

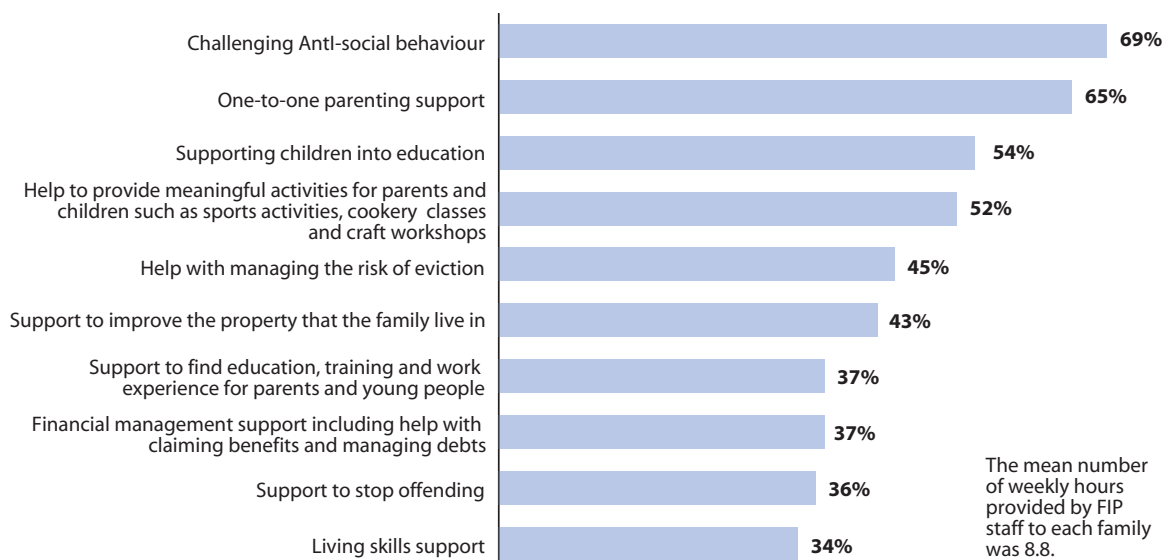
Family Intervention Projects

This section details the range of Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) in operation to support vulnerable families, describing the key features of each. Case studies are also included to highlight good practice.

What are Family Intervention Projects?

1. FIPs provide intensive support to vulnerable families and in particular those facing legal actions, evictions, or who are affected by longstanding worklessness and poverty. The FIP model was based on a number of projects run by Action for Children and expanded as part of the Government's Respect programme to target families involved in persistent anti-social behaviour, who were at risk of losing their homes. Through multi-agency whole family support plans and assertive working methods projects reduce the likelihood of legal sanctions and help families to address their problems. The package of support offered to vulnerable families often includes accredited parenting programmes and a co-ordinated programme of support from other services such as health or drug treatment which responds to the needs of different family members.

The support provided by FIPs is wide ranging:



Source: NatCen data on first 1,269 families accessing FIPs, at first review stage.

2. The significant improvements in outcomes for families who receive FIP services has led to the model being developed to reach more families at risk.
3. Three types of FIPs currently operate in different areas of the country:
 - **Anti-social behaviour FIPs (ASB FIPs) aimed at families who are persistently anti-social and at risk of homelessness:** These were set up over 2006–2008 and currently operate in 67 areas of the country. These aim to tackle the root causes of the anti-social behaviour which can be caused by mental health issues, domestic violence, and substance misuse or living in poverty.
 - **Child poverty FIPs (CP FIPs) aimed at families who are workless and have significant barriers to work, for example substance misuse, mental health issues:** There are now 32 FIPs funded to target families where no one is working, and tackle intergenerational worklessness.
 - **Youth crime FIPs (YC FIPs):** Twenty projects were set up in 2008 and all local authorities received funding from April 2009 to establish a FIP in their area aimed at families experiencing problems (for example child behavioural problems, mental ill health, domestic violence, having a parent in prison, prolific parental offending, substance misuse, and child neglect) that could lead to youth offending and other poor outcomes. These projects were announced in the Youth Crime Action Plan: www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/youthcrimeactionplan/

In each case close links to local children's and adults' services and clear referral routes need to be established to ensure support is provided to those families with the most need.

4. In addition, the £15 million Housing Challenge will fund FIPs run in partnership by Children's Services and housing providers to work with tenants who are facing eviction or involved in anti-social behaviour. There will be 88 new projects across England from April 2010 with further projects announced in Spring 2010.
5. The different types of FIPs outlined above reflects the way the policy has evolved as focus has widened from ASB to wider families at risk. In practice there are often similarities between the families targeted by different projects. Going forward, LA's running FIPs will be encouraged to bring different FIPs together as far as possible, creating a family intervention service for the most high risk and vulnerable families.

Key features of FIPs

6. The following features have been identified as crucial to the effectiveness of the FIP model:¹

1 National Centre for Social research, Family Intervention Projects – An Evaluation of their Design, Set-up and Early Outcomes, (2008) www.dfes.gov.uk/research/programmeofresearch/projectinformation.cfm?projectId=15499&type=5&resultspage=1

- **A dedicated key worker who works intensively with the whole family:** Key workers are usually family support workers who take on a lead professional role for the family. Their role is to manage or 'grip' the family's problems, co-ordinate the delivery of services, and use a combination of support, rewards and where appropriate alerting the family to the possibility of sanctions (see below) to motivate families to change their behaviour. The persistence and assertiveness of the key worker is critical to keeping families engaged and following agreed steps. Key workers may also deliver direct support to families to develop parenting and life skills, self confidence, motivation and set goals. They may also refer family members to specialist interventions, and provide advocacy for family members when dealing with other local services. Typically, family members may be referred to evidence-based parenting programmes, substance misuse treatment, or child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) etc. Small caseloads (up to 6 at any one time) enable the key worker to work very intensively with families, on average for 8 hours a week, including evenings and weekends, and stay involved for as long as necessary. The average length of involvement is 12 months although more complex cases can take considerably longer. Access to budgets is also important to enable key workers to solve small problems for families and help key workers win the families' trust.

"[FIP staff would] be there hammering on your door... and they'd come in, they'd say: 'Right. Have you got the kids up? Are they washed? Have they brushed their teeth? Have they done their hair?' By the time they threw all that at you, you're thinking to yourself, my god, what's going on here, you know. But they pushed, they do push you quite hard to get it done." (Parent).

- **Projects take a 'whole family' approach** which recognise the inter-connectedness between the children's and adults' problems and responds in a holistic way. For example, as well as dealing with a child's persistent absenteeism from school, FIPs will address any issues which would affect the parent's ability to get their child to school such as drug or alcohol misuse. Projects make particular efforts to include non-resident fathers (including fathers who are in prison, Young Offender Institutions or Secure Training Centres, etc) in work carried out with a family.
- A **contract** drawn up between the family and key worker sets out the changes that are expected, the support that will be provided in order to facilitate that change, and the consequences, if the changes or tasks which have been agreed are not completed. The contract is co-ordinated to meet the needs of the whole family and clearly sets out the contribution of different services and fills any gaps in support. The contract nearly always includes an evidence-based parenting programme, the family's objectives and how they will be met and individual family members' contributions (where appropriate). Timescales and reviews are included to monitor progress and ensure accountability.

- **Action to reduce the risk of sanctions motivating families to change:** Families supported by FIPs are often facing a range of sanctions from different agencies often linked to anti-social behaviour or youth offending, for example Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), demoted tenancies, eviction, court orders, etc. The FIPs work with families to help them improve their behaviour in order to avoid these sanctions, whilst being clear with families about the risks facing them if changes are not made. Local authorities need to consider the role of sanctions in new FIPs once they have decided which families they wish to target. Where there is evidence of poor parenting, projects may consider using Parenting Contracts or in more serious cases, parenting related sanctions such as Parenting Orders once all voluntary approaches to engagement have been exhausted.
 - YC FIPs are working closely with enforcement agencies and may link their work to the sanctions at the disposal of these agencies. For example in some areas FIPs are working with the Youth Offending Team (YOT) to include elements of the FIP contract such as a commitment to attend key worker appointments as part of the requirements of a statutory order. This may include keeping appointments with substance misuse and mental health professionals, educational specialists and anger management workers.
 - Compliance with FIP contracts can also be used to influence other agencies' decisions about the imposition of sanctions. For example in one case a behaviour contract agreed with a young person to work with the FIP provided a court with enough confidence about a young person's motivation to change not to impose a custodial sentence.
 - Projects may want to consider how incentives might be created through the use of, for example, book or record tokens, days out for the family, or support in pursuing training or employment opportunities.
 - **Effective multi-agency and governance arrangements:** A FIP cannot be effective without strategic and operational sign up and commitment from the full range of relevant local agencies. The most relevant partners will vary depending on the target family groups but services such as early years, schools, social services, youth services, housing, community safety, police, YOTs, primary care trusts (PCTs) and health services should have strategic input through the relevant strategic and policy boards. In many of the FIPs focused on preventing youth crime, links with youth offending and ASB teams are critical. Operationally, relevant agencies need to make referrals, share information about a family, attend case review meetings and provide direct services.
7. Local authorities need to think about where new FIP provision is best located and how they are managed. This will depend on the characteristics of families targeted and need to ensure links with any existing FIPs or other related provision. For example in Leicester, the ASB FIP is located in Community Safety and the new YC FIP is located in the YOT, but both share a Steering Group and are overseen by the Head of Community

Safety. In Rotherham, both the ASB and YC FIP are co-located with the Senior Parenting Practitioner and all are overseen by the Attendance and Parenting Strategic Lead. In other areas the FIP is delivered under contract by a third sector provider with contracts often being managed either in the Parenting Commissioner's contract team, Community Safety or Children's Services.

8. FIPs can provide support to families in the following ways:

- **Assertive Outreach Support** – Supporting families in their own accommodation through frequent visits by a key worker, normally up to 3 times a week, in order to keep families in their own home and maintain existing links with the community and education services.
- **Dispersed accommodation** – To support families in dispersed accommodation (tenancy located in the community linked to the FIP), enabling them to move from the area where ASB or offending behaviour has occurred. This may be necessary where community relations have deteriorated to such an extent that progress cannot be made unless a family is moved. New accommodation could be provided using a FIT (see below), with the promise of a permanent home if the contract is maintained successfully. Local Authorities are encouraged to make dispersed tenancies available.
- **Residential Core Unit** – To support families in accommodation, managed by the FIP, known as a 'core unit'. Here, a small residential scheme is used to support the most vulnerable families with 24 hour support and supervision available to them. Families living in core units are required to adhere to a set of rules and regulations such as a requirement to be in at a certain time in the evening and only receiving visitors by permission. Core residential units are currently available in a small number of FIPs, for example in Sheffield, Manchester, Redcar and Cleveland and Bolton.

"I do think the core is necessary because when we just had the floating support service there were a few families that we just... we were just going round in circles because the floating support, it's not enough. And their needs were so high that we were doing 20-plus hours a week just on one family. Only to just keep it ticking over, not to make any progress"
(Project manager)²

2 Nixon, J., Hunter, C., Parr, S. (Sheffield Hallam University), Myers, S. (University of Salford), Whittle, S. (Sheffield Hallam University), Diana Sanderson (Mill Mount Consulting), *Interim Evaluation of Rehabilitation Projects for Families at Risk of Losing their Home*, for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2006 www.shu.ac.uk/research/ceir/downloads/Anti%20Social%20Behaviour%20Intensive%20Family%20Support%20Project.pdf

Family Intervention Tenancy (FIT)

9. The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 created the 'Family Intervention Tenancy' (FIT). Under the FIT, families are provided with accommodation on a non-secure tenancy, which can become secure (or assured) on successful completion of their work with the FIP. Social housing providers may consider negotiating use of a Family Intervention Tenancy to incentivise families to engage with FIPs. Guidance on Family Intervention Tenancies is available at:
www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/familyinterventiontenancies.pdf

FIPs and safeguarding

10. **The needs of children are of paramount concern to FIPs and all of the support provided for the family is undertaken in the interests of the children involved.**
11. FIPs are critical partners in assessing whether children's safety or welfare may be at risk and can help develop and deliver elements of Child Protection Plans. FIP key workers continue to work closely with the social worker (who is the lead professional) for any child considered to be at risk. Local authorities need to ensure effective protocols are in place between statutory agencies and FIPs (see also Guidance note 8) and all FIP staff should receive appropriate safeguarding training before working with families. Both the implementation of a protocol for joint working between FIPs and children's social care and safeguarding training for key workers are conditions of the Think Family grant.

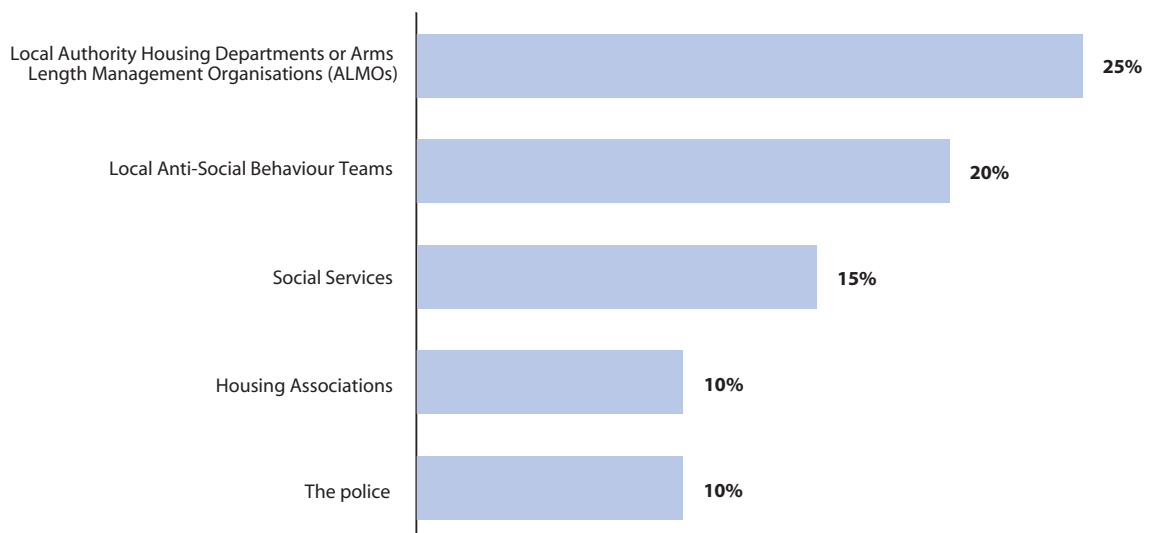
Setting up a FIP

12. The funding for FIPs is time limited so using the funds available to get them 'up and running' as quickly as possible is a priority – both to start clearing the backlog of families which need help and to start developing the strong economic case (see Guidance note 3) local projects will need to secure continued funding.
13. Setting up any new project involves enormous challenges and FIPs are no exception. First of all the project needs support at board-level to drive through recruitment and establish the FIP within existing service arrangements. Then, of course, an experienced and committed service manager is essential to 'make it all happen'.
14. Those areas that have set up new projects and struggled to find good quality staff quickly have used creative solutions to get the right people in post and trained. Seconding staff, using the authorities' recruiting agency or contracting work to an established voluntary sector provider in the area can deliver rapid results if the kind of workers needed have been clearly identified.
15. FIP workers can come from a range of backgrounds. The multi-disciplinary nature of many FIP teams, with workers from social care, housing, health, the police and the criminal justice system, is one of the strengths of the model. Workers are often attracted by the low case loads and the flexibility to work in ways which can make a real difference to the families they work with. Attitude, commitment and a willingness to

both support and challenge is more important than qualifications. Workers also need to be willing, and be contracted to, work outside office hours. This is essential if families experiencing problems are to be supported when they most need help.

16. To support the expansion of FIPs, DCSF is developing a national training programme to support key worker practice. We are working with the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) to develop a set of professional standards for key workers, which should be available for consultation in Autumn 2010.
17. Building relationships with relevant agencies is vital to ensuring families are appropriately referred to the FIP. This can involve visiting key agencies, setting up referral pathways and panels, and agreeing with partners how FIP services can complement existing structures. Effective working relationships with children's social care services is particularly important given the vulnerability of children in families support by FIPs. Again senior-level support is vital here or projects could find themselves 'out in the cold' and not embedded in local systems. The diagram below illustrates the range of agencies that generate referrals to the ASB FIPs. This list is being significantly broadened by the CP FIPs and YC FIPs who are receiving referrals from agencies such as Jobcentre Plus, Children's Centres, prisons, YOTs, and the Probation Service.

The main referral agencies were:



Source: NatCen data on first 2,225 families who were offered and had accepted a FIP intervention.

18. All FIPs are required to make returns to the **National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) FIP Information System** on each family they see. This provides national level data on how effective FIPs are at reducing risk factors and the numbers and types of families reached across the country. It also provides important local data to enable project managers and commissioners to monitor their own performance. In particular the data can be used to monitor:
- *Case loads:* annual case loads of six families or more per worker can be achieved when a project is established but this needs to be balanced against levels of drop out, the size of the families being supported, and complexity of their needs, etc.
 - *Programme exits and reduction in risks:* both the numbers dropping out or completing early and those successfully completing projects provide important information on how effective a project is being in engaging and retaining families and supporting them in moving on.
 - *The sustainability of outcomes from FIPs:* NatCen are developing the existing system to allow projects to record follow-up with families 9–14 months on – another important measure of the sustainability of outcomes delivered to families. This is due to be published Spring 2010.
 - *Reduction in risk factors:* the extent to which FIPs reduce risk factors (recorded by key workers but based on discussions with other agencies, police, schools, registered social landlords, etc) provides measures of both project effectiveness, impact on individual families and the cost savings incurred by partner agencies.
19. Securing long-term investment in FIPs from local partners should be a key task for projects from the outset. Inviting key decision makers and politicians to visit FIPs when they are up and running often helps them ‘understand’ FIP working practices and many become powerful advocates for the approaches used. By reducing the risk factors affecting a family, FIPs will reduce the demands they make on other agencies. This can make a persuasive case for further investment particularly when there are competing demands for resources. In addition, impact statements from neighbours can provide a powerful way of evidencing the effect of reductions in anti-social behaviour on the quality of life in local communities. Guidance note 3 provides unit costs for a number of these risks which commissioners may find useful in developing business cases for further investment in FIPs.
20. Every local authority is asked to provide 6-monthly updates on progress in establishing and running a FIP and can call upon the support of their Regional Lead and FIP Specialist in the Department for Children, Schools and Families’ (DCSF’s) Family Delivery Team. These are experts who have extensive practical experience of setting up and operating FIPs or commissioning services for parents. As well as providing advice on recruitment, training and operational issues they will assess progress and help develop referral arrangements and links with key partners. Contact details are provided in the *Think Family* Bibliography.

Types of FIPs

Anti-social behaviour FIPs (ASB FIPs)

21. These FIPs developed out of the Government's anti-social behaviour strategy which focused on tackling problems such as neighbour nuisance. It was clear that a relatively small number of families, with complex problems, are often involved in persistent anti-social behaviour and responsible for a disproportionate amount of problems in communities.
22. The Respect Task Force worked directly with local authorities to establish 53 Family Intervention Projects across the country in 2006–2007. There are now 66 of these projects funded until March 2011.

Family Intervention Project Housing Challenge Fund

23. In October, the Prime Minister announced the Government's intention to further expand FIPs across England. A new £15m Housing Challenge Fund has been made available for social housing providers to bid in partnership with Children's Services to ensure all families in deprived communities, who need intensive support can access this. Many of these families will be involved in ASB and causing problems in the areas in which they live.
24. The Housing Challenge Fund is supported by the Tenant Services Authority, as well as Communities and Local Government (CLG), Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Home Office and the Ministry of Justice.
25. To deliver effective FIPs, there will need to be strong partnerships locally between social housing providers and local authority children's services, and with other partners including police, health, JobCentre Plus and the strategic housing authority. New projects will begin to deliver to families in April 2010.

For more information visit: www.dcsf.gov.uk/ecm/thinkfamily

Child poverty FIPs (CP FIPs)

26. Funding for 32 Child Poverty Family Intervention Projects for 2008–11 was announced in the Budget 2008. The projects are aimed at tackling barriers to work such as drug & alcohol misuse, domestic violence, and mental health problems (which often go hand in hand), to access training and employment and thus a route out of poverty, particularly where this is intergenerational and improving children's life chances. Support for adults might include drug treatment, parenting classes, debt and budgeting advice and JCP employment related training and support.

Case study: Newcastle

A family was referred to the **Newcastle Child Poverty FIP** because of a history of worklessness, abuse, parental alcohol misuse and depression, domestic violence, mental health problems, overcrowding and debt issues. The FIP set up a contract with the family which included individual and joint sessions around alcohol use, abuse suffered, educational aspirations, counselling, parenting issues of overcrowding and debt management. Outcomes included: the mother and grandmother attending basic literacy and numeracy courses; the mother beginning to apply for jobs; reduction in parents' alcohol use; parents placed on priority housing list; improved parenting skills; activities during the summer holidays for the children; improved attendance at school and the father and grandfather being more involved with parenting tasks via family support work.

Youth crime FIPs (YC FIPs):

27. The 2008 Youth Crime Action Plan announced funding for every LA to establish a FIP to target families where children and young people are at risk of future offending. Of course the risk factors for offending are the same as those that cause a range of other poor outcomes for children and young people, including poor attainment and behavioural problems, often leading to school exclusion. Work with families to prevent offending should therefore form a part of wider action, including early intervention, to prevent **all** poor outcomes for children and young people.
28. Examples of projects funded with Youth Crime Action Plan monies are provided below to indicate the range of options which local authorities have developed:
29. **Projects targeting families with a particular type of risk:** These are FIPs which are designed around the most significant types of risk in families such as prolific parental offending, substance misuse and domestic violence. For example, focusing projects on the families of prolific offenders might have considerable impact given the high proportion of boys with convicted fathers who go on to be convicted themselves. Projects could put in place comprehensive support to address the needs of all family members. This might include supporting families to maintain contact with a parent in prison or other forms of secure setting such as a Young Offenders Institution or Secure Treatment Centre and providing support with parenting, resettlement or other problems. Projects might particularly focus on young children in these families to put in place interventions needed to interrupt intergenerational disadvantage. Projects may employ specialist staff (for example prison liaison workers, domestic violence specialists, substance abuse workers, staff seconded in from local third sector organisations or working under contract, etc) and would need to link closely with the police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Prison Service and Probation Service.

Case study: Hull – Working with families of offenders

HMP Hull is a Category B community and local prison holding remand, sentenced and convicted adult males and young offenders. Approximately 80 per cent of the prison population have a local address (within approx 50 miles of the prison). The staff identified one of their main concerns as men on short sentences who go on to re-offend and return to prison for another short sentence. The prison governor is very keen to work with families and look at support beyond incarceration.

The prison has provided a building to be used as an Offender and Family Resource Centre where the FIP will be based along with a range of services such as Drug and Alcohol Advice and Support services, housing advice and employment and skills advice. The centre will be used to deliver family friendly services and to develop support pre-release and discharge planning and link to support services. The prison has successfully bid for funding to employ link workers to support men who have just been released and they will work closely with the FIP.

The Hull YC FIP is currently working with 15 families of offenders who are serving a sentence of 12 months or less. This number is expected to increase during the next quarter as a result of the service actively seeking referrals from the Humberside Probation Trust. The project is working with families throughout the criminal justice process, while a parent is in prison and also when the prisoner is released. Evidence from the first families worked with by the project suggest significant early success:

"It's funny how things have worked out – if I'd not been on probation I'd have never worked with FIP and never thought of going to college – now I am doing it." (Mother 23)

"Because of the stresses I've had where I live – I could have easily used (heroin) again – but because of FIP I've been able to move house and stay clean."

"This is the most I've felt listened-to in my life – I can't believe how quickly things have changed since I've been working with the project." (Father 26)

"We've got our own house because you've worked with us – now it's time for him to get a job!" (Partner of Offender – PPO)

"We've enjoyed doing the activities with the children (6, 13 months), we've never done this before – we do it all the time now."

"Really glad that there's a link now between the Offender and Social Services – this was missing." (Probation Officer)

30. Projects focused on families with multiple problems and very young children:

ASB FIPs already work effectively with families where there are younger children in the family. For FIPs targeting families with multiple problems and children in the early years, health professionals need to be given a core role as they are the main, usually lead, universal service working with families in pregnancy and the first years of life when health and clinical concerns are a priority and when infants are particularly vulnerable. Health professionals have the lead responsibility working with other children's services, for the universal Healthy Child Programme (formerly known as the Child Health Promotion Programme) and other evidence-based preventative programmes, such as the Family-Nurse Partnership (focusing on vulnerable, young first-time mothers). FIPs developed for families with children in the early years, should have referral criteria and processes agreed with health services, including General Practitioners.

Case study: Blackpool – focusing on substance misusing families with children under 5 years old

This project is being delivered in Sure Start Children's Centres. Families are identified through mainstream adult substance misuse services. They have direct linkage with specialist midwife and specialist health visitor support. They will refer parents who present for treatment with at least one child under the age of 5, with additional risk factors associated with poor outcomes for children. Families attend a five-session course involving parents and their children in a range of activities at their local Children's Centre. The activities at these sessions are linked to the Every Child Matters Outcomes and support the child's development and the family's well-being. A contract is agreed and drawn up with the families and reviewed every six weeks. There is access to a commissioning budget around individual needs to provide nursery provision and basic household goods.

- 31. Projects focused on families with children identified as at risk of offending:** High risk families will often have a number of children in different age groups and the FIP needs to be able to respond to the needs of all those children. Some youth crime projects however have chosen to focus on a particular cohort of children in order to identify families. The severity of family environment and behaviour of children who are at high risk of becoming offenders allows many of them to be identified during childhood (age 5–10) often through schools and other universal services.

Case study: Tameside focusing on families who have children aged between 5 and 10 years at risk of offending

Tameside are targeting families experiencing multiple problems who are exhibiting behaviours which suggest a high risk of being drawn into offending. Children will be identified via the YOT Prevention Team, probation, police (for example families where there is prolific offending or parents returning home from prison), schools (where additional needs identified especially where these are pre-cursors of criminal behaviour such as persistent conduct disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder [ADHD], poor attendance, etc), substance-using families support, Operation Staysafe, and Joint Street Outreach Teams.

32. Other areas have chosen to identify families through Youth Justice Board programmes such as Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) for 13–17-year-olds and Youth Inclusion Support Panels for 8–13-year-olds. These programmes target young people in a neighbourhood who are considered to be most at risk of offending, but are also open to other young people in the area. Young people are identified through a number of different agencies, including the YOT, police, children and family services, local education authorities or schools, neighbourhood wardens and anti-social behaviour teams.

Projects targeting families with children and young people involved with gangs, knives or youth violence

Case study Liverpool have set up a YC FIP, targeting families that are involved in gun and knife crime. Referrals will come via a panel which will have multi-agency representation where families are identified. Good links have been established with the police. A protocol has been established with Social Care & Health regarding referrals made to the project and the sharing of information. Liverpool has a protocol regarding knife and gun crime that the project will form part of. The families are known to a number of services and are known to be difficult to engage with.

Health funding on FIPs

33. FIPs have been shown to deliver a range of outcomes beyond stopping anti-social behaviour and preventing homelessness. They are effective in improving parenting and children's attendance and attainment at school. Health promotion and tackling risky behaviours is also an important focus of FIP's work.
34. The complexity and range of health and well-being needs of the families and individuals that FIPs work with means that one individual cannot deliver all of the support required. For these reasons, ASB FIPs have available to them a 'Nominated Health Professional' (NHP) to act as a contact to help projects access the health services

needed by the families. The Department of Health provides £3 million over 2009–10 and £3 million over 2010–11 to FIPs across the 150 local authority areas to improve the health contribution. This funding enables FIP areas to co-locate a health professional part time to work closely with every local authority to help improve the health outcomes of FIP families. Professional leadership and commissioning knowledge are important skills for this role. Health visitors, school nurses, qualified nurses, psychologists and other mental health professionals could be considered important professionals for this role.

For more information of the FIP model see: www.dcsf.gov.uk/ecm/thinkfamilygrant

Information on FIPs focused on families involved in anti-social behaviour is available at: www.respect.gov.uk/members/article.aspx?id=11874

Guidance on Family Intervention Tenancies is available at: www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/familyinterventiontenancies.pdf

