

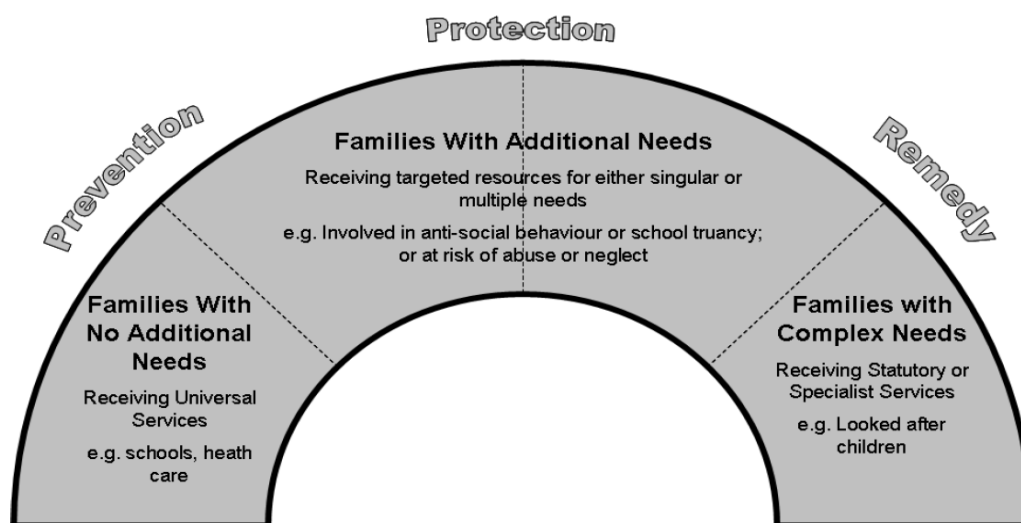
1. Introduction

Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf have been selected by The Welsh Assembly Government to deliver a transformational Families First Pioneer programme aiming to improve the life chances of children and young people, particularly those in low income families¹.

The emphasis of the Programme is on supporting the whole family through more holistic and integrated interventions, in particular at the preventative and protective stages – with the overall aim of reducing the number of children developing more complex needs. National consultation and research has identified that preventative interventions focusing solely on the child aren't usually enough to ensure good child outcomes – the whole family requires support.

The Pioneer Programme for which this partnership has been selected has two distinct but inter-linked components:

- The further development of **effective systems for identifying and supporting families of children with emerging additional needs** (including effective assessment, Team around the Family and key worker).
- The development of **integrated 'family-centred' support services** across all levels of need, but focusing on the area between 'Prevention' and 'Protection' in the diagram below.



Families First Pioneers' Guidance March 2011, drawn from the work of The Efficiency and Innovation Board 'New Models of Service Delivery' Group

¹ The Programme is a key strand of the overall Child Poverty Strategy 2011

2. Project Timescales and Activities

The Institute of Public Care (IPC) at Oxford Brookes University has been asked to support the Programme. IPC has a strong track record in supporting partnerships at national, regional and local levels to deliver transformational change of this nature.

The Programme is also being guided locally by a 'Families First' Steering Group comprising managers of key agencies and services, reporting to Senior Commissioners in RCT.

There are four stages to the Programme:

- Phase One:** **Review** – of existing local arrangements and findings from research and best practice (March – April 2011)
- Phase Two:** **Consultation and Development** – with professionals and children and families (April – June 2011)
- Phase Three:** **Re-design and Road Testing** – of systems and services in each area (July – August 2011)
- Phase Four:** **System and Service Change** including piloting and evaluation (October 2011 -)

3. How Might You Be Asked to Contribute?

This Programme needs to take account of existing systems and services as well as those that might have a positive contribution to make in the future, and therefore it is essential to involve as wide a range of stakeholders as possible.

You may be asked to contribute to the Programme in a number of ways, including by:

- Attending local or partnership-wide events to consider the strengths and weaknesses of existing systems, pathways and services.
- Attending local events to consider how systems and services may need to change to become more holistic and effective in the future.
- Participating in local events to road test any proposals for change.
- Becoming involved in a local pilot for new ways of working, for example Team around the Family or Key Working.

We would also welcome your suggestions and feedback more generally throughout the Programme and look forward to your contributions.

You can contact IPC about this programme on 01225 484088 or by email kburch@brookes.ac.uk . You can also contact the Families First Steering Group Chair, Neil Elliott (Tel: 01443 424136 or Email neil.a.elliott@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk) or the Project Lead, Carryn Williams (Tel: 01443 744186 or Email Carryn.E.Williams@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk)