

FAMILY PATHFINDERS – INFORMATION AND APPLICATION PACK

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1. Background

- 1.1. A number of recent government publications and strategies have pointed to the interrelated needs and problems within families and the necessity to improve both service delivery and systems of support for families at risk.

Both tailored service delivery...

- 1.2. There is increasing evidence that tailored, flexible and holistic services that work with whole families can turn lives around. For example:
- The Respect Action Plan launched a national network of Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) to deal with the needs of whole households. These projects, which target persistently anti-social families, deliver whole family support led by assertive key workers who pull together the efforts of all agencies working with families to change behaviour and deliver outcomes.
 - The Social Exclusion Action Plan led to the establishment of Family Nurse Partnership, a preventative programme which involves family nurses working with first time young mothers and provides a focus on the child in their family context.
- 1.3. Such projects are leading the way on family focussed service provision, and have demonstrated that it is possible to deal effectively with the needs of a whole family.

...and coordinated systems

- 1.4. *Reaching Out: Think Family* – the first report from the Families at Risk Review – highlighted the importance of the home environment and the crucial influence of parents in determining outcomes for children. When parents face multiple problems in their own lives the impact can be severe and enduring for both themselves and for their children. Families at risk of course need good children's services, but adults' services also have a vital role to play. Even the best children's services can only mitigate the impacts of parental problems such as domestic violence, involvement in the criminal justice system or substance abuse.

- 1.5. *Reaching Out: Think Family* argued that if we are to break the intergenerational cycle of disadvantage, then we need to build the capacity of systems and services to ‘think family’. Thinking family means looking at individual needs in the context of the whole family, so clients are seen not just as individuals but as parents or family members. In particular, it highlighted significant opportunities to build on recent progress in systems reform by:
- Extending the logic of coordination from Every Child Matters (ECM) to *all* services – including adults’ services – working with families
 - Ensuring that systems and services work together to focus their energies on families at risk; and
 - Capitalising on the reach and expertise of the public and third sectors to identify and intervene earlier to better support families at risk

Family Pathfinders: bringing tailored services and systems reform together

- 1.6. *Aiming High for Children: Supporting Families* announced £13m over the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period for a pathfinder programme led by Department for Children, Schools and Families to test out ways to provide more effective support to families locked into a cycle of low achievement.
- 1.7. This document sets out the next steps for establishing the Family Pathfinder programme, which will explore ways of improving the response of services and systems to vulnerable families. The Pathfinders will combine improved service delivery – building on the success of Family Intervention Projects – with a series of system changes to ensure a consistent whole family response. This follows on from the analysis in *Reaching Out: Think Family*¹ and the vision set

¹ http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/families_at_risk/review_analysis.aspx

out in *Think Family: Improving the life chances of families at risk*². This latter report aims to start a shared journey towards a system that ‘thinks family’ at every level and describes the key components of such a system. It argues that neither services nor system reform can ‘think family’ effectively on their own. It describes a system that builds on the principles of Every Child Matters, and which is integrated at every level:



Families at the centre	Families are involved in the design of their support wherever possible and empowered through devolved budgets and family-led decision making.
Integrated frontline delivery	Empowered and assertive practitioners provide tailored and joined-up support around the whole family. They identify needs early and proactively engage families.
Integrated processes	Shared assessments and information across agencies give a full picture of a family's needs and help ensure support is fully co-ordinated.
Integrated strategy	Joined-up planning and commissioning drive a focus on families at risk across all agencies.
Inter-agency governance	Accountability for family outcomes is clear, with strong leadership at the top and protocols setting out agreed responsibilities between agencies.

- 1.8. This document invites Local Authorities, with their partners, to apply to become one of the 12-15 Family Pathfinders which will robustly test and inform the development and implementation of the ‘think family’ approach. This is an opportunity to be at the heart of driving sustained and improved outcomes for families at risk.

2. Aims

- 2.1. The overarching aims of the Family Pathfinders are to:

- Improve outcomes for families caught in a cycle of low achievement,

² http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/families_at_risk.aspx

particularly those who are not being effectively engaged and supported by existing services

- Build on ECM transformation to encourage greater co-operation with adults' services, including social care, employment, housing, adult mental health and adult skills
- Provide an evidence base on the impact and effectiveness of the Family Pathfinder model and generate best practice on effective implementation, including:
 - lessons on how systems change across adults' and children's services can improve support for vulnerable families
 - lessons on the impact of providing whole family services to families at risk
 - Lessons on effective practice in working with families who are reluctant to use services or difficult to engage

3. Design considerations

3.1. This section sets out the design considerations that local areas will need to address in developing proposals to become one of the Family Pathfinders. It discusses:

- Building blocks of the model
- Core partners
- Targeting
- Clear outcomes

Once selected, we will work with successful sites to develop, co-design and refine their plans in consultation with others.

Building blocks of the model

3.2. Family Pathfinders must improve services to families at risk at all levels. This means that they must put in place effective whole family services as well as improving systems.

3.3. At the service delivery level, they should extend or commission

frontline services that build on effective whole family working models, such as Family Intervention Projects, and should consider the role that mainstream services can play to better support families. This includes using a flexible and assertive working style to ensure that both services and families are fully committed and engaged. Persistence will be critical to ensure that services engage those unlikely to take up support without strong encouragement, and that families remain actively engaged.

- 3.4. The Family Pathfinders will also need to develop changes to local systems to improve integrated governance, strategy and processes such as commissioning, assessment and information sharing. There will be strong encouragement of innovation and flexibility in local design of the pathfinders, but areas will be expected to include the following building blocks at each level of the system:

Table 1: The Building Blocks

System Level	Aim	Expected deliverables for Pathfinder area:
Families at the centre	To ensure family-centred services and systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of families in the design of services and systems. • Empowering families through family-led decision making and/or the use of devolved budgets.
Integrated front-line delivery	<p>To support families with effective and coordinated services</p> <p>Pathfinder areas will be expected to extend or commission services which provide tailored, integrated support plans working with the whole family.</p> <p>Staff in universal services should be supported to respond earlier and more effectively to families at risk (through common aims, increased awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency teams around the family drawn from across adults' and children's services to address the needs of the whole family. They should also agree the objectives for intervention with each family and regularly review cases. • Assertive lead professional / key worker (drawing from both adults' and children's services) who leads in engaging families, working directly with them and coordinating other service involvement. Small caseloads should enable practitioners to work with families for as long as is needed and an assertive working style ensures families benefit from the support put in place. Areas may wish to consider budget holding lead professionals. • A shared script or shared endeavour among all staff in contact with families so that the key

	of parental/family responsibilities and assertive and persistent working styles)	<p>agencies working with families have common aims and are working towards the same outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure key adults' services understand the needs of their clients as parents, and tailor their service to take account of parenting responsibilities. Services should evidence that they offer support at times which enable full participation of parents.
Integrated processes	<p>To equip front-line staff to do their job more effectively</p> <p>Family Pathfinder sites will need to improve information sharing and multi-agency working to allow early identification of risk and coordinated planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for staff across services in contact with families on assessing risk in the wider family. • Whole family assessment in the form of a robust family needs assessment framework (building on Common Assessment Framework) which includes regular reviews with the family (including young people where appropriate) and other agencies. • Contracts setting out commitments made by the family, key worker and other agencies. These should include a coordinated support plan for the whole family which pulls agencies together and fills in gaps in support. It should include the family's objectives and how they will be met, individual family members contributions (where appropriate) and the contribution of services, with timescales and reviews built in to ensure accountability. • Agreed protocols on information sharing between adults' and children's services
Integrated strategy	<p>To ensure a focus on vulnerable families across all agencies</p> <p>Family Pathfinder sites must join up planning for vulnerable families across relevant partners. This will include all core partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common vision and agreed outcomes for families across services as part of the LAA process. • Include the contribution of adults' services to family wellbeing in CYPP and Parenting Strategy • A families-at-risk multi-agency steering group. This could build on existing groups locally as appropriate (e.g. safeguarding boards, Children's Trust boards, FIP steering groups where applicable) but must include key partners across both children's and adults' services. • Joint commissioning across adults' and children's services for family support, possibly with pooled funding. This should include sharing

		population level needs analyses and agreeing shared priorities and responses.
Inter-agency governance	<p>To ensure clear accountability for improving outcomes for families</p> <p>Family Pathfinders must secure the Local Strategic Partnership as a key driving body and use their Local Area Agreement to bring partners together.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear accountability for families and joined up governance of adults' and children's services for vulnerable families • Championing of the 'Think Family' approach through a senior nominated leader • Protocols with key adults' services to share responsibility with children's services for outcomes for the family

Core partners

- 3.5 Family Pathfinder sites will be expected to include a core set of partners in the delivery of services: local authority education and children's social care services, adult's social care, housing services, Primary Care Trust and provider services for child and adult health (including mental health), substance misuse services, Children's Centres, Jobcentre Plus, Learning and Skills Council, schools, the police, anti-social behaviour teams, the third sector, Prison Service, Probation, Youth Offending Teams, the Youth Service and Maternity Services.
- 3.6 This list is not intended to be exhaustive and local areas may wish to engage additional partners such as leisure or advice services in the work of the Pathfinders. The intensity and nature of engagement of specific partners should be determined locally and should reflect the specific focus and priority outcomes of the individual pathfinder.
- 3.7 Proposals must include an explicit statement of support from the Local Strategic Partnership.

Targeting

- 3.8 'Families at risk' is a shorthand term for families with multiple and complex problems such as worklessness, poor mental health or substance misuse. Local areas will be expected to target families who

are - or are at risk of - experiencing multiple risks which are driving poor outcomes for children and families. The Pathfinders are intended to reach the most vulnerable families currently not being helped by services as well as more preventative work aimed at those who may have one or two additional needs, but whose situation may escalate without preventative support.

3.9 Key problems experienced by family members could include combinations of the following factors:

- Poverty, debt, worklessness
- Low parental education and skills
- Domestic violence
- Relationship conflict
- Neglect and poor family functioning
- Mental health
- Physical health and disabilities
- Learning disability
- Involvement in crime, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse
- Poor housing and homelessness

3.10 Plans for the types of families which the Pathfinders target should be informed by discussions about local priorities and needs analyses, such as those informing the development of local strategic plans, local parenting strategies or children and young people plans.

3.11 In terms of frontline delivery of services, some local authorities may have already identified service gaps around specific groups of families, such as parents who are offenders or in prison (including domestic violence). Alternatively, pathfinders might choose to expand an existing whole family service, such as a Family Intervention Project (FIP), to work with a broader client group or set up a related project. Additionally, top tier authorities with existing FIPs might want to consider regional models of delivery, or areas might want to consider building on the FIP by linking it with other innovative whole family

services such as the Family Nurse Partnerships projects. In any case, all plans must include the design components listed in table 1.

Extended Family Pathfinders for Young Carers (optional)

- 3.12 We are also seeking to identify 5-6 areas which, in addition to their core Family Pathfinder model, will extend their work to include systems and support services which will address directly and in more detail the support needs of families with young carers. Areas successful in bidding to extend their pathfinder in this way will be known as “Extended Family Pathfinders”. The overriding priority is to model/test preventative support around the person cared for and the wider family which will help ensure that children within these families do not have to take on inappropriate caring roles. Supplementary funding (see below) will be made available for up to 6 pathfinders to do this. Those bidding to become an Extended Family Pathfinder for young carers will need to meet all of the core requirements for their main pathfinder work (as set out in sections A-C in Annex A) as well as meeting some additional criteria (set out in section D, Annex A).
- 3.13 While the overriding priority for the Extended Family Pathfinders is to develop and test more effective forms of preventative support around the person cared for and the family as a whole, we recognise that some remedial support for young carers may feature in plans and be relevant as part of the process of helping some families move away from dependence on the care of a child.

Clear outcomes

- 3.14 Working with families at risk has the potential to support delivery of many of the new suite of Public Service Agreements (PSAs). Local areas will be free to choose the specific targets and indicators they are seeking to improve according to the local priorities and the design and focus of their pathfinder. Proposals should include a clear statement of the indicators which your area has prioritised which relate to the pathfinder proposal.
- 3.15 Successful applicants will have an opportunity during the co-design phase to work collaboratively with other areas and the central

implementation and evaluation teams to set out in further detail the improvements they are intending to deliver and how they will be measured. We will seek to establish an overarching outcomes framework which will run across the 12 sites and which will be used to measure and compare impacts.

4 Implementation support

- 4.1 Family Pathfinder sites will be supported by a national implementation team run by DCSF. This team will be made up of people who have experience in innovative ways of working with families at risk and of supporting local authorities to improve practice. Each successful local authority will be given a nominated contact who will be available to work with them to ensure that the plans are successfully implemented. This will include both plans for service delivery and for changes to broader systems, strategies, commissioning and governance. Once the pathfinders are launched, this contact will continue to work with local authorities to trouble shoot emerging practice issues.

5 Evaluation and Learning

Evaluation:

- 5.1 An independent national evaluation will be conducted to review and examine implementation processes as well as the impact of the Family Pathfinders on the outcomes of families at risk. It will comprise three components:
- **process evaluation:** to assess the effectiveness of system and service changes
 - **impact evaluation:** to capture user and professional perspectives and short term impacts on outcome indicators
 - **economic evaluation:** to measure of the cost effectiveness of the model
- 5.2 The sites will agree to work closely with the evaluation team in establishing baseline data and a performance management framework, and must provide the qualitative and quantitative information needed to support this. Areas will be expected to nominate a lead with

responsibility for collecting required information. Areas will also collaborate with the evaluation team to provide access to staff and families, records and data and facilitate interviews.

Integrated Learning

- 5.3 The pathfinders will generate new knowledge about how greater co-operation between adults' and children's services can improve outcomes for families at risk.
- 5.4 On a local level, local authorities and service providers will establish a mechanism for sharing lessons between local partners. DCSF will set up an appropriate forum for representatives from the pathfinders to come together to share experiences, learn from each other and provide feedback into the development of national government policy
- 5.5 The pathfinder sites will engage in an ongoing dialogue with policy makers and commissioners at national, regional and local levels. The DCSF will establish appropriate mechanisms for sharing the learning with other local authority areas, including linking into the DCSF and Local Government Association network of local authorities who are involved in the Narrowing the Gap in Outcomes project.

6 Resource

- 6.1 A total of £13m for 2008-2011 has been secured for all of the Family Pathfinders. Each pathfinder will receive funding of up to £780,000 for the three year period: up to £180,000 in financial year 2008-09, up to £300,000 in 2009-10 and up to £300,000 in 2010-11.
- 6.2 A further total of £3m will be available for the Extended Family Pathfinder for Young Carers component of the work. These areas will each receive up to an additional £400,000 over the three year period: up to £92,500 in year 1, up to £146,500 year 2, and up to £161,000 in year 3.
- 6.3 Pathfinder areas will be supported with funding for a period of three years to allow approaches to become fully embedded. Areas may also wish to set out any commitments of local funding they would invest to support the Pathfinders, though there is no requirement to do so. There will be no extra funding after the agreed three year period and

pathfinder areas will be expected to demonstrate how they will fund any new services commissioned beyond this point.

7 What it will mean to be a Family Pathfinder site

7.1 The Family Pathfinders offer a valuable opportunity for local authorities and their partners to:

- Provide an earlier, more coordinated response to families at risk and reduce the number of families who reach crisis point
- Bring together local partners in a shared venture to improve outcomes for families which supports the delivery of a number of key Public Service Agreements
- Improve the engagement of families at risk with services through an assertive style of working which combines the key elements of support and challenge
- Benefit from collaborative learning with other areas, formative national evaluation and the opportunity to influence the development of national policy through regular national, regional and local feedback
- Secure additional flexibilities and resource to support local innovation
- Drive local service and system improvements including commissioning and joint working locally, and enhance delivery of specialist services for families at risk

8 Assessment and selection process

8.1 To be successful, areas will need to submit an innovative and focused proposal as well as demonstrate the commitment and capacity necessary to establish and maintain a Family Pathfinder. Areas must consent to testing and developing the 'think family' model and addressing the key design considerations set out in section 3.

8.2 The selection criteria, which can be found in full at Annex A, fall under three areas. We will be looking for:

- A A robust, sustainable, innovative and outcome focussed proposal
- B The capability to deliver a successful pathfinder
- C An appropriate mix of sites in terms of demographics, profile and geography

8.3 The selection panel will consist of representatives from the DCSF, Cabinet Office and an independent external body. Applicants must nominate a clear pathfinder lead for their areas, and should note that they may be called in for interview during the selection process.

8.4 For areas applying to become an extended family pathfinder for young carers, we will also be looking for evidence of the criteria set out in section D of the annex.

8.5 The key milestones are:

- **Applications submitted** by 29th February 2008
- **Assessment of bids and selection** of successful sites by end March 2008
- **Announcement** of successful sites early April 2008
- **Co-design phase** April 2008
- **Baseline evaluation** established end April 2008
- **Launch** of Family Pathfinder end April 2008
- **6 month review** after initial set-up period
- **Year 1 evaluation** report April 2009
- **Year 2 evaluation** report April 2010
- **Final evaluation** report April 2011

ANNEX A: PATHFINDER SITE SELECTION REQUIREMENTS

A: A robust, sustainable, innovative and outcome focussed proposal

In no more than 1,500 words, areas must clearly set out their proposal. This should comprise three clearly marked sections (A1-A3) with the following information:

A1. Pathfinder Aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief outline of aims • Short background and rationale on why you are applying to be a pathfinder • Explanation and detail of your targeting and recruitment strategy, including the numbers of families with whom you intend to work • Clear explanation of the outcomes you aim to deliver, indication of current performance, and explanation of how you intend this to be achieved
A2. Pathfinder design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building blocks – description of what you will do at each level of the system • Core partners – detail on who will be involved and how • Brief explanation of how you will involve families in the design of services, systems and outcomes • Information on how the pathfinder and progress will be managed including governance structure, accountability arrangements and performance management framework
A3. Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear financial profile for the 3 year period including detail of any local contribution and plans for mainstreaming post initial three year period • Risk management framework, setting out key risks, countermeasures and contingency plans • Key links to wider strategic plans

B. The capability of the site to deliver a successful pathfinder

The proposal must be accompanied by supporting documentation which demonstrates an area's ability to successfully deliver the proposed pathfinder. This information should be appended to the main proposal, clearly marked Annex B, with sections labelled B1-B4.

CRITERIA	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
B1. Commitment to family-based working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of <u>existing</u> services working with the whole family (e.g. Family Intervention Projects; Family Nurse Partnerships;

	Family Group Conferencing; Functional Family Therapy etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of <u>planned</u> services working with families • Children and Young People's Plan • Parenting strategy • Family strategies
B2. Track record of multi-agency working and record of successful innovation and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective interagency strategy and planning through Local Strategic Partnership (or equivalent body) • Advanced children's trust arrangements • Advanced arrangements for adults' services partnerships (e.g. Supporting People, Health and Social Care) • Effective multi-agency commissioning arrangements, including possibly pooling of budgets • Implementation of joint processes and information sharing systems such as the Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People • Inspection ratings and assessments • Evidence of successful change and service improvement for children, adults and families • Awards, such as Beacon Status
B3. Evidence of sign-up and commitment from key local partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit statement of support to bid from Local Strategic Partnership • Details and commitment from key partners, including evidence of senior level sign off from key partner agencies
B4. Relevant Area Based Initiatives in operation	Details of current or recent involvement in other national pilot projects or pathfinder schemes such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrowing the Gap in Outcomes • Children's Trust Pathfinders • Youth Crime hotspots • Youth Taskforce areas • Parent Early Intervention • 14-19 Pathfinders • City Strategy • Parent Support Advisors • Skills for Life • IRT/ISA Trailblazers • Adults facing Chronic Exclusion Pilots • Budget Holding Lead Professionals • Individual budget pilots

C. An appropriate mix of sites in terms of demographics, profile and geography

In order to get an appropriate mix of sites, areas are requested to include background information on profile and outcomes. This information should be appended to the main proposal, clearly marked Annex C, with sections titled

C1 and C2.

CRITERIA	EVIDENCE
C1. Local area profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Description of local area (including rural/urban, population size) ○ Type of authority ○ Overall level of area deprivation (IMD) ○ Family structure (proportion lone parent households; household size) ○ Ethnicity
C2. Local area outcomes	<p>Baseline data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proportion of children in absolute poverty ○ Proportion of children in relative poverty ○ Achievement gap between pupils receiving FSM and their peers at KS 2 and 4 ○ Proportion of 16 and 17 year old NEET ○ Under 18 conception rates ○ Overall employment rate ○ Overall numbers of on out of work benefits ○ Children in workless households ○ Number of households in temporary accommodation ○ Crime and antisocial behaviour ○ Fear of crime ○ Life expectancy ○ Domestic violence ○ 19 year olds with at least level 2 qualification ○ Smoking prevalence for pregnant women ○ Use of class A drugs

D. To apply to be an extended family pathfinder for young carers

In no more than 500 words, set out your plans for extending your pathfinder to look in greater depth at systems and forms of preventative support for families relying on or at risk of relying on the care of a child. You should:

CRITERIA	EVIDENCE
D1. Extended Family Pathfinder for Young Carers design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your aims, objectives and intended outcomes • Explain how this extended work will complement and link to your family pathfinder proposal, and how it builds on work already underway • Specify what new or expanded systems and services will be put in place • Specify how many and which type of families will be targeted and supported over the period and the number of young carers or potential young carers who will be helped.

In addition, areas seeking funding to be an extended family pathfinder for young carers should provide the following evidence to support their application. Each section should be clearly marked D2-D5:

CRITERIA	EVIDENCE
D2. Evidence of action already taken to build more preventative support around families who rely on - or are at risk of relying on - the care of a child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of action already taken to identify/quantify the numbers of families relying on or at risk of relying on the care of a child and to evaluate the causes of the problem • Issue highlighted in current strategic plans and/or evidence of some measures underway to shift the support systems towards earlier identification and prevention, specifically by building better, more integrated support around the person cared for and their wider family earlier so families do not have to depend on the care of a child
D3. Track record in innovative forms of support for families affected by illness, disability or substance misuse , including working with and through voluntary sector and volunteering agencies and building links between them and more specialist support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and expertise in reaching out to families who may be reluctant to engage • Evidence of efforts to move towards a strong, well integrated continuum of support for families affected by illness or disability ranging from specialist multi-agency teams where this is required to less formal forms of family support and intervention • Evidence that approaches have been based on a clear assessment of local needs and that some measures are in place to provide a basis for longer term monitoring and evaluation.
D4. Commitment to linking up early prevention systems – including less formal forms of family support – with more specialist services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of core partners should be provided in the main Pathfinder proposal (under A2 Pathfinder Design). This section should be used to set out additional evidence on how your area will link up different levels of support – including the most specialist - for families with carers. It should also set out clear proposals for links with the main pathfinder structures and services.
D5. Defined success criteria and a clear basis for monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a minimum, sites will be expected to be in a position to assess impacts on formal caring by children, on children's outcomes, parents' ability to parent; on rates of referral to more specialist services and on family stability and better family outcomes over the longer term