

# Family safeguarding Bracknell Forest

## Keeping families together



The family safeguarding model has launched in Bracknell Forest, aiming to reduce the number of children taken into care by motivating and inspiring parents to make the changes needed to keep their family together. But what does it mean for you?

### The challenge

Without access to specialist help, children's social workers alone cannot protect children from the risks they face from parental mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse. Children's social workers don't have the specialist knowledge or expertise in these areas and therefore need to refer parents onto other agencies where they may not meet eligibility thresholds and may be reluctant to attend appointments.

### The solution

We have created two family safeguarding teams with staff from a range of professions, including adult specialists who provide direct help for families and their children. Both teams are based together in the same location so they can work closely together. We now focus on working with families using techniques such as motivational interviewing to inspire parents to realise the changes needed and make them happen. There are four steps to success that we will work through together:

## 1 Focus on families' abilities and support them to make change happen.

The concept of family safeguarding is a simple one: get people who are working with the same family to work in a team and share the concerns and risks.

We have changed how we work with families to focus on a more motivational approach. This is a more collaborative way of working, where we aim to motivate parents to identify for themselves the change needed within their families rather than imposing change upon them. As professionals, it is important we come together to support parents to identify their own reasons for change and the actions they need to take to keep their children safe.

The overall aim is to bring about long term change within families which is driven by the parents themselves and is therefore likely to be more sustainable.



## 2 A range of professionals work together in the same place to provide joined up support. The teams are made up of:

**Social workers** - who work with families to support them to make the changes to keep their children safe.

**Family workers** - work with families and children and provide support to social workers.

**Domestic abuse victim workers** - support victims of domestic abuse, help them to recognise domestic abuse, and support them to make changes to protect their family.

**Domestic abuse perpetrator workers** - these support perpetrators of domestic abuse to recognise the impact of their actions and how these can affect their families.

**Drug & Alcohol recovery workers** - work with parents who are experiencing difficulties with either drugs, alcohol or both, and support them to make positive lifestyle changes.

**Mental health workers** - work with parents who are experiencing mental health difficulties.

**Clinical Psychologist** - works with parents on different aspects of parenting that may affect their children.



## 3 Changing our culture

### Our teams work with families to support them and address the difficulties they may be experiencing.

Previously, social workers were often process driven and task focussed, following activities laid out in child protection or child in need plans. Now, group case supervision includes all the professionals working with the family and each team member is focused on supporting the family to achieve what they need to in order to keep their children safe.



## 4 It's easier to share information

### We are developing a new way of accessing our children's database known as the mosaic workbook. This will reduce the time social workers spend recording information.

You'll be given the tools to support best practice:

An eight module parenting assessment/intervention programme guides family safeguarding workers through the interventions they put in place with families over time. It captures parental capacity to change and incorporates tools to analyse risk and identify needs. This will help to define priority issues and enable staff to set and track progress towards goals for each family member. Recording on a single family mosaic workbook for all professionals to feed into will reduce the amount of time spent on recording, travelling, meetings and writing separate reports. The workbook provides a concise record of the case, and will prove helpful in reducing time spent preparing for case proceedings.



# Family safeguarding Bracknell Forest

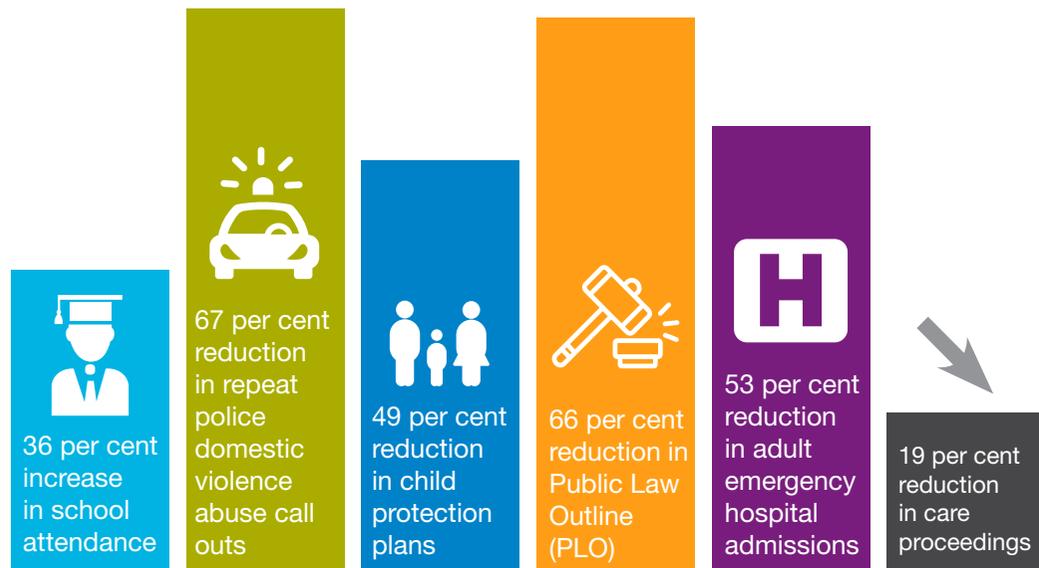
## Keeping families together



Bringing together all the professionals we need under one roof to protect children

### What does success look like?

### Results from Hertfordshire showed:



#### Partners

The model is supported by a strong partnership between the council, East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Groups, Thames Valley Police, probation, service and the local mental health trust.

#### Case study from Hertfordshire:

##### Mary's story:

Mary has had previous children removed. She is in an abusive relationship and is using drink and drugs. The family has PLO status. Family safeguarding has supported Mary to look after her new baby.

She says "All the support – the social worker, the mental health worker and domestic violence worker – all came together. They made their plans and they've worked for me. Without the support I've had ... I wouldn't have her today. She's my little miracle.

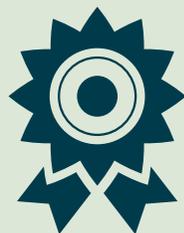
I'd like to thank everyone for what they've done. I have a new life and a new beginning. I want to get her into school. Never go into an abusive relationship. Do all the things she needs. I am on cloud nine."

"We held her and the unborn baby at the focus of all the interventions and made her feel safe. It worked well. Mum was ready to engage. She empowered herself to move on" **Mary's social worker**

More time spent with families, less time spent on administration



Quality of work praised by CAFCASS and the courts



Ofsted 'Good' rating



Huge enthusiasm from staff



Children looked after reduced by 10 per cent



£3.6m less expenditure in first year



Significant improvement in feedback from families and schools

