



## FAMILIES FIRST DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26

### Local Authority:

The Delivery Plan comprises four sections, each of which must be completed prior to submission.

Section A – Local Authority Overview of Families First Delivery Plan.

Section B – Delivery of Elements

Section C – Challenges and Risks

### Section A - Overview

Please provide an overview of, and rationale for, the proposed Families First programme within your area for 2025-26. You should identify the needs of the area and how your plan addresses them. Where changes to delivery are being made, please explain how they remain aligned with FF programme.

#### The Gwynedd Family Support and Parenting Strategy

Gwynedd Council have developed and updated its Children and Families Strategy. Our focus remains on the strategic direction that is set within the Family Support and Parenting Commissioning Strategy. The vision is that families in Gwynedd will be 'strong, resilient, and prosperous' to ensure that:

- *Children get the best start in life.*
- *Parents, carers, and families receive the right type of support at the right time to enable them to provide the best level of care and opportunities for their children.*
- *Children and young people achieve their full learning potential and develop skills.*
- *Children, young people, and families enjoy the best possible health and have fair access to energetic, cultural, play and leisure opportunities.*
- *Children, young people, and families, are, able to voice their opinions confidently and make a positive contribution to their communities.*

- *Children, young people, and families live in suitable and stable homes and accommodation*
- *Young people develop into confident, successful, and independent adults.*

The Gwynedd Children and Families Leadership Group and Gwynedd Council's Cabinet have agreed the vision. We are therefore focusing on the following outcomes and commissioning services in line with what we seek to achieve, namely that:

- working with families whose children could be affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)
- children, young people, and families, in or at risk of poverty achieve their potential.
- children, young people, and families are healthy, safe and enjoy wellbeing.
- families are confident, nurturing, and resilient.

These outcomes are underpinned by a range of key principles that are core to the potential solutions you may design. These are:

- **Needs based** – access to services is based on **need** rather than where families, parents, children, or young people live.
- **Preventative** – re-directing our focus towards stopping problems developing and reducing dependency.
- **Targeted** – protecting and nurturing people and addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged communities.
- **Personalised** – ensuring that services are **tailored** so that they effectively meet people's needs and provide flexibility to respond in Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd.
- **Integrated** – agencies who deliver services must work together to meet needs and therefore tender in partnership for families signalling a conscious shift towards more integrated services.
- **Consistency and flexibility** – Many stakeholders underlined the need for consistency to promote equality of access across the County. Alongside this, stakeholders and partners called for flexibility across the three areas of Arfon, Meirionnydd and Dwyfor, in order, to link up rather than displace continuing service provision in some areas and plug gaps in others.
- **Empowering and strengths based** – all family and parent support should be **empowering** – supporting people to do things for themselves, building on identified strengths and assisting in making change sustainable.
- **Family focused** – all services need to **place families at the heart of their approach** – families first not service first (**Ffordd Gwynedd**)

- **Value for Money** – all family and parenting support services must offer value for money linked to an appropriate outcome measurement framework – **cost and quality**.
- **Bilingual** – all family support and parenting support services will be offered in the **language of choice**.

Programme delivery:

- ACE's focus and priority
- Age range shift for family and parenting support interventions with an increased focus on elements of the programme on the 8-18year groups; 0-7, **7-12, 13-18 (25\*)**
- Increased support for parents, children and young people living with disability and parents with learning difficulties or mental health problems.
- Cessation of financial services support
- Greater awareness of substance misuse problems in families (parents and children, links to domestic violence and domestic abuse)
- No requirement for Learning Sets, however we need to consider a Training and Learning Forum for all aspects of the Families First projects.
- Fathers (resident or non-resident).
- Gypsy and Travelling Families
- Families experiencing imprisonment.

## Section B - Delivery

Local Authorities are also expected to prioritise the Team Around the Family model and continue to ensure multi-agency working remains an integral feature of Families First.

### JAFF/TAF

To ensure seamless access to preventative and/or statutory services dependent on the level of need, Gwynedd have adopted and continue to use the regional SSWBA assessment and care planning templates. We have made some adjustments to these to reflect best working practice captured in Gwynedd.

The regional referral form has been adopted that enables referrers to use one form to access preventative and /or statutory services. The referral form includes and is structured to consider the families strengths and considers what their wellbeing outcomes are. It also captures the “what matters” question so that any referral focuses on what are the important issues that the family want support or assistance with.

Following on from this, Gwynedd has adopted the regional Part 3 care and support assessment and eligibility tool across preventative and statutory services enabling families

to move easily between provision if, and when the need arises, as such reducing the assessment burden on them.

The key elements included in the JAFF have been retained in the part 3 assessment document due to the keenness of the group to have one overall assessment tool.

The JAFF and Part 3 Assessment tool share a common language, and both are underpinned by the same principle of building upon and recognising family's strengths.

The TAF structure will retain its position as coordinators of support and senior case managers for the 3 **Family support Teams**; 3 coordinators allocated to the Arfon Team and 1 each to the Dwyfor and (commissioned) Meirionnydd Teams.

## Disability Services

### Service Provider - DERWEN

Through our close work with families with disabled children we have identified number of areas which are needed to support families and children to improve outcomes for parents and young people. These areas cover the full age range in terms of enhancing parent skills and resilience and targets older children in enhancing their own skills in understanding and dealing with their emotions. Specifically:

1. Preventative mental health work for children and teenagers with learning disability

Enhancing the skills of young people with learning disability (LD) to better understand and tolerate their emotional experiences is likely to affect their own well-being, reduce challenging behaviour and mental health difficulties, and have a 'knock-on' effect on their family. Providing skills/training on emotional and mental health for young people with LD is a neglected area or preventative work.

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) is a treatment for individuals with extreme emotional sensitivity, i.e. whose emotional responses are quicker, bigger and take longer to return to baseline than average. These responses often lead to risky and impulsive behaviours to reduce and tolerate emotional experiences. DBT usually involves group-based skills training; a weekly skills class to teach and shape the learning of new skills to manage emotions. It involves mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotion regulation and interpersonal effectiveness (e.g. asking/saying no, keeping/ending relationships, and self-respect). DBT is an evidence-based approach and is routinely available for young people without learning disability, adults with mental health difficulties, and adults with learning difficulties. It is not currently available for adolescents with learning disability.

After a successful pilot in the special schools the service continues to provide emotional regulation groups (either face to face or virtually) also during the pandemic these sessions were offered on a 1:1 basis. These sessions were also a success with regular positive feedback received from the families. The project is now delivering the sessions in mainstream schools.

We have continued with the work of delivering an adapted DBT course to young people with learning disability and to evaluate the work to add to the knowledge base of how to enhance the skills of young people with LD. Their schools or other agency as likely to benefit from this kind of work would identify the young people. All special schools in the area will continue to be offered group-work and support in continuing with the work themselves.

The service has extended to young people with LD outside special schools. We also offer the groups to children and young people who have additional needs other than a learning disability who are in mainstream schools. We have found that the course we offer benefits many children and young people who are under the neurodivergent umbrella as many struggles with their emotional regulation.

We have developed a series of 2 workshops for parents to discuss, understanding and managing their child's emotions. There is also an emphasis within these workshops on the parents / carer's emotional wellbeing. These are discussed further in part 2.

## 2. Senior Parent Support Officer and Parent Support Officers.

Having a child with a disability presents many additional challenges alongside the usual challenges, families face. Given recent experience, increasing families' chances of participating in an evidence-based group intervention through appropriate support is likely to enable more people to benefit from the programmes that are on offer. The Parent Support Officers are responsible for supporting families to access these evidence-based intervention groups.

The Senior Parent Support Officer along with the Parent Support officers identify where and when a group is needed, organise the people needed to run the groups, and support them in running them.

Locally we have a wealth of skilled workers in statutory services and third sector who are trained and able to run evidence-based preventative interventions for families. The team has been working collaboratively with several different services including Health, Social Services, Families First Teams in running various parenting programs and workshops.

The senior Parent Support officer uses the above knowledge and strategies to link in with and support the two parent support officers in the team to complete individual work with families e.g. assisting with behaviour management strategies or other parenting activities.

These are the workshops and evidence-based programmes we have found to be successful in supporting families of children with additional needs in Gwynedd: Since September 2023 we have run the **Riding the Rapids Course** 4 times in Gwynedd. Riding the Rapids is a course designed for parents and carers of children who are autistic, on the pathway for an autism assessment or who have significant learning disabilities or other complex disabilities. The course aims to help parents to

understand and support their child's well-being, and reduce stress, distress and distress-related behaviours, or other behaviours of concern.

Research shows that parents and carers who attend Riding the Rapids can develop effective strategies to support their children and increase their coping skills and confidence therefore reducing stress.

Riding the Rapids was developed in Manchester by the Specialist Community Service—Learning Disabilities and Autism. The Social Policy and Research Unit at the University of York have researched it.

There are two separate courses: one for parents/ carers of primary-aged (reception to year 6) children and one for parents/ carers of secondary aged teenagers (school years 7-11).

Feedback from attendees of the Riding the Rapids course has been positive. Parents have reported that they feel listened to, and parents really valued being able to get together, the sessions were 'almost like a therapy session'. A lot of parents feel Riding the Rapids has given them some great strategies and use them still. Parents reported that relating to other parents' struggles has been good and connecting with others and offloading in a safe space.

**Sleep workshops and support.** We can offer support to Families of children with Learning Disabilities and or additional needs. Some parents are unable to attend workshops, so we offer 1:1 support either online or by Visiting the home. One of the parent support officers has recently completed the Cerebra Essential Paediatric sleep advice consultant training.

**ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy)** sessions have been provided for parent who are struggling with their child's diagnosis, these have been a success and will be a part of our future programmes.

**MAKATON** sessions were provided after numerous parents requested assistance with communication techniques.

**Parent Support groups, The Meet and Make sessions** are held twice a month virtually. These groups are a parent support and wellbeing group. We also organise face to face sessions across the county.

We also co run the **Cuppa and Chat sessions** with the Gwynedd Autism Team and Specialist School Nursing Team. The sessions allow parents a safe space to meet with other parents of children with additional needs and to chat with Services such as ours who offer support.

We also organise **play sessions** during half term holidays.

Support for **young carers**, we can offer an assessment and support for children who may be undertaking additional tasks because of a sibling with a disability.

**Sensory workshops and support.** Research shows that around 90% of individuals with ASC have some sensory processing difficulties. Therefore, it is important to supporting parents to recognise and understand their child's sensory needs.

We can offer 1:1 support or workshops. Members of the team have attended an Accredited Sensory Needs Practitioner Training course. This course enabled the attendees to have access to a programme, which allows professionals to assess an individual's needs and creates targeted sensory programmes for that individual.

**Understanding and Managing Emotions support.** We can offer support to families of children with Learning Disabilities and or additional needs. Some parents are unable to attend workshops, so we offer 1:1 support either online or by visiting the home. In these sessions we discuss why some children with a learning Disability, or additional needs find it difficult to regulate their emotions. We discuss the importance of children understanding their emotions and we try out different strategies for parents to support their child to regulate their emotions. We also discuss the importance of parents looking after their own well-being.

Programmes like those mentioned above aim to support and empower parents of disabled children and children with additional needs in their parenting role to understand their child's communication and behaviour, and appropriately manage behaviour to prevent escalation in challenging behaviour due to parent-child 'mismatch'. The workshops and programmes have also been successful in bringing parents together. Many parents feel isolated and may not have the same support networks as other parents. Coming to a session or a course can be very daunting. We collaborate closely with parents to make sure they feel comfortable with attending sessions. Parents have reported that they feel listened to and that the advice and support they receive from other parents is so important. This would not have been available to them if they had not attended the group/course.

We are also looking into other evidence-based programmes:

Kent university have developed EPATS (Early Positive Approaches to Support). This is a program for parents / carers with children under the age of five with a learning disability. The team is currently looking into how we can provide the service in Gwynedd.

## **Commissioned services or projects**

- 1. Parenting support**
- 2. Support for young people.**

**Project: Lot 2: A Family Support Service; Therapeutic, Counselling and Mediation Services**

The project will be one of three specialist **Family Support Services (FSSs)** projects and will provide specialist support to the 3 **Family Support Teams (FSTs)** in Gwynedd; Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd.

The following work will be delivered:

- Therapeutic Counselling for children 10-19yrs based on nationally recognised Therapeutic and Counselling qualifications provided by appropriately trained staff.
- Inter-parental Relationship Conflict Therapy based on nationally recognised Therapeutic and Counselling qualifications and provided by appropriately trained staff.
- Evidence based interventions that use the nationally recognised Motivational Interviewing practice.
- Parent-Child (to include absent fathers) mediation.
- Evidence based Family Group Conferencing programmes that resolve issues within the family, which hinder the family's ability to provide a stable and happy home life environment.
- Evidence based counselling for children and young people who have experienced Bereavement or Loss of significant adults and influences in their lives.
- Person centred Counselling
- Evidence based programmes for fathers (who present violence towards partners/family).

This will be done through one-to-one work, group work, mediation, and group conferencing. Although some interventions should relate to appropriate adult-based theories (the parents), the outcomes should be child focused, fully considering the mitigation of **Adverse Childhood Experiences**.

Provider will have experience of delivering services to children, young people, and families, including those affected by Domestic Abuse, suffer from poor mental health, and have a learning disability. To meet the needs of users, sessions may be centre based, community based or within the home.

As part of the wider project, it is expected for the successful organisation(s) to work closely with Gwynedd Council Children's Services and the Family Support Teams and the other Specialist Services providing support for the Families First Programme in Gwynedd.

There will be development of a specific referrals and screening process for case and family allocation, the successful applicant(s) will be required to contribute towards and comply with agreed referral and assessment processes.

Ensure that the people of Gwynedd are at the centre of everything we do – 'Ffordd Gwynedd'.

Lot 2 services will be available through the referral of the Information Advice and Assistance process and TAF Team (the Gwynedd Team around the Family).

**Project: Lot 5: Family Support Team for Arfon, Dwyfor & Meirionnydd Area - Gwynedd**

### **Provider: Plas Pawb**

A comprehensive Family Support Team specification is provided and will cover the whole of Gwynedd – (**Dwyfor, Meirionnydd and Arfon**) and will work in collaboration with the Meirionnydd Team and the TAF team to ensure a clear and effective referral and case management route and progression.

The main high-level outcomes for the projects are set out in the Welsh Governments '**Families First Programme Guidance**' (April 2017)

This Lot includes provision of:

#### **Parenting**

1. Evidence based parenting interventions and programmes (formal, informal and peer led) on an outreach basis to parents / families with children and young people between the ages of 5 and 25 years old. Provision will therefore need to be delivered flexibly on a 1-2-1 basis and in group settings according to the needs of parents and families.
2. Evidence based family support service to parents, families with children and young people between the ages of 5 and 25. Again provision should be delivered flexibly within the home and from outreach family centres according to the needs of parents/families.
  - Developing positive attitudes, aspirations, and resilience
  - Enhancing positive parenting skills
  - Increasing parents' confidence and skills in providing a positive home learning environment and supporting their child with their learning
3. Bespoke services to promote the mental health and emotional wellbeing of parents and to promote and sustain effective relationships with the family.
  - Improving parent-child and parent-parent relationships
  - Increasing parents' confidence in their parenting role
  - Strengthening parents' understanding of child development
  - Supporting parents to achieve good mental health.
  - Supporting parents to achieve positive emotional wellbeing.

#### **Young People**

4. Bespoke services for parents/families with children and young people under special circumstances e.g. children / young people at risk of becoming NEET, young people at risk of offending, children/ young people with additional learning needs and young people at risk of becoming homeless.
  - Empowering young people to become active and productive participants in society.
  - Increasing confidence and resilience
  - Improving social and emotional wellbeing
  - Improving the life chances of young people

*In addition to these, services should also aim to support young people in the following areas:*

- Building the capacity of young people to consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control.
- Developing positive attitudes, behaviour, and aspirations
- Developing the ability of young people to manage personal and social relationships.
- Preventing needs from escalating
- Protecting young people from the damage caused by exposure to ACEs and other similar experiences.
- Mental Health and Wellbeing - The service model recognises the importance of embedding an appropriate response in the family environment to support the young person's recovery from mental health and wellbeing issues and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

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Lot 5 services will be available through the referral of the Information Advice and Assistance process and TAF Team (the Gwynedd Team around the Family).

### **Project – LOT 6 Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Youth Justice Service**

#### **Provider: Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Youth Justice Service**

- To provide an early intervention (as part of the Families First Programme) service to young people at risk of offending and of anti social behaviours that is likely to bring them into contact with the Police and the criminal justice system. This will include universal and targeted education, prevention programmes and structured work with young people. It will also facilitate access to a range of interventions for young people at risk of substance misuse.
- To provide a specialist service to young people identified as having a range of above issues through the Families First **Family Support Teams**.
- This service will provide a comprehensive assessment and intervention for those young people identified as having moderate to high level needs including referring those in need to the appropriate service and interventions.
- To provide a direct service to children and young people in informal education and community group settings across the area providing appropriate information about substance use/misuse, risk reduction, health, and social well-being.
- Provide casework services to children and young people referred from **FSTs** using recognised theoretical models, an action plan and review systems.
- Support community groups and informal education settings to develop, plan and review drug and alcohol education prevention programmes to be delivered to children and young people in educational settings.
- Support youth workers/ community group leaders to deliver appropriate education prevention programmes to children and young people in their settings.
- Suitability screening of referrals

- Assessment of referral, child and Family using appropriate and proportionate assessment Tool (Asset+, Bureau Assessment, Prevention/Onset)
- Child Centred intervention which take into account Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma
- Specialist Screening (Substance Misuse, Mental Health, Education Training and Employment)
- Opportunity to refer to YJS Health Panel for specialist Advice, assessment and intervention.
- Risk assessment relating to Offending and Public Protection.
- Extensive Restorative Justice and Victim work (Reparation, Mediation)
- Possible referral to Parenting Worker for parents and Carers.

Interventions -

- Child on Parent violence intervention
- Activities to promote health and wellbeing.
- Understanding Crime and the Justice system
- Responsibilities and Children's Rights
- Choices and Consequences work programmes.
- Reparation activity projects
- Victim impact programmes
- Resilience Interventions
- Healthy Living learning (Smoking cessation, healthy diet, good sleeping patterns etc)
- Anger Management and Emotional Regulation

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Lot 6 services will be available through the referral of the Information Advice and Assistance process and TAF Team (the Gwynedd Team around the Family).

### **Section C - Challenges and Risks**

Please outline any areas of challenge or potential risks to the implementation of the Programme within your Local Authority area and how you plan to overcome them.

The main risk for 2025/ 2026 remains as previous year's - the uncertainty about the future of the programme and grant funding and therefore there is a high risk that staff will move to other posts therefore reducing the service available to families in Gwynedd, but hopefully early confirmation of secured funding received will help in reducing any staffing issues due to short term contracts.

The commissioned project will remain in contract until March 31, 2026.