members and practitioners;
- **joint assessments and delivery** (adult services and children's services /referral agency and Pathfinder staff)

Nature of the support:

- **intensive, one-to-one support** /use of assertive key workers to provide support and draw in other specialist support;
- in some instances, **minimising the numbers of professionals involved** with a family at any one time, in order to improve family engagement by providing a more streamlined, planned and coherent package of support;
- **out of hours support**;
- **Team Around the Family (TAF)** approach providing a coordinated and integrated response to families' needs, which actively engages families in the process;
- use of **solution-focused approaches** related to family functioning and parenting support, including: Triple P; Webster Stratton; Family Group Conferencing; and solution focused therapy;

Additional Team

Extension of Existing Model

- **joint delivery**, for example families have an adult and children's lead professional working with them.

Staffing

Pathfinder staff have been drawn from a wide range of professional backgrounds, including:

- **social care**: social workers, family support workers;
- **health**: health visitors, adult mental health, family therapy, substance misuse, nursery nurses, psychologists;
- **antisocial behaviour and crime**: police, youth offending, probation, anti social behaviour unit, domestic violence;
- **welfare**: benefits advisors;
- **housing**: housing officers;
- **voluntary sector**: specialist support, including family support workers, Family Group Conferencing, and intensive outreach.

Data

- **Intelligent data/information systems** using data from a wide range of sources to develop family and intervention chronologies.

Challenges

Common challenges faced by Pathfinders, include:

Strategic level challenges

- **governance**: lack of clarity regarding the Pathfinder's strategic positioning within the LA and/or no senior leader or manager driving the development of the Pathfinder has slowed progress in some areas. Engaging all relevant adult and children's services has also been a challenge within some areas. In some LAs there is also a lack of clarity about where the Pathfinder sits alongside other parent and family support services.

- **extended tendering procedures** have resulted in significant delays in implementation within some Pathfinders;
- developing **data sharing protocols and systems** between adult and children's services. Existing data systems are not designed to support family-focused working. Accessing data on families continues to be a challenging and time consuming process;
- **too focused on children's services** as the policy is predominantly being led by DCSF. In a number of LAs (but by no means all) the Pathfinder is viewed as a children's services initiative with limited benefit to adult services;
- **lead in times**: the time it takes to embed systems change has been a challenge and the ability of Pathfinder staff to influence strategic and operational working at a LA level has also been challenging.

Operational level challenges

- **staffing issues**: key personnel on sick leave, and issues with staff recruitment and retention (at the managerial and practitioner level) have all impacted on delivery;
- different thresholds for accessing services across different services can lead to difficulties in constructing cross-service packages of support for families. The Pathfinders have been challenged in developing shared understandings of working practices and requirements (including risk thresholds) across adult and children's services;
- **assessment**: views on the suitability of existing assessment tools, such as the CAF, as the basis for a 'Think Family' assessment varied. The time required to undertake whole family assessments has been an issue for some Pathfinder teams.
- **lack of referrals from adult services**: despite spending time and resources on raising awareness some Pathfinder teams have had relatively few referrals from adult services.

Emerging practice

Information systems

The '**Information Desk**' developed by Westminster is designed to collect, analyse, and present (in a user friendly format) data on families for practitioners working within the Pathfinder. All practitioners who are members of the **Team Around the Family** (TAF) can access data held on the families they are working with via SharePoint.

After a family has been referred to the Pathfinder and once consent has been obtained from the family to work with the Pathfinder and share information, an information request is sent to all relevant agencies, including:

- **Police:** comprehensive police package includes offences and intelligence reports (using CRIMINS, PNC, Merlin etc).
- **Social services:** core and initial assessments, child protection information, case notes, visits etc.
- **Housing:** summary provided by landlord of type of property, tenants registered, any rent arrears, anti-social behaviour issues etc.
- **Youth Offending Team:** summary of current status, work undertaken, level of engagement.
- **Probation service:** if known to probation, details of probation worker, case status.
- **Immigration:** clarification of family members' current immigration status.
- **Schools:** attendance, attainment, behavioural information.
- **Health.**
- **Environmental health:** if the family are known to environmental health, if so, what the current status is. Can also request further environmental health involvement.
- **Young People's Services:** if a young person is engaged with young people's services, which ones, and details of key worker.

This information is used to develop a number of intelligence reports including:

- a **Family Network Chart:** similar to a family tree, it provides a visual representation of all family members and presenting issues e.g. rent arrears, mental health issues, domestic violence, offending issues, drug use, etc. The chart also helps highlight 'intelligence gaps' which can be explored further at TAF meetings;
- **Family Timeline** or visual chronology of intervention. All relevant information relating to individual family members, including issues and concerns, key family events, the support provided by agencies/services and practitioners' visits are recorded here.

Both of the above are used by practitioners at TAF meetings to agree strategies for family support etc. The charts and reports are updated by the Information Desk after each TAF meeting. The report presents a wide range of information in one easy to read package, with a summary for each family member that identifies:

- the **reasons for referral**;
- the **presenting issues**;
- any **intelligence gaps**; and
- also **recommendations** for further information gathering / queries that can be responded to at the meeting.

It also provides a **context for behaviour**, for example, a school exclusion could have occurred the day after a parent was arrested, and the report will show that relationship. It draws information from both LA agencies and external

agencies, such as the Immigration Service. The team have a contact within the Immigration Service who can quickly provide clarity on, for example, an immigration status. Having this accurate and up to date information allows the TAF to make safe, effective decisions on the basis of a broad range of intelligence.

Sharing Information

Accessing information from other services can be challenging. A *'Consent to Health Records'* form has been developed for the Durham Pathfinder service to use where they are seeking information from health services. The form will need to be completed for each member of the family and each family member who is competent will need to sign to give their consent. This form allows families to consent to health professionals sharing information (in the shape of reports rather than health records) with the Family Pathfinder team to inform their assessment process. Family members need to provide consent to share information for each relevant health area, including: general practitioner services, paediatric services, health visitor, school nurse, adult mental health services, CAMHS etc. The consent is valid for 12 months or until the Pathfinder team is no longer working with the family (if this is longer).

This form will be piloted in the Pathfinder teams to see if it facilitates information sharing with both adult and child health services and therefore can be replicated in other areas of the Children's Trust and other Think Family projects. The form will ensure that the Pathfinder has written evidence of consent from the family to access health records; if health providers

will not share information, even with this detailed written consent, then the matter would need to be escalated to the Children's Executive Board of the Children's Trust.

The Information Desk flowchart shows a cycle starting with 'Referral Received' leading to 'Consent Obtained', then 'Information requested'. This leads to 'Information Received', which is processed by 'SharePoint IT Expertise' and 'Analyst'. The process then branches into 'Products Updated' and 'Analytical Products'. 'Products Updated' leads to 'Updater sent to Info Desk', which then leads to 'Care Plan Signed / agreed by Families'. 'Analytical Products' leads to 'TAF Meeting Care Plan written / Updated', which then leads to 'Care Plan Signed / agreed by Families'. The central box includes 'SharePoint IT Expertise', 'Analyst', 'Caseworker', and 'Metropolitan Police'.

Information Desk - Family Network Chart shows two family units. Family A (Mother, Child 1, Child 2) is located at 10 Newton House, New Town Road. Family B (Mother, Child 1, Child 2, Child 3, Child 4) is located at 8 Westminster House, New Town Estate. The chart shows connections to 'New Town Nursery' and 'New Town School'. It also notes 'Seen Driving' and '3 door Salvo to be involved in drug dealing'.

Information Desk - Family Timeline shows a timeline from Friday 29th November 2006 to Saturday 13th January 2007. Key events include: 'Parents drug treatment programme' (01/12/2006), 'Family Meeting' (02/01/2007), 'Family Meeting to discuss drug treatment results of New Town Mother' (02/01/2007), 'Family Meeting to discuss drug treatment results of New Town Estate' (02/01/2007), 'Parents Meeting' (13/01/2007), 'ADC Agreement Signed' (10/12/2006), and 'Attending additional sessions' (05/01/2007).

Engaging other services and agencies

The Pathfinders are using the following strategies to engage other services and agencies:

At the strategic level:

- **writing the bid:** strategic leads from both adult and children's services were responsible for writing many of the initial Pathfinder bids;
- **management groups:** all key partners (from adult and children's services) represented on strategic management groups and strategic management groups chaired by senior managers from adult services. Partners have responsibilities beyond attendance, such as responsibility for key Think Family Work Streams;
- **champions:** identification of strategic Think Family Champions within both adult and children's services;
- **networking opportunities:** Family Pathfinder leads spending time networking with key services and agencies, particularly within adult services, to promote a Think Family approach;
- **impact on performance indicators:** Family Pathfinder managers have evidenced how taking a Think Family approach can impact on performance indicators within other agencies and services, such as health;
- **recruitment:** adult services engaged in the recruitment of all Pathfinder staff.

At the operational level:

- **protocols and guidance:** establishing joint working protocols (between adult and children's services) and engaging practitioners from both adult and children's services in that process;

- **Think Family Delivery Teams** have been established to resolve specific delivery issues encountered by the Pathfinders on a day to day basis;
- **assessment:** practitioners from both adult and children's services engaged in the design of whole family assessment tools and other operational tools such as family action plans. Practitioners are also undertaking joint whole family assessments across adult and children's services. A flexible approach to receiving referrals from adult services has also facilitated engagement;
- **joint delivery:** practitioners from adult and children's services are joint working with families and modelling what joint working looks like. Practitioners from adult services are playing a key role in TAF meetings, helping to promote the Think Family approach. Practitioners from adult services are also acting as lead professionals;
- **raising awareness:** practitioners are working in partner agencies (i.e. if they are from children's services they are spending time working with adult services) in order to raise awareness of their service, take referrals and provide advice and support. Family Pathfinder team members have also been given responsibility to develop Think Family work within specific target areas, such as black and minority ethnic, fathers, domestic violence, disability etc.;
- **training:** the development of integrated training programmes across adult and children's services are providing informal networking opportunities, as well as formal learning. Practitioners from adult and children's services are delivering joint training to model integrated approaches, for example

training on 'adult mental health and child protection';

- **champions:** use of Think Family champions at the practitioner level, e.g. practitioners from adult services raising awareness of the benefits of a Think Family approach within their own agency and partner agencies.

1) Consultancy Support

In Bolton, the main Pathfinder team are providing 'consultancy support' for other agencies within the LA in order to embed the Think Family approach. Key agencies include:

- adult social care;
- the adult alcohol team;
- targeted youth support;
- education social work team;
- the behaviour support team;
- early start support workers; and
- the Youth Offending Team (YOT).

Agencies are being asked to identify families who would benefit from a '**whole family approach**' to service delivery. Pathfinder staff are providing training for these agencies on how to adopt such an approach, based on their learning of working in this way over the last six months. This includes assessing the needs of all family members, referring and signposting family members to other appropriate agencies and services; and playing a central role in co-ordinating support through **TAF meetings**.

Securing the buy-in of other agencies

This is crucial to the success and sustainability of the Pathfinders and it has been important to ensure that key strategic managers, across a range of services and agencies, see the tangible benefits of taking a Think Family approach. Pathfinder staff in Bolton and other Pathfinders have spent a significant amount of time meeting with senior managers in a range of agencies to highlight how adopting a 'Think Family'

approach can help them meet their own targets and objectives.

Pathfinders have engaged agencies and services by showing them what the Pathfinder can do for them, whether this is meeting particular performance indicators, such as engagement with health professionals, or by reducing the numbers of referrals to Children in Need.

2) Flexible Adult Working

In Bolton, this work is led by the Inclusion Officer, whose role is to adapt LA working practices and protocols to ensure they accommodate a whole-family approach. The Inclusion Officer is currently working with adult services to help adapt their working practices for families within the Pathfinder. Through this work, which includes adult services adopting more flexible threshold criteria, the positive effects of a Think Family approach are being seen and, it is hoped, will be adopted over the longer-term. Flexible adult working includes:

- **lowering thresholds:** so that adult services are working with families within the Pathfinder who do not meet their existing threshold criteria. Many of the adults Pathfinder staff are working with have mental health issues which would not normally meet existing threshold criteria;
- **keeping cases open:** in time-limited interventions where adult workers would normally close a case, for example drugs rehabilitation;
- **co-ordinating support:** so that support for adult family members complements the needs of children in the family.

3) Engaging Adult Services

The success of the Family Pathfinders and 'Think Family' policy more widely will ultimately depend on the level of engagement of both children's and adult services. The policy agenda, whilst being delivered in partnership with other government departments, is led by the DCSF.

As a consequence, within most Pathfinder areas children's services have taken the lead, with adult services being incorporated into partnership working practices.

In those Pathfinders where adult services have been successfully engaged accountability for Think Family sits across both adult and children's services. In the areas where there is strong or good representation of both adult and children's services, the following factors are evident:

- **strong support and awareness of the 'Think Family' brand** – developed through a range of activities, both to raise awareness and develop plans/local systems;
- **clear partnership approach to delivery** – originating from a partnership approach to developing the bid, illustrated for example by the Pathfinder Board/Steering Groups being chaired by a lead from adult services;
- **equal representation of the adult and children's services throughout the Pathfinder/Think Family policy**, i.e. at strategic, operational and delivery level;
- **clearly worked out processes** of how children's and adult services will work together, including assessment processes.

Engaging Adult Services in Durham

In order to ensure their engagement, adult services in Durham have been involved in Pathfinder development across all stages, including developing the initial Family Pathfinder bid:

- **At the Initial Bid Stage**

The Pathfinder bid was signed by the Chief Executive of the County Council at the time, the Director of Children's Services, the Director of Adult's Services and the Acting Director of Health Provider Services with a letter of support from the Assistant Chief Constable of the Police.

The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Services in Children's Services and the Head of

Adult Care in Adult and Community Services were the lead officers for the bid and they have met regularly to discuss areas that require a joint approach, particularly families at risk, families where there is hidden harm etc. Key staff in adult services have championed the Pathfinder and the Think Family approach across adult services and adult services have participated in Pathfinder developments at all levels of the project.

- **Ongoing Governance Arrangements**

The 'Think Family, Think Place Strategic Management Group' is driving forward the Think Family agenda in the county. This is a strategic management group of adult and children's services managers, which also includes representatives from wider services, such as:

- housing;
- neighbourhood services;
- regeneration;
- police;
- Jobcentre Plus etc.

This strategic management group provides accountability, drive and leadership for the Think Family agenda.

Representatives from adult services sit on the **Pathfinder Steering Group**, and are also involved in operational management. Adult services have been involved in all Pathfinder recruitment activity, from team manager posts to family workers, as well as the development of assessment tools such as the whole family assessment, business processes, job descriptions, etc.

The Pathfinder Steering Group has now become a **Think Family Operational Management Group** which will maintain its adult's services representation but will now have a representative from each Think Family project, for example Family Intervention Projects (FIP), Youth Crime Action Plan (YCAP) FIP and

Parenting Early Intervention Programme (PEIP), in addition to the Pathfinder.

Reports on the Pathfinder have been presented at adult services senior management groups to inform them of progress and issues to consider, for example the potential rise in requests for adult assessments etc. Presentations have been given at management and team meetings to promote the Pathfinder to a wide audience in adult's services. There is a growing awareness in adult services of the need to link to children's services, especially in supporting parents with particular needs, for example parents with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD); and parents with substance misuse issues, due to the Hidden Harm agenda.

● Commissioning Services

Adult services have recently commissioned a pilot project for parents with LDD. When adult services supported the Pathfinder they asked for parents with LDD to be one of the triggers for Family Pathfinder intervention. The Pathfinder Project Manager, located in children's services, was asked to join the steering group of this pilot to ensure there would be minimum overlap between the projects and to provide children's services input and support to the pilot. Staff in the pilot have undertaken training in the family nurturing parenting programme – through the improved links between adult's and children's services more adult services staff are looking into this kind of training to support their work with adults.

● Assessment Processes

The Pathfinder is actively promoting the use of CAF by asking for this assessment to access the service. The CAF should show the connection between the issues of the parent and the needs of the child. Pathfinder staff join the existing Team Around the Child to create a Team Around the Family to ensure the right services remain involved to support the family and avoid the referral culture that can be so detrimental to families at risk. The Pathfinder key worker will

usually take on the Lead Professional role for the family.

The project managers from the Pathfinder and the CAF implementation projects have worked together to ensure access to the Pathfinder through CAF processes. Working with adult services' colleagues the two projects have developed a 'Pathway into CAF processes' for adult services so they have the means to engage with CAF. They are now working to devise a programme to raise awareness in adult services through a package of training via CAF e-learning and briefings to managers and frontline staff.

● Performance Indicators

The Pathfinder has agreed performance indicators and quality measures that encompass targets across adult and children's services and some new Think Family measures, such as the '*numbers of children subject to a child protection plan due to parental substance misuse*'. The project will also monitor the engagement of adult services through numbers of referrals from Pathfinder teams to adult services and whether these resulted in services being provided or not.

4) Integrated Training

The Gateshead Pathfinder has focused on systems changes to embed whole family approaches. This is reflected in Team Around the Family working amongst children's and adult services engaged with the Pathfinder; and a number of key agencies, such as housing, appointing family-focused workers. Gateshead attribute their success in doing this to:

- ensuring buy-in from all agencies through integrated training and networking;
- raising awareness and demonstrating the success of the whole-family approach;
- establishing a range of interventions and pilots linked to the Think Family agenda.

Integrated Working Training Directory

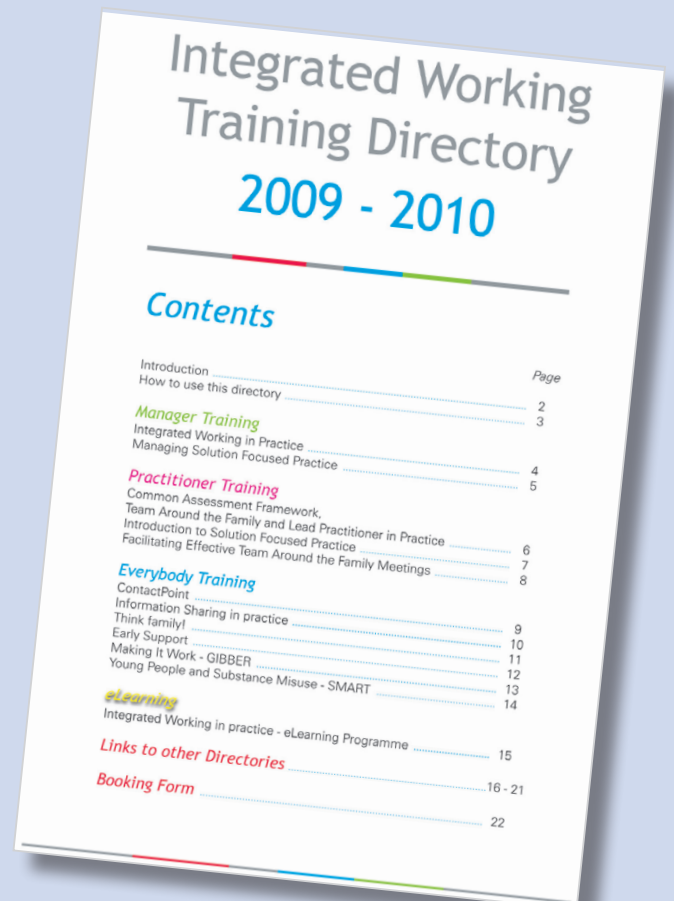
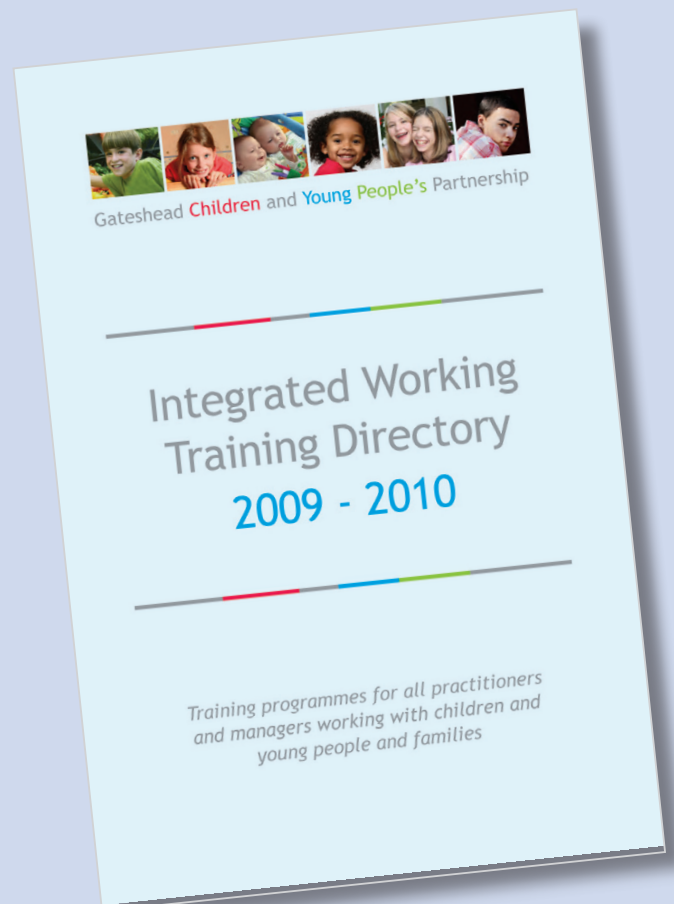
This is a joint adult and children's services training package (for managers and practitioners) to promote the benefits of integrated working, as well as providing practical guidance on how to implement such an approach. All agencies within children's and adult services are being trained on integrated working. All training is delivered jointly to adult and children's services staff, in order to emphasise the integrated nature of the work and help establish links.

The training includes:

- information on the Think Family agenda and what integrated working is;
- using the CAF; Team Around the Family (TAF) approaches and being a lead professional;
- how to design and manage effective TAF meetings.

Taking a Whole Family Approach

In Gateshead integrated working training and the success of Family Intervention Projects and other Think Family models of working led to the housing department adopting a whole family approach with some cases. Their aim was to tackle the underlying family issues that were creating the housing problems. This had immediate success and the housing department approached the Pathfinder wanting to develop their work in this area. The FIP have now seconded a parenting worker to the housing company to work alongside their substance misuse worker and mental health manager, who look at addressing underlying family issues in an integrated way. Families have reported the success of this new approach: 'families are saying 'this is the first time people are asking: 'why is it like this?' Not just 'stop doing this.'



Referral and assessment

Pathfinders are keen not to use the term 'referral' and instead are using the term 'request for service', which will help retain the involvement of agencies/services who are currently working with families and ensure that the Pathfinder does not become a 'dumping ground' for 'problem' families.

● Referral and assessment processes in Durham

In Durham, the Team Around the Child (TAC) process identifies the need for additional intervention because outcomes are not improving etc. Once consent has been obtained from the family to involve the Family Pathfinder team, the lead professional sends copies of the CAF and any other documents, such as plans, minutes from TAC meetings to the Family Pathfinder team manager. The team manager checks the family against the [Pathfinder Risk Tool](#) to see if they meet the triggers for Pathfinder intervention.

If the family meets the triggers for intervention, the team manager contacts the lead professional to arrange a TAC meeting which the team manager and possibly the key worker will attend. This meeting provides the opportunity for the team manager to ask further questions or to find out more to make a definite decision whether to accept the family. If the family are not accepted (or do not consent) then the team manager will suggest other services that may help.

If the family is accepted at the TAC meeting, for quality assurance purposes, this starts the beginning of the family assessment period. The key worker then has 25 working days to complete a family assessment.

Once the case has been accepted, the key worker will visit the family to obtain their

written consent to start working with them and start the family agreement. All members of the family are assessed individually for the family assessment, to identify their needs and feelings about family issues, and to provide an opportunity for disclosure about possible domestic abuse etc. TAF meetings are held monthly, relevant agencies are invited and a Multi-agency Whole Family Care Plan agreed. Families also attend the TAF meetings. A Family Agreement is also drawn up which sets out the principals of what needs to change, how the family and Pathfinder staff will address these issues, when Pathfinder staff will visit the family and how they will know when they have addressed the issues identified. Every three months the TAF meetings are chaired by the team manager to review progress. As part of the preparation for a family to exit from the Pathfinder, a new Lead Professional is identified, so a positive handover can take place. TAC meetings continue after a family has exited the Pathfinder to support the family to maintain changes and address any outstanding issues.

● Referral and assessment processes in Islington

The Islington Family Pathfinder Team is working with families where there is a parent or carer with mental ill health or dual diagnosis (including substance misuse), which is impacting on their parenting and their children. The Pathfinder has kept its referral criteria relatively broad so that they can work with families who do not meet existing thresholds.

Practitioners are encouraged to contact the team to discuss possible referrals and, even if they do not meet the criteria for referral, the team can provide consultation advice. The Pathfinder team also identify referrals when they are working in their partner agencies.

All Family Pathfinder Team members spend some part of the week in their partner agencies, for example the children's social worker spends half a day a week in each of the two community mental health teams covered by the Pathfinder and the adult mental health worker spends a similar amount of time in the children in need teams. Once the Pathfinder agrees to work with a family, if the referral has come from adult services the family will be allocated a lead professional with a children's services background and vice versa, to facilitate joint working across adult and children's services.

A joint visit is then undertaken with the practitioner who referred the family and a member of the team to discuss the support they can offer and to obtain consent for them to work with the family. A **whole family assessment** is undertaken, again in conjunction with the practitioner who referred the family to the Pathfinder. The

whole family assessment is based on the CAF but has been adapted to include a greater emphasis on adults within the family and their needs as individuals, as well as parents. In many instances it is not appropriate to wait until the end of the assessment period before providing support, so the team will address pressing practical issues such as housing, benefits, getting the children to school etc. This also provides an opportunity for staff to develop a relationship with the family.

A TAF meeting is then arranged drawing in all relevant agencies. A **Family Action Plan** is developed at the TAF meeting which identifies families' needs, actions and outcomes and is signed by all those in attendance at the meeting. The TAF is reviewed on a six weekly basis and the referring practitioner is expected to stay involved until at least this point in time.

Raising awareness of young carers

One of the key aims of the extended Pathfinders is raising awareness of young carers, across both adult and children's services. Agencies and services targeted include health, social care and schools. Awareness raising strategies used by extended Pathfinders include:

- **appointing a member of staff with responsibility for developing work in schools**, including raising awareness of young carers' issues in schools (through assemblies and work with individual classes), helping children and young people identify themselves as carers; and seeking referrals for the Think Family team (including self-referrals);
- the development of **guides and information documents** to raise awareness of young carers across a range of services and agencies;
- **strategic level work with health professionals**, particularly in adult mental health services to raise their awareness;
- attendance at **adult services team meetings** to raise awareness of their work;
- extended Pathfinders **utilised links developed by the main Pathfinder team** to help raise awareness of their work. They have also raised awareness

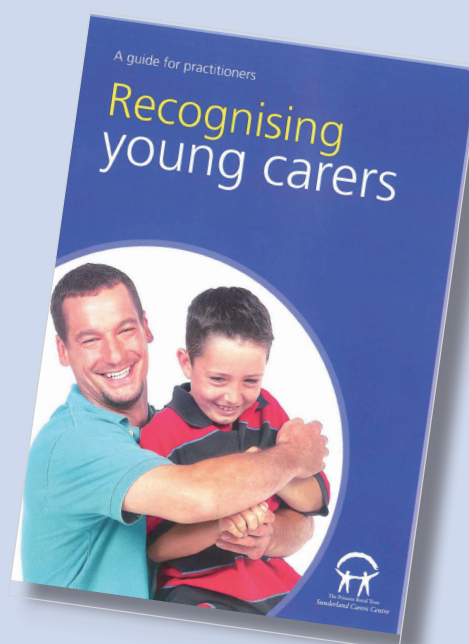
amongst other agencies by presenting at Think Family events;

- **young carer champions:** in one Pathfinder, representatives from organisations on the Young Carers' Strategic Group have been identified as advocates for young carers and are responsible for raising awareness of young carers within their own organisations, informing staff how to identify young carers and who to refer them to.

Sunderland Young Carers

Sunderland Young Carers' Family Pathfinder is prioritising developing strategic links with the health sector, in particular, with adult mental health services and the Acute Trust. This includes consultants and doctors who diagnose adults with a degenerative or long-term illness, such as multiple sclerosis.

The Pathfinder is trying to tackle the 'creep' of responsibility onto the child or young person which can occur when parents are diagnosed with a debilitating disease. There may not be an immediate issue, but the situation is likely to deteriorate in the longer-term. Therefore, hospital consultants and mental health nurses are being asked to refer families with children and young people to the Pathfinder. The Pathfinder has developed '*A Guide for Practitioners: Recognising Young Carers*', which aims to raise awareness of young carers amongst professionals and provides practical guidance, in terms of what to look out for, and who to contact if they are concerned about the impact of potential caring roles. The Pathfinder has received an increase in the number of referrals it receives from health professionals as a result of distributing the guide.



The Pathfinder has also been developing **strategic links with adult mental health services** and is now receiving referrals from staff who work with parents with mental health problems and drug addictions. They have successfully raised their profile through developing joint working relationships with adult services, the health service and by working in partnership with the main Family Pathfinder within the LA. The Pathfinder is also running training with first year social worker students to raise their awareness of the issues faced by young carers.

The Pathfinder is continuing to work on raising the profile of young carers within schools and has carried out training to help schools identify and support young carers. A '**young carers' card**' has been developed which is designed to be carried by young carers and explains why they may potentially have problems attending school, or completing homework. This has been so successful that the LA has now taken on the responsibility of distributing the card to all schools in the LA and raising awareness.

Some emerging evidence of impact on families

Some very early indications of reported impact on families are provided below:

Reducing the numbers of agencies working with families

- **Background:** One family referred to the Pathfinder had more than 20 agencies working with them. There was a lot of duplication between the work being delivered by the agencies, and the family had disengaged because they felt they were being inundated with too much support.
- **Approach:** The Pathfinder team designed a Family Plan with the family, working out what the family saw as their immediate priorities, and when were the best times for the family to work with agencies.
- **Impact:** They reduced the number of agencies to those that would be able to deliver services to meet the prioritised needs outlined in the Family Plan, and then when the agencies could work with the family. This created a more streamlined package of support that the family could understand and engage with.

Preventing Care proceedings

- **Background:** One family referred to the Pathfinder consisted of two parents and a 20-month old child. The father was unemployed, both parents had alcohol problems, there was reported domestic violence and neighbours were ringing the council on a regular basis complaining about the noise and arguments from the house. Social Care were close to initiating care proceedings at the point of referral to the Family Pathfinder.

- **Approach:** By taking a whole-family approach, the Pathfinder team could see that both parents needed to understand the impact of their behaviour on their child, work on their relationship difficulties and detox. However, it was recognised that detoxing one parent whilst the other was drinking heavily might lead to relapse and that both parents needed to detox at the same time. The Pathfinder team worked with the Adult Alcohol Team to ensure that both detoxifications were co-ordinated at the same time: the mother's took place in residential care, whilst the father's was undertaken at home. This co-ordination ensured that individual interventions complemented the needs of other individuals and the whole family.
- **Impact:** This work, in conjunction with other family based work (including mediation with neighbours), is bringing about positive results within the family.

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