

Family Safeguarding Cambridgeshire

The Strengthening Families, Protecting Children - Family Safeguarding approach improves outcomes for vulnerable children and young people by involving multi-disciplinary teams in children's social care. Cambridgeshire is one of six local authorities delivering this model of social care and was allocated £4.1m in 2019 to be a trailblazer authority for the scheme.

Most children who are facing the greatest risks to their wellbeing are those who live in families where at least one of the adults is struggling with mental or emotional health issues, substance or alcohol difficulties, or where there is domestic abuse. Under the Family Safeguarding approach, children's social work teams are expanded to include adult practitioners who are experts at supporting parents to address these challenges.

Family Safeguarding has three core elements:

1. **Multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs)**: specialist adult workers with domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health expertise working within social work teams. Group case supervisions are also held with all workers allocated to a case.
2. **Motivational Interviewing (MI)**: MI supports families in dealing with a variety of mental health, substance misuse and domestic violence issues planning and connecting them with the resources they need to achieve such change and helping them to find their own personal motivation for positive change.
3. **Structured Workbook**: a new method of recording case notes with the aim of improving information sharing, streamlining processes and reducing the amount of time spent reporting.

"We hope to continue this journey and continue to improve the lives of the children and families within our communities." - Lou Williams, Director of Children's Services

"Putting specialists together in a sustained way to help a family solve its wider problems has been key to this approach and ultimately what keeps a child safe within their own family" - Assistant Director for Children's Social Care Nicola Curley.

What Works Evaluation of the implementation of Family Safeguarding Cambridgeshire

A 7-month study into the implementation of the Family Safeguarding pilot in Cambridgeshire published in June, highlighted that 60 per cent fewer children were subject to care proceedings due to the new approach allowing children to stay safely with their families.

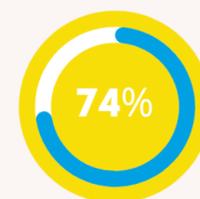
And now as a result of the findings, recommendations are being made for other local authorities considering the family safeguarding approach, based on what worked well in Cambridgeshire.

Cambridgeshire's way of working has also been shown to improve best practice, with staff able to provide more targeted support at the right place and time and spending more time with families instead of having time taken up dealing with the legal aspects of care proceedings.

A recent report into the Cambridgeshire Family Safeguarding model found that:



Agreed that Motivational Interviewing is an effective way to improve outcomes for families



Felt that leadership and management kept them well informed about changes affecting their work.



Expect to remain within Children's Safeguarding in Cambridgeshire for the next year.

The publication can be read in full [here](#)