



SOMERSET THINK FAMILY STRATEGY 2018 - 2019

THE RIGHT SERVICE
IN THE RIGHT PLACE
AT THE RIGHT TIME



think child, think parent
THINK FAMILY



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Introduction

“Strong families help build strong communities, so they are crucial for a successful society”

Think Family toolkit 2009

Families are the building blocks of our communities. As well as providing for the current generation, families bring up the children who will be the future of Somerset.

In the majority of cases, families provide the positive nurturing, learning and care needed to enable children to lead healthy and happy lives. Good parenting leads to improved attainment, resilience, healthy lifestyles, confidence and feelings of self-worth. Through the provision of effective universal services in the community, such as GP and other community health services, good child care, nursery and school education, most families will flourish.

Some families however, need extra support. Too often cycles of intergenerational disadvantage can become established in families. Children and young people’s problematic behaviour in school or the community has traditionally been treated as a child-specific issue, rather than one caused by unmet parental need such as mental health, substance misuse, domestic abuse (hidden harm) or broader social circumstances such as housing and debt. This strategy focuses specifically on the needs of these families.



What is Think Family?

It is recognised that where families have multiple and complex needs, historically services have worked in isolation of each other. ‘Thinking Family’ means taking a broader view by ensuring that all members of the household and their wider community are able to get the support they need, at the right time, to enable them to achieve positive changes and improve their lives. It means making sure that families receive integrated, coordinated, multi-agency, solution focused support. By identifying problems early, all services can work closely together to help prevent a family’s needs escalating and requiring more intensive, specialist intervention. This means breaking down multi-agency barriers, facilitating better communication between professionals and smoothing the journey for families with complex needs. By taking an integrated approach, we will meet needs in a more effective and efficient way. Practitioners who work in partnership with families are able to recognise their strengths and promote resilience to build their capabilities.

The aim of the strategy is:

To encourage all partners to 'Think Family' and actively work together to secure better outcomes for children, young people and their families across Somerset.

This strategy has been co-developed along with a number of other key documents (outlined on page 14) to help all staff working with families understand better what we need to do and how to do it.

Think Family: The Principles

- early Intervention and 'no wrong door'
- good inter-agency working
- promotion of resilience and wellbeing to improve their lives
- build on families' strengths
- practitioners have the knowledge and confidence to support families with a range of issues without having to 'refer on' to others

What does effective Think Family working look like:

For Families

- families are empowered to make decisions and changes to their own lives
- families receive tailored support that fits their size and structure, culture and patterns of behaviour
- families tell their story once
- families are listened to and involved at all stages
- where needed, families have a key contact or lead professional who co-ordinates their support and keeps things simple and manageable. They have a trusting relationship with their lead professional
- children and young people are empowered and supported at key transition points in their lives
- families focus on their strengths and building resilience
- families know where to find information, advice and support

For Professionals

- assessments take a holistic approach, with the skills to identify the impact of each of the family members on the family
- information sharing is clear and practitioners seek parents' and children's permission for information sharing and are transparent in their support.
- practitioners are able to recognise and respond appropriately to potential risk factors e.g. domestic abuse, substance misuse and the impact this can have on the family
- practitioners will enable families to seek appropriate support for mental health difficulties
- practitioners understand their responsibilities for safeguarding and remain aware and be prepared to intervene when there is evidence that someone could be at risk
- data is used effectively to understand the needs of children, young people and families and communities
- practitioners work with parents, young people and children to enable the child to have age-appropriate understanding of any difficulties their parents are experiencing
- understand who and how to collaborate when working with other professionals
- a commitment to include all significant others not just immediate family and a willingness to share power and ensure that all voices are heard and taken to account

What does effective Think Family working for services look like?

- services working with adults and children have a shared understanding of the needs and capability of the whole family and take them into account during assessment and action planning
- partners identify and share good practice examples to improve the development of Somerset's workforce
- services working with adults and children work closely to support around the family to provide a tailored and family centred response for families
- communities are empowered so that families can be supported within their community where possible

Think Child, Think Parent, Think Family:

An open door to joined up support at every point of entry. Looking at the family, building on families' strengths and coordinating the approach with support tailored to the family's individual needs.



Why is a Think Family approach important for Somerset?

- identifying vulnerable families and supporting them to make positive changes means that children, young people and families have raised aspirations, improved lives and the costs to society are reduced (evidence from Graham Allen, Munro Report, Marmot review, Frank Field, Early Intervention Foundation¹)
- families tell us that they want practical help with looking after their children and strategies and tools to manage problems themselves
- a joined-up approach of support will offer better quality services
- a lack of coordination between services can mean missing opportunities to:
 - Protect children from harm
 - Support adults with their own problems that may affect / impact their role as parents.
 - Support children to ensure that they do not suffer adverse health, developmental and educational consequences

“They say things like ‘we only work with your mum’, but my mum lives with me, so it is all connected”

- Young Carer



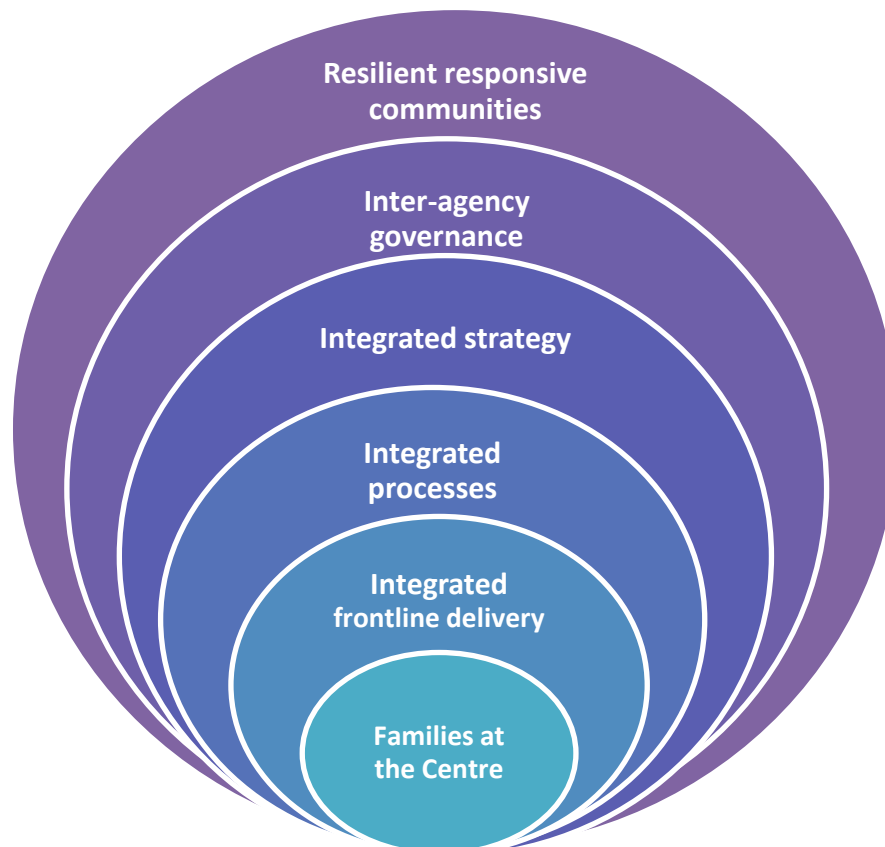
¹ Allen, G. (2011), Early Intervention the next steps

Marmot, M. (2010), fair Society, Healthy Lives- A Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England

Field, F. (2010), The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults

Munro, E. (2011) The Munro review of child protection: Final report, a child-centred system

Think Family: How Change Can Be Achieved



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 coordinated
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
Resilient Responsive Communities	Families are supported in their communities to develop their social capital, reduce isolation, increase social networks, and build their confidence

The Somerset Picture

“There is a need to continually (re)think family in the context of different communities cultures and demographics- and to understand the reality of ‘doing family’ from the perspective of the lived experience of vulnerable families facing multiple challenges”

Kate Morris (2012) University of Nottingham

Troubled Families: vulnerable families’ experiences of multiple service use.

The Troubled Families Programme pulls together cross-government funding and support to provide a catalyst for local services to transform and work together in a more effective and cost-efficient way to achieve better outcomes for families. The programme does not mandate how services should ‘transform’. Instead, through this financial framework, the programme aims to incentivise a re-configuration of services around families and to encourage innovative, multi-agency practice that best fits the local context.

Local authorities and their partners have already achieved a huge amount. Services are coming together across organisational boundaries, overcoming operational and cultural barriers to achieve sustainable change for the most disadvantaged families in their communities. The impact of this service transformation can be seen in the steep increase in the numbers of families across the country receiving a ‘whole family approach’ and achieving significant and sustained progress against the problems they face. However, there is still much left to do. Services need to further invest and align if an integrated, whole family approach to early intervention is to become the norm by the time this programme comes to an end in 2020.

The table shows the most prevalent criteria initially identified for the Somerset Troubled Families Programme. The Troubled Families Programme has identified 9,745 families within Somerset (January 2018) meeting the indicators across the 6 of the main Troubled Families vulnerability groups.

Criteria detail	Number of Troubled Families	% of Troubled Families
Police Callouts	6,261	61.83%
Non-Working Benefits	6,156	60.79%
Persistent Absence	5,766	56.94%
Child in Need	5,640	55.70%
getset referral	3,579	35.34%
Experienced Domestic Violence	3,378	33.36%
S47 Enquiry	1,921	18.97%
Anti-Social Behaviour	1,822	17.99%
Out of Work Benefits	1,641	16.21%
Pupil Referral Unit or not on School Roll	1,478	14.60%
3 Fixed Term Exclusions	966	9.54%
Child Protection Plan	957	9.45%
Young Person Not in Employment, Education or Training	573	5.66%
Perpetrated Domestic Violence	548	5.41%

Links to our Strategic Direction and Plans

- ✚ [Somerset Children's Trust Children and Young People's Plan 2016 - 2019](#)
- ✚ [Somerset's Strategic Vision for Education – Achieving Excellence for All 2016-2020 \(with supporting strategies / plans across key stages\)](#)
- ✚ [Somerset's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-2019](#)
- ✚ [Somerset's Early Help Charter](#) – *within Somerset's Early Help Strategy 2016-2019*
- ✚ [Somerset's Early Help Strategy 2016-2019](#)
- ✚ [Effective Support for Children and Families in Somerset - Thresholds for Assessment and Services Guidance](#)
- ✚ [Somerset Family Outcomes Framework](#)
- ✚ [CSC Workforce Development Strategy](#)
- ✚ [Somerset County Council Sufficiency Statement for Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2016-2019](#)
- ✚ [Somerset's Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing, 2015-2020](#)
- ✚ [Hidden Harm Needs Assessment 2015](#)
- ✚ [The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for 2016](#)
- ✚ [Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-18](#)
- ✚ [Somerset County Plan 2016-20](#)
- ✚ [Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group – 5 Year Strategy \(published 2014\)](#)
- ✚ [Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board - Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019](#)
- ✚ [Somerset Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan 2017-2019](#)
- ✚ [Somerset Safeguarding Children Board Neglect strategy 2017](#)
- ✚ [Community Connect](#)
- ✚ [Village Agents](#)

What does our strategy cover?

This strategy sets out:

- the commitment required from partner agencies to drive and embed a Think Family approach
- the development of a Think Family knowledge and skills framework to inform practice and training
- to reflect the priorities of parents, their children, young people and wider families including the barriers to making positive changes
- how we will assess the effectiveness of the Think Family approach provided by partners in Somerset



What makes a successful service?

The Think Family approach aims to identify the broader needs of the family and provide support in a coordinated way to minimise duplication of services, free up resources and provide additional support to the families most in need.

Children and young people may be at greater risk of harm or be in need of additional help in families where adults have, for example, health problems, misuse drugs or alcohol, are in an abusive relationship, have complex needs or disabilities.

A successful approach to supporting families is built upon an understanding of the developmental needs of children, the factors that impact parenting capacity, and the impact of parental behaviours on children.

Contact with any service should focus on a family's strengths and give them access to a broader system of appropriate support where necessary.

Practitioners from all agencies that work with children, young people and adults will:

- secure child and adult safety
- take a strength-based approach to promote resilience, aspiration and the wellbeing of all family members, now and in the future
- have meaningful conversations with families so that they can consider the wider family context and how they affect the individual they are working with by sharing information and involving families within the decision-making processes as much as is practically possible
- offer appropriate support to enable families to avoid crises and manage them well if they arise
- have knowledge of how to access other relevant services to enable families to get the right support and make appropriate referrals where necessary
- share relevant information with other services/agencies with the child, young person or adults consent (within the remit of the information sharing protocols/procedures)
- undertake a holistic assessment of children and young people within the context of their family
- identify appropriate services to support the identified needs and ensure that all services are working towards the same outcomes
- focus on partnership working with, and to meet the needs of, family members, and not lose sight of the family by 'referring on' to other services
- respect the right of the child to maintain direct contact with both parents, except if this is contrary to the child's best interests

What have we achieved in Somerset so far?

- ✓ Established the getset service encompassing children's centre services, supporting families with the 'whole family working' methodology.
- ✓ Achieved the first phase of the National Troubled Families programme and on track to meet outcomes for Troubled Families phase 2.
- ✓ Established a number of 'One Teams' in high demand areas that are providing multi-agency professional hubs to support families, using the whole family approach.
- ✓ Implementation of the Effective Support for Families in Somerset guidance agreed through a series of multi-agency workshops and formally launched in February 2016, identifying the needs of the whole family.
- ✓ Developed and revised the Early Help Assessment with a multi-agency task and finish group to produce a single assessment for Somerset, widely used by partner agencies.
- ✓ Early Help Assessment Data is analysed to recognise where hidden harm factors are identified
- ✓ A Hidden Harm Protocol has been established between drug and alcohol, domestic abuse and mental health services.
- ✓ Agreed with Somerset Education Partnership Board and nine GP Federations that the delivery of early help would be based in and delivered by schools (Parent and Family Support Advisors, or equivalent), where the child is of school age and the family are in need of Level 2 support.
- ✓ Team Around the School rolled out across the county and continues to develop.
- ✓ Healthy Child meetings are coordinated by getset and Public Health Nursing.
- ✓ Multi-Agency Identification and Support in the Early Years (MAISEY) meetings are established across the County.
- ✓ Think family is established as the basis of Safeguarding Practice. It underpins all the advice and guidance provided and is threaded through policies, processes and training provided for all staff.
- ✓ The Early Help advice line is well established and supports all practitioners completing Early Help Assessments (EHA).
- ✓ A consultation helpline for Safeguarding Leads was established in February 2016.
- ✓ Monthly Children Missing 'out on' Education (CMooE) meetings are established, using data available to ensure children are returned to education swiftly, consider part time timetables and Elective Home Education issues.
- ✓ Electronic early help case management system (EHM) within Somerset County Council has been implemented.
- ✓ Professional Choices is available to facilitate file sharing and virtual meetings. It is also where the EHA and other tools are accessed and the 'who's who' directory.

Key Documents:

To help professionals, a range of documents are available to support the delivery of this strategy:

[Effective Support for Children and Families in Somerset](#) - which outlines Somerset's approach to the levels of need, how to identify what level of intervention a child or family may need, and the differences between early help and statutory child protection.

[Step up, step down protocol](#) – guidance on the process of ensuring children are supported as needs escalate or lessen.

[Early Help Offer](#) - what early help is available in Somerset and this is all included on Somerset Choices portal.

[Team Around the School Handbook and Toolkit](#) – advice to schools and Community Learning Partnerships to help set up and manage the team around the school multi-agency meetings.

[Professional Choices](#) - is a new website that will make it easier for professionals to work together. The three main elements are:

[Early Help Assessment and Practitioners Guide](#) – including the Virtual Meeting Rooms and the Who's Who directory is available through Professional Choices.

[Joint Adult Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policy](#) - A multi-agency Policy agreed by the Safeguarding Adults Board's in B&NES, Bristol City, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Somerset County Council.

[South West Child Protection Procedures](#) - Somerset is one of the 12 Local Safeguarding Children Boards that make up the South West consortia that have developed the Southwest Child Protection Procedures (in conjunction with Tri.x).



What we need to do 2018 - 2019


A review of the effectiveness of this strategy will be undertaken by the Workforce Development Board, reporting to Children's Trust Executive.

Somerset already has many elements of Think Family in place but we know we need to do more to embed this and to improve overall.

Somerset needs to ensure that learnings and recommendations from Serious Case Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews support the Think Family Strategy. The recommendations below identified in the Think Family strategy have been included in a recent Serious Case Review:

1. Early Help Assessments are utilised when assessing the needs of the whole family, to consider the full family situation and develop a clear plan for the family
2. Agencies review their Hidden Harm protocol and this is audited by Public Health Commissioners

The information within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment helped to inform the improvement programmes within the Children and Young People's Plan 2016-2019; Improvement Programmes 7 and 5 specifically relates to the aim of this strategy.



Improvement Programme 7 – Embedding a Think Family approach across the workforce

The outcomes we want to achieve are:

- vulnerable young people and families are more emotionally resilient and capable of resolving problems
- vulnerable young people and their families are directly involved in helping themselves and encouraged to help others through volunteering or peer mentoring
- young carers of parents with mental health problems and drug and alcohol problems have access to advice and support and know how to call for help when needed
- all professionals and staff who work with adults and children and young people understand the concept of Think Family and are alert to the effects of adult behaviours on children and young people and know how to take action to respond appropriately

Our priorities are to:

- ensure children and young people are empowered and supported at key transition points in their lives
- identify young carers and ensure they have access to timely advice and support and can maintain engagement with their education
- build a high-quality workforce which has the skills and confidence required to respond to changing needs in families and identify parental vulnerabilities
- maximise the use of the approach, tools, data analysis and learning from the national Troubled Families programme to support practitioners working with our families
- establish integrated multi-agency area teams
- empower children, families and communities by enabling them to have the tools, skills and information they need to help themselves and that allows them to manage the common challenges of family life within their families and communities
- empower parents to have the confidence, knowledge and skills to undertake their parenting responsibilities

Delivering the Strategy

This strategy is the plan to embed the Think Family approach across the wider children's and adults workforce and provide clear strategic direction from the Children's Trust, partners include:

- ✚ Somerset County Council
- ✚ Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group
- ✚ Avon and Somerset Police
- ✚ Schools (represented by Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Special School Associations)
- ✚ Somerset Education Partnership Board
- ✚ Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust
- ✚ Yeovil District Hospital Foundation Trust
- ✚ Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- ✚ The voluntary and community sector
- ✚ National Probation Service
- ✚ Bristol Gloucestershire Somerset and Wiltshire Community Rehabilitation Company (Probation)
- ✚ District and Borough Councils (represented by Taunton Deane Borough Council)
- ✚ Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges (represented by Richard Huish College)
- ✚ Job Centre plus
- ✚ Careers South West
- ✚ Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
- ✚ Healthwatch

Each member will approve this plan and their particular contribution through their own governance arrangements.



How we will measure success

Somerset Children's Trust, collectively and by individual partner organisations as appropriate, will monitor and evaluate performance using this strategy and action plan (appendix 1). We will challenge ourselves and partners where progress is slow. The Children's Trust Executive will monitor progress of the Think Family Strategy against the CYPP plan using the CYPP reporting mechanisms on a quarterly basis.

Recommendations identified: (see Appendix 1)



1. Embed the Think Family approach into operating protocols and policies
2. Agency training plan incorporates a Think Family approach
3. Partners to consider whether there is a need to be flexible within eligibility criteria in individual cases when a Think Family approach is established
4. Early Help Assessments are utilised when considering the strengths and needs of the whole family
5. Professional Choices is available for all staff to access
6. Promote the Think Family approach to all participation groups, young carers groups and Trust Governors/Member
7. Hidden Harm Protocol covering domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and impact of mental health on children is established



Further Information or Additional Reading

- ✎ Social Care Institute for Excellence (2009) Think child, think parent, think family: a guide to parental mental health and child welfare, London: SCIE.
- ✎ Social Exclusion Taskforce (2007) Reaching out: think family, London: Cabinet Office
- ✎ Department of Health (2007) Putting people first: a shared vision and commitment to the transformation of adult social care, London: DH.
- ✎ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2004) Every child matters, London: DCSF.
- ✎ Social Exclusion Unit (2004) Mental health and social exclusion, London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- ✎ SCIE's at a glance summaries have been developed to help you understand as quickly and easily as possible the important messages and practice advice in SCIE's guides. These summaries will give you an overview of the messages or help direct you to parts of the guide that you may find most useful. You can also use them as training resources in teams or with individuals.

Appendix 1 – Action Plan Template

Think Family Action Plan 2017 - 2019											
No.	Recommendation Identified in Overarching Think Family Strategy <small>Issue/ Driver/ Gap/ Objective requiring action</small>	Monitoring/ Progress <small>Measure of Success - how will you know the actions have resolved the issues identified</small>	Actions <small>Stated Clearly and Concisely</small>	Resource Demand/ Constraints	Person Responsible <small>(Action Owner)</small>	Completion Target Date	RAG Rating <small>(see key)</small>			CYPP 2016-19 Outcome Measure <small>(Programmes 5 & 7)</small>	
	Specific	Measurable	(Specific) Achievable	Realistic		Time bound					
1	Embed the Think Family approach into operating protocols and policies	All operating protocols and policies reference a Think Family approach							P7	All professionals and staff who work with adults and children and young people understand the concept of 'think family' and are alert to the effects of adult behaviours on children and young people and know how to take action to respond appropriately	
2	Agency training plan incorporates a 'Think Family' approach	Incorporated within mandatory training programme									
3	The partnership considers whether there is a need to be flexible within eligibility criteria in individual cases when a Think Family approach is established.	There are no comments or complaints received from people using our services that relate to flexibility of support.									
		People using our services and our staff can identify when there has been flexibility of service that better meets needs.									
4	Early Help Assessments are utilised when considering the strengths and needs of the whole family	Early Help Assessments are utilised by all staff as appropriate to the role							P5	Families receive good quality multi-agency help to support parents or carers in changing behaviour so risks to children are reduced	
5	Professional Choices is available for all staff to access	When there are any difficulties accessing Professional Choices staff utilise the PC helpdesk to resolve these.							P7	All professionals and staff who work with adults and children and young people understand the concept of 'think family' and are alert to the effects of adult behaviours on children and young people and know how to take action to respond appropriately	
6	Promote the Think Family approach to all participation groups, young carers groups and Trust Governors/Members	All groups are aware of the Think Family approach									
7	Hidden Harm Protocol covering domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and impact of mental health on children is established.	Hidden Harm Protocol is reviewed and audited by the three lead agencies							P7	Young carers of parents with mental health problems and drug and alcohol problems have access to advice and support and know how to call for help when needed	

Appendix 2 – Example Action Plan (Somerset Partnership)

Somerset Partnership and Taunton & Somerset NHS Foundation Trust								
No.	Recommendation Identified in Overarching Think Family Strategy Issue/ Driver/ Gap/ Objective requiring action	Monitoring/ Progress Measure of success. How will you know the actions have resolved the issues identified	Actions Stated clearly and concisely	Resource demand/ constraints	Person Responsible	Target Date for Completion	RAG Rating See Key	
	Specific	Measurable	Specific and Achievable	Realistic		Time bound		
1	Embed the Think Family approach into operating protocols and policies	All operating protocols and policies reference a Think Family approach	1.When reviewing all Trust operating protocols a Think Family approach will be incorporated into these when updated. 2.When reviewing and updating all Trust policies a Think Family approach will be incorporated into these when updated.	Write a standard statement for insertion into all operating protocols Write a standard statement for insertion into all policies	Richard Painter	From March 2018	G	A
2	Agency training plan incorporates a 'Think Family' approach	Incorporated within mandatory training programme	To incorporate a thread of Think Family throughout mandatory training	Already embedded in all levels of safeguarding training	Richard Painter	Completed	G	G
3	The Trust considers whether there is a need to be flexible within eligibility criteria in individual cases when a Think Family approach is established.	There are no comments or complaints received from people using our services that relate to flexibility of support. People using our services and our staff can identify when there has been flexibility of service that better meets needs.	Promote a Think Family approach on the website and published literature provided by the Trust. Promote a Think Family approach to all new staff at the point of recruitment and via staff newsletters for existing staff	Prepare an internal communication strategy to reflect the comms strategy of the Children Trust	Richard Painter	2 months after publication of the TF strategy	G	A
4	Early Help Assessments are utilised when considering the strengths and needs of the whole family	Early Help Assessments are utilised by all staff as appropriate to the role.	Early Help Assessments are embedded in practice of all appropriate staff.	Already embedded in Children Services. Adult services mandatory training will reference Early Help Assessments and the Trust will provide support from the Safeguarding Service to assist with implementation and upskilling staff.	Richard Painter Richard Painter	Completed Sep-18	G G	G A
5	Professional Choices is available for all staff to access	When there are any difficulties accessing Professional Choices staff utilise the PC helpdesk to resolve these.	Promote PC and the helpdesk to all staff via staff newsletter and mandatory training	Utilise the links to PC and provide update once supplied by GB	Gill Bawler	Mar-18	G	A
6	Promote the Think Family approach to all patient participation groups, young carers groups and Trust Governors/Members	All groups are aware of the Think Family approach	Invite groups reps to TF launch event and provide promotional material to these groups.	Invites to be sent out once launch event finalised	Vicky Hearn/ Richard Painter	Once launch event finalised by Vicky Hearn	G	A
7	Hidden Harm Protocol covering domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and impact of mental health on children is established.	Hidden Harm Protocol is reviewed and audited by the three lead agencies	Ongoing audit programme led by Public Health Commissioners	Audit led by public health commissioners	Amanda Payne/ Suzanne Harris/ Richard Painter	Completed	G	G