

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

26TH OCTOBER 2017

A REVIEW OF RHONDDA CYNON TAF'S FAMILIES FIRST PROGRAMME

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC HEALTH & PROTECTION IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLOR LEWIS AND COUNCILLOR LEYSHON

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline to Members the findings and recommendations following a detailed review of the existing Families First commissioned projects in line with Welsh Government's revised programme guidance and the recently approved RCT Resilient Families Programme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within this report.
- 2.2 Consider and agree the proposed arrangements for the implementation of the Resilient Families Service to deliver an improved Team Around the Family (TAF) model across RCT.
- 2.3 Authorise the Service Director, Public Health and Protection, to implement the report's commissioning proposals, specifically in relation to the Disability Focus, Parenting Support and Youth Support elements of the Families First grant.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the re-commissioning of services will deliver a programme in line with Welsh Government's new Families First guidance, which supports the development and delivery of Rhondda Cynon Taf's new Resilient Families Service.

4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Families First is a Welsh Government grant funded programme designed to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. It places an emphasis on early intervention, prevention, and providing support for whole families, rather than individuals.
- 4.2 The programme promotes greater multi-agency working to ensure families receive joined-up support when they need it. The intention of the programme is to provide early support for families with the aim of preventing problems escalating.
- 4.3 The Council currently receives a Welsh Government grant of £3.4M per annum, to deliver the Families First programme. The programme is seen as one of Welsh Government's key initiatives for tackling poverty.
- 4.4 Welsh Government's initial Families First guidance (2013) included a requirement that services should be "strategically commissioned" as it was widely agreed that a more coherent, strategic approach was needed to avoid gaps and duplication in the commissioning of services for families. In line with this, the Council established commissioning arrangements with a number of internal and external providers to deliver a wide range of services that fall within the following categories:
- Disability
 - Early Intervention (includes Team Around the Family)
 - Pathways to Progression (includes Youth/NEET Support)
 - Closing the Gap (School attendance)
 - Health and Wellbeing (Sexual health, obesity, prenatal support)
- 4.5 Welsh Government's view is that to a large extent, across Wales, the programme has been successful in responding to the needs of local populations. However, the range of commissioned services has become increasingly broad which has led to concerns over sustainability, should this continue. Welsh Government have stated that "the data tells us that the presenting needs of families most often fall into the categories of wellbeing, confidence and resilience. These need addressing before any other issues, such as unemployment or skills, can be tackled".
- 4.6 In August 2016, the Council received notification from Welsh Government that there would be another Families First programme. The notification set out Welsh Government's intentions for the new programme and clarified the distinctive contribution the programme will make alongside other programmes and initiatives.
- 4.7 The notification confirmed four key elements of the new Families First programme:

- Continuation of Team Around the Family
 - Continuation of the Disability Focus to support the needs of families affected by disability
 - Continuation of the strategic commissioning activity but the focus narrowed to concentrate on parenting support and support for young people
- 4.8 The revised guidance sets out that all future services, commissioned under these four key elements, must be able to demonstrate that they can improve outcomes for families to ensure they are confident, nurturing and resilient. *Taking Wales Forward* contains a commitment to, “Support families and parents to reduce adverse childhood experiences which can have lifelong effects”, and Welsh Government see the Families First programme as a key vehicle through which this can be achieved.
- 4.9 The guidance also places an expectation on the Council to commission:
- A coherent and structured set of evidence-based projects which contribute to population outcomes and which are based on a local assessment of the needs of children, families and young people.
 - Projects which have a strong focus on both prevention and protection.
 - A small number of **large-scale strategic projects**, which are time-limited with clear exit strategies.
- 4.10 The revised guidance does mean that other related activity such as support into employment, some health related services, and childcare provision will no longer be eligible for Families First funding.
- 4.11 As a result, in October 2016, the Families First Steering group agreed to carry out a review of all Families First commissioned services. The purpose of the review was to assess each commissioned service to identify what works, and what we need to do differently to respond to the changing criteria and context of the Families First grant, the recent Wellbeing Future Generations Act population needs assessments and the recently approved Resilient Families Programme.
- 4.12 The review was overseen by the Families First Steering Group, which met regularly throughout the review process. The recommendations from this review have informed the commissioning decisions, with the aim of having arrangements for a more coherent programme in place by 1st April 2018.

5. SERVICE REVIEW

Methodology

5.1 The findings and recommendations draw on the full breadth of information collated and analysed using a variety of methods. This included:

- A review of nationally and locally published provider performance information, provider contracts and service level agreements, programme guidance, financial reports and local needs assessment information.
- 1 to 1 meetings with lead contacts for each Families First provider.
- The completion of a self-assessment questionnaire by each provider.
- Stakeholder engagement through review workshops and task and finish working groups.
- Service user consultation findings i.e. service user feedback, Extending Entitlement Young People's Viewpoint Survey, Population Needs Assessment consultation feedback.

5.2 In addition to this, the proposals also take into account a number of recent key developments:

- The agreement by RCT Cabinet to develop a Resilient Families Service to deliver an improved Team Around the Family (TAF) model.
- The improved alignment with other tackling poverty programmes such as Flying Start, Supporting People, Communities for Work, Inspire to Work and Substance Misuse Services, but also the changing delivery arrangements as Communities First ends.
- Children First/Community Zone/Neighbourhood Network proposals.
- Valleys Taskforce High Level Plan "[Our Valleys, Our Future](#)"

5.3 The following section sets out the main themes that emerged from the review, and how these have been applied to inform the proposals for each of the four key Family First elements.

Summary of Review Findings

5.4 The review identified many examples of good practice across individual services funded via Families First. However, a number of themes have emerged which will need to inform future commissioning decisions:

1. **Targeting hard to reach groups.** The way in which hard to reach groups are targeted across all commissioned services varies significantly, and for some, is a considerable challenge. There are currently no multi-agency systems for information to be shared for identifying those at risk, and no formal integrated referral system.

Service users and professionals alike said there needs to be clearer information available on what services are available and how to access them. **In response**, the future Families First programme will need to improve the way in which information about services is made available and ensure there are clearer pathways of support. This will be achieved through the agreed new Resilient Families Service, a proposed Integrated Parenting Framework and a proposed Young People's Support Framework, all of which are set out later in this report.

2. **Access to Services.** Although current services report good outcomes, service users have reported that provision is disjointed and not always available at the right time and in the right area. **In response**, the future Families First programme will need to ensure that there is a more coherent service offer and single point of contact for those requiring information, advice, support and intervention.
3. **Effective Systems of Monitoring and Review.** Robust management arrangements are in place in relation to the financial monitoring of Families First expenditure, however, there were limited contract monitoring systems in place and limited evidence that performance/outcome data had been verified. Initial discussions have also established that some organisations hold a substantial amount of valuable information, which is currently not reported. **In response**, new arrangements have now been established which ensure appropriate information is collected and verified to evidence the reported outcomes and value for money.
4. **Co-ordination and Consistency.** Areas of duplication between different funding programmes were identified. In most cases, there were significant inconsistencies in the way services operated and how they linked to wider strategic frameworks/priorities. **In response**, the new arrangements provide an opportunity for a more co-ordinated approach to planning and service delivery with the aim of maximising resources and improving outcomes.

6. **FAMILIES FIRST PROPOSALS**

- 6.1 At the Families First Review Steering Group, on the 6th September, consensus was gained for the following proposals to be presented to Cabinet.
- 6.2 The following section summarises the proposals for the delivery of the four main elements of the Families First programme:
 - Team Around the Family
 - Disability Focus

- Strategic commissioning:
 - Parenting Support
 - Young People Support

(Please see attached (as Appendix 1) report for more detailed information on each proposal)

Team Around The Family (Taf) Element

- 6.3 In July 2017, the Council's Cabinet approved the creation of the Resilient Families Programme as the single approach in Rhondda Cynon Taf that aligns the work of the Council and its public, private and voluntary sector partners and as the prevailing arrangement that shapes how national policy related to supporting families is implemented in RCT.
- 6.4 Cabinet agreement was also given to the development of a Resilient Families Service in consultation with key partners to deliver the early intervention and intensive intervention elements of the Integrated Family Support Framework and an improved Team Around the Family (TAF) model.
- 6.5 The Resilient Families Service will be able to effectively identify families at risk of family breakdown before they get to crisis point as well as continuing support for families no longer requiring statutory intervention. Focusing on assessing and addressing the level of resilience families have to deal with the challenges they face, the key functions of the Resilient Families Service will be to undertake assessment, brokerage and review; family engagement; and plan co-ordination.
- 6.6 The key objective of the Resilient Families Service will be to:
- Reduce the number of families requiring statutory intervention
 - Reduce the number of children on the CPR
 - Reduce the number of children looked after
- 6.7 The creation of the Resilient Families Service will provide the opportunity to deliver swift, effective, consistent and bespoke support to families. The Service has been designed to identify the right families in need of support at the right time, to provide swift family-led assessment, to remove practical barriers to positive change and to provide timely, appropriate and effective interventions. The Service will deliver improved support to families in quicker response times; shorter and sharper diagnostic assessment; a trusted single point of contact and pro-active practical support to engage with interventions designed to increase resilience levels.

- 6.8 It is proposed that the Resilient Families Service will comprise of four teams:

The Assessment, Brokerage and Review Team

The assessment stage will be delivered by the creation of a dedicated Assessment, Brokerage and Review Team. This Team will be in a position to provide timely response to referrals and reduce the threshold gap between statutory services and early intervention and prevention services. Proportionate assessment will be resilience focused utilising the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Framework (MARAF) tools to enhance the consistency of approach to the delivery of services and align early intervention and prevention services with statutory services.

The Families Plus Team

The Families Plus Team will work with families from across RCT identified as requiring intensive intervention following assessment i.e. support for complex or entrenched needs is required. These families are most likely to have been stepped down from Children's Services intervention or have been referred to the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) but did not meet the threshold for Children's Services intervention. The Families Plus Team will comprise of Intervention Workers who will deliver a short term intensive package of support to families in order to build positive engagement and reduce risk levels.

The Children with Additional Needs Service (CANS) Team

The Children with Additional Needs Service (CANS) Team will work with families across RCT where the neuro-developmental, cognitive or physical impairment needs of their child(ren) are below the statutory threshold for intervention and the family requires specialist support to understand and manage their child's needs and/or address the impact this is having on the wider family. The CANS Team will comprise of Intervention Workers who will provide short term intensive bespoke packages of specialist support to families that focus on developing strategies to improve the quality of family life.

The Families Team

The Families Team will work with families from across RCT identified as requiring early intervention following assessment i.e. co-ordinated multi-agency support is required. The Families Team will comprise of Intervention Workers, who will provide a central point of contact and advocate for families; provide direct support; and work alongside other partners to ensure that the intervention plan is effectively delivered.

Delivering The Resilient Families Service

- 6.9 The proposed approach to implementing the Resilient Families Service focuses on a partnership based delivery model. This will enable the

Council, alongside our third sector partners Barnardos and Action for Children, to utilise the expertise and resources within the existing Team Around the Family Hubs to support the swift and effective implementation of service improvements within timescales and existing resource allocations. It will also enable changes to service delivery to be made with minimum disruption to families and optimises the chances of gathering the impact data needed to measure the effectiveness of the new Service and inform future delivery and commissioning decisions.

6.10 Discussions with Barnardos and Action for Children, as the service providers currently commissioned to deliver Team Around the Family arrangements, have been positive with both organisations agreeing to work with the Council to develop and deliver this new service model.

6.11 It is therefore proposed that the Resilient Families Service is delivered in the following way:

- The **Assessment, Brokerage and Review Team** – delivered in house due to the specialist nature of the Team and the need to apply a consistent approach to the assessment process as well as utilise a range of information to build and effectively monitor intervention plans.
- The **Families Plus Team** – delivered in house due to the specialist nature of this Team and the need for its development and delivery to be closely linked to Children's Services social work teams.
- The **Children with Additional Needs Service (CANS)** – delivered in house due to the specialist nature of the Team and the need for its development and delivery to be closely linked to Education and Health.
- The **Families Team** – delivered by commissioned providers. It is proposed that Barnardo's and Action for Children, currently responsible for the Cynon and Taf Team Around the Family Hubs, be reconfigured to provide the Families Team function in line with Children Services' East and West geographical boundaries.

6.12 In addition to the four teams identified above, it is proposed to recommission the existing Welfare Benefits Advisors project delivered by RCT Citizens Advice Bureau. This provision is unique since it focuses on providing advice through a community outreach approach. Benefits and debt issues represent a significant challenge for many of the families engaged in services. In 2016/17, 1,119 individuals were supported by the project. Of these, 84% stabilised or improved their financial situation as a result of the support they received. This is a key Families First performance measure, and has been identified as an area of significant need during the review of the Team Around the Family model. It is

therefore recommended that this service be aligned and integrated as a key intervention/pathway within the Resilient Families Service.

- 6.13 To ensure that the Resilient Families Service has access to a full range of interventions, it is proposed to allocate £74,548 towards the creation of a flexible commissioning fund. The fund will be used to support the dynamic commissioning of interventions available to facilitate the creation of bespoke action plans by the Assessment, Brokerage and Review team, to build the resilience of families. This may include the purchase of specific interventions for families and/or individuals where there is currently no commissioned service available and could include specialist support such as Counselling, Family Therapy or attachment issues. This funding could also be used to purchase individual support for children, and young people such as holiday care provision.

Resources

- 6.14 The table below contains the estimated costs for the Resilient Families Service:

Team	Budget Allocation
Assessment, Brokerage and Review Families Plus Team	£631,685
CANS Team	£243,098
Family Team East - Barnardos	£439,214
Family Team West – Action for Children	£439,214
Welfare Benefits Advisors (CAB)	£100,000
Flexible Commissioning Fund	£74,548
Total Allocation	£1,927,759

Disability Focus Element

- 6.15 Within the Families First guidance, families with disabled children and young people have been identified as a priority group and as such there is a ring-fenced allocation of **£268,000**.

6.16 The current Families First Disability Focus package delivers support for families with disabled children and young people via the following projects:

Project	Budget Allocation
Action for Children (Disability TAF)	£120,000
Viva	£ 98,098
TAF Holiday Care	£ 25,000
STARS	£ 30,720
Total Allocation	£273,818

6.17 Whilst there are good features across the individual projects funded via the Families First Disability ring-fenced allocation, the creation of the Resilient Families Service provides the opportunity to review current arrangements and develop a more coherent package of support for families with disabled children and address the findings of the review. The findings for the disability element of the review fall in line with the key themes set out in paragraph 5.4 of this report.

6.18 In addition to this, the Wellbeing and Population Needs Assessments have told us:

- That most people with a disability or Autistic Spectrum Disorder will not use high level, specialist services for their condition but will use the same services as everyone else.
- Although a range of support services exist, people are unsure what is available to them and how to access services, support and help.
- People with physical disabilities including sensory impairment want to be part of their community removing the barriers that exist.
- To establish an early intervention and preventative services rather than reactive services, which often come into play at times of crisis.
- It is difficult to access support in times of urgency.

Disability Focus Proposals

6.19 The priority of the Disability Focus Proposals is to support the creation of the Children with Additional Needs Service (CANS) Team and specific interventions for disabled children as part of the Resilient Families Service.

6.20 The Children with Additional Needs Service (CANS) Team will provide a single point of access for families across RCT and work with them where the needs of their child(ren) are below the statutory threshold for intervention and the family requires specialist support. The CANS Team will comprise of Intervention Workers who will provide short term

intensive bespoke, packages of specialist support to families that focus on developing strategies to improve the quality of family life.

6.21 To achieve this new model of delivery, it is proposed:

- To pool the Disability Focus funding currently allocated to VIVA and Action for Children, and instead refocus the funding to support the creation of the Children with Additional Needs Service (CANS) Team as part of the Resilient Families Service. This would maximise the development of a clear, coherent package of support, aligned to the delivery of services under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014.
- To renew the contract for the Support to Access Recreation Scheme (STARs), at current funding levels, as a disability intervention project, with the services forming part of the CANS programme of interventions.
- Ensure that all Families First commissioned activity is accessible to families with disabilities and include this requirement in all future provider contracts.

Resources

6.22 To support the implementation of the above proposals, the following resources are required from the Families First Grant:

Project	Budget Allocation
CANS	£243,098
STARs	£30,720
Total allocation	£273,818

Strategic Commissioning Element of The Families First Programme

6.23 This element of the Families First Grant requires the Council to commission a small number of strategic projects, which have a clear and demonstrable link to community-based needs assessments and focus on early intervention and prevention.

6.24 The Council currently commissions fifteen projects, which are delivered under the following headings:

- Pathways to Progression (includes Youth/NEET Support)
- Closing the Gap (School attendance)

- Health and Well-being (Sexual health, obesity, prenatal support)
- Stronger Families

National changes to the strategically commissioned element of the Families First programme

- 6.25 People who experience poor wellbeing and lower levels of confidence and resilience are more likely to expose their children to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as domestic violence, alcohol and substance misuse and mental health problems. They are likely to become socially isolated and be less able to create stable and nurturing environments in which to raise children. Children and young people who are being raised in such environments are more likely to struggle to achieve long term positive outcomes and are highly likely to raise their own children in environments where ACEs are commonplace, creating a cycle of social and economic deprivation which is difficult to break.
- 6.26 In light of this evidence, Welsh Government have revised the Families First guidance and have stated that services commissioned as part of the programme should focus on **parenting and support for young people**. The projects which are commissioned should also focus on equipping families with a range of skills to build their confidence and resilience and support them to achieve long term positive outcomes. It is important that services for parents and young people are not delivered in isolation and we will need to ensure services are linked together and coherent to enable families to receive the breadth of support they need.

Strategic Commissioning Review

- 6.27 A summary of the overall review findings have previously been set out in paragraph 5.4.
- 6.28 It's worth noting that in 2017/18 only **1%** of the Families First grant was allocated to specifically deliver parenting support, whereas 30% was targeted at support for young people. Therefore, to meet the new Families First grant criteria and deliver the parenting support element of the programme, as defined by the guidance, there is a need to shift resources away from some existing projects.
- 6.29 Therefore, the review findings have informed the planning for each of the two main areas (Parenting Support and Support for Young People) identified in the Families First guidance. In addition to this, the proposals outlined below will also form part of the suite of interventions available to the Assessment, Brokerage and Review Team within the new Resilient Families Service. Further details regarding the proposed approach going forward is set out in the next section of this report.

Strategic Commissioning - Parenting Support

- 6.30 As outlined in the Families First guidance, it will be important to ensure services are designed that are aimed at achieving the following objectives:
- 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
 - 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
- 6.31 Currently, parenting is delivered by a wide range of services and is one of the areas that has been in greatest demand. However, the way in which services were originally commissioned has resulted in fragmented delivery by a number of different providers, delivering a mix of formal, informal and specialist parenting provision on an ad hoc basis and with no geographical equity of provision.
- 6.32 This view is supported through the findings of the Wellbeing and Population needs assessments which states that "parenting provision is in the main delivered on an adhoc basis to specific client groups such as those living within Flying Start areas. This in itself has been criticised by parents as being unfair".
- 6.33 Furthermore, feedback from stakeholders suggest that parenting classes delivered solely in Flying Start areas are not always palatable to families as they feel stigmatised because they have been specifically targeted. Stakeholders have suggested that parenting provision should be universal and available to parents in need of support regardless of where they live.

Proposed New Approach: An Integrated Parenting Framework

- 6.34 The priority of the parenting support proposals is to secure a more coherent service offer underpinned by a clear entry point and assessment so that parents receive the most appropriate support and level of service when they need it.
- 6.35 To deliver this new approach, over the past six months the Early Years and Family Support Service (EYFSS) has developed a new "**Integrated Parenting Framework**" to secure a more coherent parenting pathway which will be used to inform the commissioning of all parenting provision across RCT.

- 6.36 It is proposed that the Integrated Parenting Framework will comprise of five levels of support:

Level 1 – Family Support (low level advice and signposting)

EYFSS will liaise with a range of Council and external services to ensure that the advice given to parents is accurate and appropriate and that services working with parents are aware of opportunities available for parents requiring Level 2 or Level 3 interventions.

Level 2 – Informal Parenting Support (drop in support groups)

EYFSS will liaise with both commissioned and non-commissioned services and organisations that provide informal support to parents in a wide range of settings e.g. parent and toddler groups to support the progression of parents requiring formal parenting support via participation in evidence based programmes. The Parenting Support Team will provide specialist workshops for parents at Level 2 with a view to engaging them in Level 3 programmes. Parents engaged in Talk and Play provision will also be supported to progress onto Level 3 support.

Level 3 – Formal Parenting Support (evidence based 12 week programmes)

The delivery of the evidence based programmes will be led by the Parenting Support Team and supported by Families First commissioned partners and colleagues from Health. This will lead to a range of 12-week evidence based programmes covering the full age range from birth to 18 years being delivered in venues across RCT and open to any parent living in RCT. Particular focus will be given to targeting the engagement of 'harder to reach groups' such as fathers, teenage parents and families affected by parental imprisonment which will include the delivery of programmes at times to suit the needs of parents.

Level 4 – Targeted Parenting Support (practical targeted support to apply learning at home)

The delivery of targeted support to apply learning from formal parenting programmes will be led by the Parenting Support Team and supported by Families First commissioned services. Bespoke plans will be put in place to assist parents to use the skills and tools gained from participation in evidence based programmes in their home environment. Working with both the immediate family members and also the extended support networks this intervention will focus on embedding consistent routines and boundaries and building the confidence of parents to apply their learning gained at Level 3.

Level 5 – Therapeutic Parenting Support (relationship support interventions)

The provision of bespoke therapeutic parenting support will be overseen by EYFSS and will be delivered by a range of specialist staff including the Dads Matter Parenting Officers (as part of the Parenting Support Team) Health Visitors, the Dads Matter Senior Therapist and supported by the wider Parenting Support Team.

- 6.37 The proposal would look to extend existing Flying Start parenting provision and staffing structures within EYFSS, creating a comprehensive universal parenting provision across all five levels of the RCT Integrated Parenting Framework. This will ensure that parents who are in need of support will be able to access provision regardless of where they live.
- 6.38 To achieve this new model of delivery, it is proposed to:
- Enter into a Service Level Agreement for the delivery of the parenting framework with the Council’s Early Years and Family Support Service. This will ensure that provision is effectively aligned with Flying Start delivery and we join up services across the authority to deliver a more coherent pathway of support for parents.
 - Create a ‘**Parenting Support Team**’, which will consist of staff funded from a number of sources including Council core funding, Flying Start grant and Families First grant. The creation of the Parenting Support Team will facilitate the “Formal Parenting Support” (Level 3) i.e. open access, evidenced based parenting programmes and the “Informal Parenting Support” (Level 2) i.e. drop in support groups. This will require the creation of three new Parenting Support Team posts funded through the Families First grant.
 - Reconfigure existing external provider contracts for those organisations who currently deliver parenting interventions and family engagement activities, in line with the Integrated Parenting framework. This would include:
 - Renewing the contract for Valleys Kids at existing funding levels but reconfiguring provision to support the delivery of Level 2/3 interventions.
 - Renewing the contract for Homestart at existing funding levels but reconfiguring provision to support the delivery of Level 4 interventions.

Resources

- 6.39 To support the implementation of the parenting proposals, the following resources are required from the Families First Grant:

Project	Budget Allocation
Early Years and Family Support Service	£133,026
Valleys Kids	£216,965
Homestart	£198,140
Total allocation	£548,131

Strategic Commissioning - Youth Support

- 6.40 The provision of good quality support for young people is essential to help families reach their potential. Providing young people with access to the right help at the right time is an important part of any package of support which is provided to families. It can help to build resilience to enable young people to develop the skills they need to live, learn and achieve.
- 6.41 According to the Families First guidance, building the resilience of young people can help achieve a number of long-term positive outcomes and reduce instances of:
- Low school attendance and educational attainment
 - Poor emotional health
 - Teenage pregnancy
 - Youth offending
- 6.42 The current Families First programme does already provide a wide range of projects which contribute towards these areas i.e. supporting young people with their emotional and mental wellbeing, improving school attendance, promoting healthy lifestyles and helping to prevent young people from becoming NEET (not in Education, Employment or Training). The provision ranges from interventions that are universally available to specialist interventions, however, it is recognised that there is a need for all Families First projects to be more closely aligned to ensure there is a more coherent package of support available to young people across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Proposed New Approach: Young People's Support Framework (YPSF)

- 6.43 As part of the Families First review, the Council's Engagement and Participation Service has developed a **Young People's Support Framework (YPSF)** to enable closer alignment of services available across the authority which encompasses all levels of support from informal to specialist support.
- 6.44 It is proposed that the **Young People's Support Framework (YPSF)** will comprise of three levels of support:

Level 1 – Informal Support (Open access, universal provision available to all young people)

The informal support refers to services that are universal to all young people (11-25), available across the local authority and are open access. The potential providers of Level 1 support are varied and include the Youth Engagement and Participation Service, voluntary sector providers, cultural services, leisure and community groups.

Level 2 – Formal Support (Targeted provision for young people with support needs)

It is proposed that services delivered at Level 2 will be focused on the introduction of the Wellbeing, Engagement and Resilience Pathway (WER), which provides a four staged approach to supporting young people and focuses on the improvement of resilience levels. The WER pathway is fully compatible with the current developments of a Resilient Families Service, which has a direct route into the pathway.

Provision delivered at Level 2 will be by referral only, with those referred receiving a package of support that includes a resilience assessment, strength based action planning and the delivery of bespoke activities.

Level 3 – Specialist Support (Targeted provision for young people with higher level needs)

All young people accessing this level of support will be referred due to the need for specialist, intensive provision than cannot be provided in either Levels 1 or 2. Particular focus will be given to young people that have been identified as having high needs in the following areas:

- Offending or behaviour issues
- Mental health
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACE's)
- Entrenched poor attendance

6.45 The pathway will also form a direct link with the Resilient Families Service enabling those families to access specialist support for their children.

6.46 To achieve this new model of delivery and based on individual project review findings, it is proposed to:

- Enter into a Service Level Agreement for the delivery of the Young People's Support Framework (YPSF) with the Council's Engagement and Participation Service (E&PS). This service would have responsibility for the implementation of this framework, and provide an ongoing lead coordination function; including supporting those services commissioned through Families First funding that provide interventions for young people. This arrangement would take advantage of the specialism that exists within the Council and would be supported by retaining some of the existing commissioned interventions.
- Reconfigure the current internal Supporting Engagement in Education, Employment and Training, Post 16 Transition Support Workers and Closing the Gap (attendance) Families First projects into a single strategic project to deliver the Wellbeing, Engagement and Resilience (WER) Pathway.
- Recommission existing youth support projects at current funding levels but reconfigure service specifications to support the delivery of the Young People's Support Framework. This includes:
 - Youth Arts and Sonig Programme (Council's Cultural Services Department)
 - Youth Offending Preventative Service
 - Young Adult Carers Support Project
 - Sexual Health Outreach Service (Cwm Taf UHB)
 - Women's Aid (CYP project)

Resources

- 6.47 To support the implementation of the above framework and proposals the following resources are required from the Families First Grant:

Project	Budget Allocation
Engagement and Participation Service: WREP	£499,498
Youth Arts and Sonig Programme	£94,350
YOS	£90,790
Young Adult Carers Support Project	£19,500
Sexual Health Outreach Service	£50,000
Women's Aid (CYP Project)	£24,144
Total Allocation	£778,282

7 COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS

- 7.1 Any new contracts will be recommissioned in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. All existing providers will either be re-commissioned (although contracts may be reconfigured) or their contracts will not be renewed.
- 7.2 Contracts will be subject to the availability of funding, and will contain provision to vary the contract if there is a reduction in funding from Welsh Government and a break clause if there is a complete withdrawal of funding.
- 7.3 The proposed outline project plan for the re-commissioning process is set out below:

Governance Arrangements	Commencement Date	End Date
Proposals submitted to Families First Steering Group for approval	September 2017	September 2017
Cabinet decision to proceed with proposed commissioning arrangements	October 2017	October 2017
Communication with the market on the outcome of the Cabinet decision	November 2017	November 2017

Exit arrangements for projects whose contracts are not being renewed	December 2017	1 st March 2018
Drafting/agreeing of service specs and monitoring outcomes with providers	November 2017	January 2018
Award of contracts	January 2018	31 st March 2018
New Contracts/SLA commence	1 st April 2018	

8 NON-RENEWAL OF CONTRACTS

- 8.1 The proposals set out in this report are intended to introduce significant changes to the way in which some services are currently delivered. The organisations that provide services that meet local priorities, the requirement of the new guidance, and related performance measures will be retained, but may be reconfigured and delivered in a different way.
- 8.2 However, and as outlined in paragraph 6.28, in 2017/18 only **1%** of the Families First grant was allocated to specifically deliver parenting support. In order to allocate additional funding for the new identified priorities, such as parenting, or where services do not fit the new funding criteria, it will be necessary for the contracts of some services not to be renewed.
- 8.3 The Families First review and subsequent proposals have set out the recommendations for the contracts for the following projects not to be renewed:

Project	Rationale (Summary)
The Viva Project	The service does not fully meet the needs of children and young people with disabilities. Viva's review findings fall in line with the key themes set out in paragraph 5.4 of this report.
TAF Disability (ASD/ADHD)	The effectiveness of the disability element of TAF appears to be impeded by the same issues identified for the wider delivery of TAF. Whilst the current project was commissioned to provide services for families with children with ASD and ADHD, this focus precludes children with other forms of disability, including, neuro-development, cognitive or physical impairment.

Learning for Life – Arts Factory	The project does not meet any of the new Families First funding criteria or identified performance measures.
Go4It (Obesity Project) – Trivallis	The programme is health related which aims to reduce obesity; therefore, it does not meet any of the new funding criteria.
Prenatal Support (Low Birth Weight Babies) – Cwm Taf LHB	This project was originally established as a pilot. Due to the changes in Families First funding criteria, it is no longer eligible for funding. Consideration should be given to mainstreaming the project into the work of the Health Board or other health related projects.

8.4 Under the terms of the contracts, the current agreements will cease automatically on 31st March 2018 unless the contract is extended. Work will take place with current providers to identify exit strategies for services that will not be continuing and this may include transferring service users to other provision. Although we do not have a legal requirement to do so, we intend to give a minimum of 3 months' notice to providers that the current arrangements will end in order to enable them to plan their exit strategies.

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed for each individual project. Findings from these assessments have informed the proposals set out in this cabinet report.

10. CONSULTATION

10.1 Regular communication has taken place with key stakeholders and existing providers to keep them updated on the changes to the Families First programme and how this may impact on future service delivery. Specific consultations have included:

- A parenting task and finish working group
- Resilient Families Programme Implementation group (includes external agencies)
- Resilient Families thematic sub groups
- Communication/monitoring visits and 1 to 1 meetings with lead contacts for each individual Families First provider
- Self-assessments for all Families First providers
- Population Needs Assessment working groups.

10.2 Children, young people and families have also contributed to these proposals via the following consultations that have taken place over the last 12 months:

- Through the Understanding Our Communities project, people who live and work in Cwm Taf were consulted, including people who use public services, people who work in public services, community groups and children and young people.
- The RCT Extending Entitlement viewpoint survey with over 5,000 young people aged 11-25 years old sharing their views on what was important to them.
- Engagement and involvement with children and young people in relation to the Well-being and Population Needs Assessments.
- An Appreciative Inquiry (AI) method with a group of young carers, who then went on to facilitate several groups of their own, using the same method. The young people were keen to work with this process to help them identify potential ideas for what would need to happen to make positive changes.

11 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 11.1 The Families First programme is currently wholly funded via a grant from Welsh Government. For 2017/18 the grant allocation amounted to **£3,431,789**. The programme is wide ranging and will include a number of separate external contracts and internal SLAs.
- 11.2 Confirmation of funding for 2018/19 will not be known until early January 2018, however, for the purposes of planning this report is based on the assumption there will be a stand still budget as per 2017/18.
- 11.3 It is essential that specifications for services are designed so that they can be delivered within the overall level of Families First grant funding provided by Welsh Government. As noted in the report, all agreements will be subject to the availability of funding, and will contain provision to vary the contract if there is a reduction in funding, and a break clause if there is a complete withdrawal of funding.
- 11.4 To effectively manage the Families First grant, the current programme includes an allocation of funding for infrastructure support. This includes support for financial monitoring, contract monitoring, data recording and service user involvement. This is to ensure that the Council is compliant with the terms and conditions of the Families First grant.
- 11.5 The funding breakdown for the proposals set out in this report are provided below:

Families First Theme	Proposed Budget Allocation
Team Around the Family (Resilient Families Service)	£1,510,113
Disability Focus (CANS Team)	£ 243,098
CANS Intervention (STARS)	£ 30,720
Welfare Benefits Advisors (CAB)	£100,000
Flexible Commissioning Fund (Resilient Families Service)	£74,548
Parenting Support	£ 548,131
Support for Young People	£ 778,282
Infrastructure Support (Staff, IT and development)	£ 146,897
Total	£3,431,789

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

12.1 There are no legal implications arising from these proposals; however it will be necessary to consult with Welsh Government and ensure that any proposals are in accordance with the conditions attached to the offer of funding.

12.2 The following legislation has been considered in relation to the development of these proposals:

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014:

- Putting an individual and their needs, at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in, and control over reaching the outcomes that help them achieve well-being
- Supporting people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of this care and support
- Increasing preventative services within the community to minimise the escalation of critical need
- Strong partnership working between all agencies and organisations.

The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- A more equal Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales

12.3 The proposal also demonstrates application of the sustainable development principle:

- Long term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

13. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

13.1 The new Families First proposals contribute significantly to:

- The **Council's Vision** of *'a County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all'*;
- Achieving a healthy, well educated, safe and skilled population;
- The preventative and early intervention action taken to reduce the number of people entering statutory services;
- The Social Services and Wellbeing Act and its fundamental principle of promoting people's independence to give them stronger voice and control;
- The Public Services Board area based approach to partnership working;
- The Sustainable Development Principle, specifically in relation to involving people, collaboration and prevention.

14. CONCLUSION

14.1 The recommendations set out in this report will ensure that the Families First Programme provides a fit for purpose service, which is responsive to the needs of families within RCT. The new suite of strategically commissioned services will form part of the wider RCT Resilient Families Service by providing an effective and meaningful response to meet the needs of children, young people and their families requiring support.

14.2 The proposed changes take account of the revised Families First guidance, the new Families First Performance Management Framework, and the focus on early intervention and prevention that builds family resilience and wellbeing, to ensure young people are resilient, confident and equipped with skills which help them to make a meaningful contribution to society. The recommendations safeguard areas of greatest need, address the findings of the review, whilst minimising the impact on front line delivery of the Families First Programme.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee - *Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee*

Contact Officer - Derek James – Head of Communities and Prosperity. - 01443 425512

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

26TH OCTOBER 2017

A REVIEW OF RHONDDA CYNON TAF'S FAMILIES FIRST PROGRAMME

**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC HEALTH & PROTECTION IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS,
COUNCILLOR LEWIS AND COUNCILLOR LEYSHON**

Background Papers

None.

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744386**

Appendix 1: Families First Review Recommendation Summary:

Organisation	Project Name	Internal /External	Budget Allocation	Review Recommendation
Action for Children (Family Intervention Team)	Taff Ely TAF Hub	External	491,880	It is recommended that the current Families First funded Team Around the Family budget and approach be reconfigured to support key elements within the Resilient Families Service. The Resilient Families Service will replace the current Team Around the Family (TAF) delivery model with a new and improved service.
Barnardo's (Family Links Service)	Cynon Valley TAF Hub	External	486,539	
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (On Track)	Rhondda Valley TAF Hub	Internal	531,685	
Valleys Kids	Valleys Kids - Rhondda Fawr	External	216,965	It is recommended that Valleys Kids be recommissioned, and the project reconfigured to ensure geographical equity, consistency and co-ordination throughout RCT. The reconfigured project will focus on level 2/3 interventions specifically for Parenting and Support for Young People hence forming part of the Parenting Support Framework and Young People's Support Framework.
Home-Start	Home-Start Project	External	198,410	It is recommended that Home-Start be recommissioned to support the delivery of RCT's Integrated Parenting Framework with particular focus on tier four interventions.
Citizens Advice Bureau	Welfare Benefits Advisors	External	100,000	It is recommended that Citizens Advice Bureau be recommissioned and the project aligned/integrated as a key intervention and pathway within the Resilient Families Service.
Women's Aid	Women's Aid - CYP Support Worker	External	24,144	It is recommended that Women's Aid be recommissioned and the project aligned to meet the needs of the Integrated Family Support Service.
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (Cultural Services)	Youth Arts & Sonig Youth Music Industry	Internal	94,350	It is recommended that Cultural Services be recommissioned, and the project realigned with the new Young People's Support Framework as part of the pathway of interventions available, including support for children with additional needs.

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (Youth Offending Service)	Youth Offending Prevention Service	Internal	90,790	It is recommended that the Youth Offending Service be recommissioned, and the project reconfigured to form part of the Integrated Family Support Framework and address the identified needs of the Young People's Support Framework.
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (Leisure Services)	STARS	Internal	30,729	It is recommended that the STARS project be recommissioned and aligned to support the delivery and referral pathways within the Integrated Family Support Framework and the Resilient Families Service, and specifically link to meeting the needs of the CANS Team.
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (Children's Services)	Young Adult Carers Support Project	Internal	19,500	It is recommended that the Young Adult Carers Support Project be recommissioned and realigned to meet the needs of the Integrated Family Support Service and the Young People's Support Framework.
Cwm Taf UHB	Sexual Health Outreach Service	External	50,000	It is recommended that the Sexual Health Outreach Service be recommissioned, and going forward should form part of the Young People's Support Framework (YPSF). Sexual Health should be a focus of the YPSF and the project should be reconfigured to include more targeted support to identify vulnerable young people who may be targeted for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (Education Services)	Closing the Gap	Internal	260,000	It is recommended that the current Closing the Gap, Post 16 Transitional Support Workers and Youth Engagement and Participation projects be reconfigured into a single strategic project to deliver the Well-being, Engagement and Resilience Pathway (WERP), as outlined in the main body of this report.
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (Education Services)	Post 16 Transitional Support Workers	Internal	129,454	
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (Education Services)	Youth Engagement & Participation Project (YEPS)	Internal	53,495	

Viva Wales	Viva Project	External	98,098	It is recommended that Viva's contract should not be renewed, and the funding is utilised to support the work of the Children with Additional Needs (CANS) Team and specific interventions for disabled children as part of the Resilient Families Service.
Trivallis (formerly RCT Homes)	Go4it!	External	40,000	It is recommended that Go4it!'s contract should not be renewed since it will not meet any of the new Families First national performance measures and priorities post April 2018.
Arts Factory	Learning for Life Programme	External	15,000	It is recommended that the Arts Factory's contract should not be renewed since it will not meet any of the new Families First national performance measures and priorities post April 2018.
Cwm Taf UHB	Pre-Natal Support Project	External	163,000	It is recommended that the Pre-Natal Support Project's contract should not be renewed since it will not meet any of the new Families First national performance measures and priorities post April 2018.
Action for Children	TAF Disability Project	External	120,000	It is recommended that the TAF Disability Project does not continue in its current format, and the funding utilised to support the Children with Additional Needs (CANS) Team and specific interventions for disabled children as part of the Resilient Families Service.