Families First Partnership
Data Requirements and Impact

Version 1 – 31st July 2025

DATA to INSIGHT

What is *Data to Insight*?

Data to Insight (D2I) is **the sector-led service for children's services data professionals**.

Owned by local authority data professionals, and supported by the ADCS, DfE, DLUHC and Ofsted, we are a small core team supporting a much wider network of children's services data people, all **working together to improve data use in the sector**.

Our original informal motto was "Build once, use 150 times", and this still represents a core part of our ethos: there are many thing that every local authority (LA) needs to do, and many of these can be done once in a shared, standard way. Doing this can **empower LA colleagues** – both to benefit from good practice shared across the sector, and to maximise the value of the time they spend locally on data work.

The core service maintains Excel data tools, web tools, Python code libraries, in-year data collections, learning opportunities and support documents. We also provide community support, collaboration support, and advocacy.

We also work on **funded projects** doing things like data validation, demand modelling, new data standards, and user research.

LA colleagues can sign up to join us at www.datatoinsight.org

Intro and Key Documents

This document is our attempt to distil many of the Families First reforms into a concise explainer for LA analysts. It is our best interpretation of the new guidance and, as such, does not constitute formal advice. The key documents we have referenced are:

Families First Partnership Programme Guide

Guidance document for the implementation of Families First reforms.

Working Together 2023

Framework describing how safeguarding partners must work together to safeguard children.

Children's Social Care National Framework

Statutory guidance on the purpose, principles for practice and expected outcomes of children's social care

Families first for children pathfinder implementation and process evaluation report

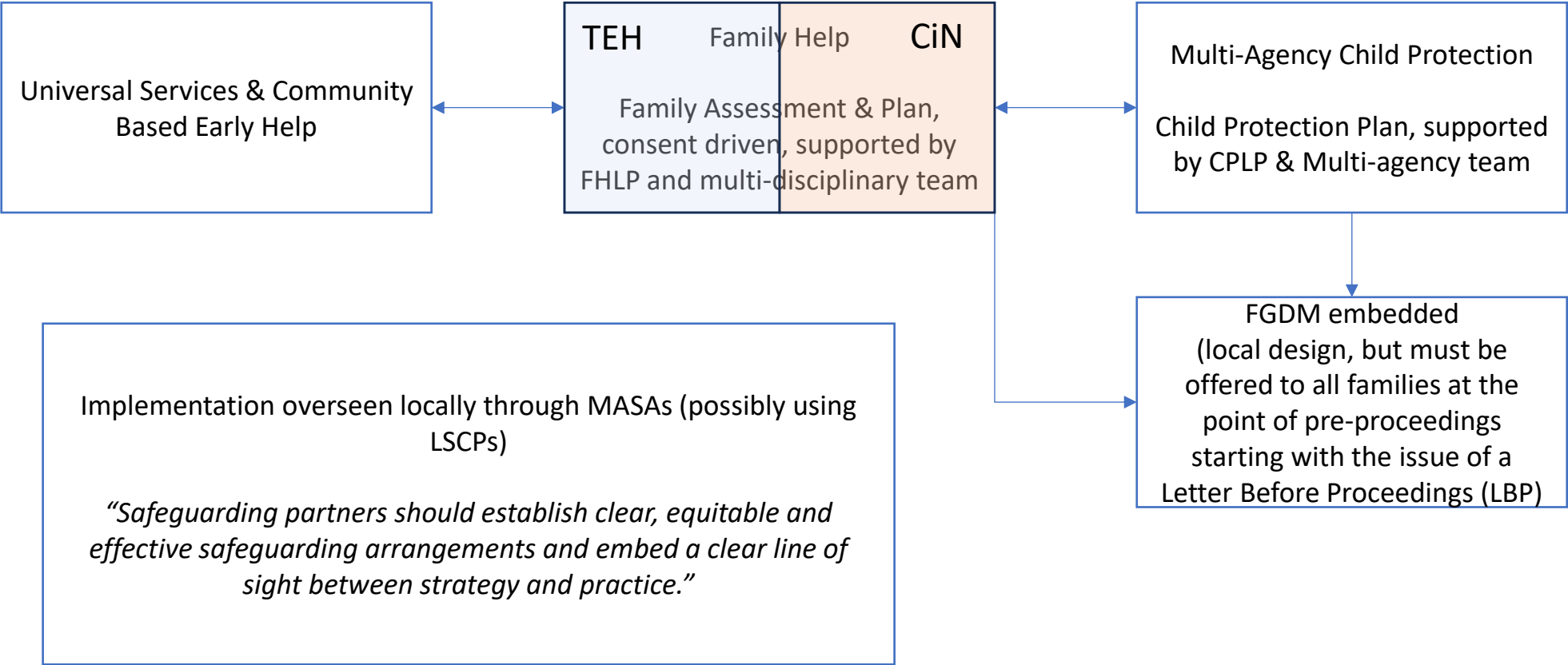Early findings evaluation report for the pathfinder projects

Families First Case Management System (CMS) Implementation Guidance

Due by end of 2025

What's changing?

- Updating of local needs assessment (if required) as basis of service design
- Seamless 'Family Help (**FH**)' – joining Targeted Early Help (**TEH**) and Child in Need (**CiN**)
- Family Help Assessment - consistent across EH and CIN
- Introduction of Family Help Lead Practitioner (**FHLP**) role to hold FH work
- Multi-disciplinary Family Help teams
- Multi-agency child protection teams
- Introduction of Lead Child Protection Practitioner (**LCPC**) Role
- Oversight of FH through Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (**MASA**) possibly via the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (**LSCP**)
- Better information sharing (data warehouses pulling from case management systems (**CMS**))
- Increased use of Family Group Decision Making (**FGDM**), such as Family Group Conferences (**FGC**) across the safeguarding system.

What it might look like

| Universal Services & Community Based Early Help | | TEH   Family Help   CiN

Family Assessment & Plan, consent driven, supported by FHLP and multi-disciplinary team | | Multi-Agency Child Protection

Child Protection Plan, supported by CPLP & Multi-agency team |

FGDM embedded
(local design, but must be offered to all families at the point of pre-proceedings starting with the issue of a Letter Before Proceedings (LBP)

Implementation overseen locally through MASAs (possibly using LSCPs)

"Safeguarding partners should establish clear, equitable and effective safeguarding arrangements and embed a clear line of sight between strategy and practice."

Immediate impacts

- Local needs assessment should be updated/written if necessary and used by CSC/MASA as a starting point to design services. Most LAs will have a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), but this alone might not be the best fit and need additional work.
- Workforce/structure changes as Early Help and Children's Social Care 'merge' and new processes implemented.
- Guidance seems to suggest that FH teams will not necessarily be entirely staffed by social workers (SWs), with no requirement for FHLPs to be SWs (unless moving into child protection where the FHLP will need to be an SW linking to the LCPC).
- Case management system changes – initially aligning assessments, possibly (medium-term) eventually combining of TEH and CiN into a single process.
- Increasing FGDM – guidance suggests local design, with suggestion that it sits across all services. Also needs to be offered to everyone at pre-proceedings
- Some data requirements have started to emerge – for now these are quite light touch – nonetheless, the statutory returns are likely to look quite strange for the next few years. Any changes to reflect the reforms will not be implemented into the current returns immediately.
- DFE have also suggested a voluntary collection (probably annual) for things not covered by statutory returns – they have consulted on this, so we'd expect to hear more on this soon from your regional groups etc.
- LAs will need to think about how SEND will fit in here as there are early signs that SEND will be moving slightly away from its current education focus towards Family Help.

FAQs

- **Will CiN/EH be fully merging?** This is the point where we think there is the most uncertainty – the guidance suggests a merge – one plan, one assessment etc. but there still seems to be a duty to know who meets the threshold for S17 in stat returns, also in the ILACS framework etc. so in practice – no, or at least not yet.

- **Will the stat returns be changing?** Probably, but not for a while. The lead in times for changes is quite long, and there's still a lot of uncertainty. The voluntary data collection will inform any changes, so they are some way off yet.

- **When is all this happening?** The guidance suggests that 25/26 should be used for preparation – completing the needs assessment, mapping existing service, planning workforce transformation etc.

In the latest newsletter the advice was to wait for further guidance before making system changes:

"We encourage areas to hold off making changes to systems until this guidance is available. We recognise that it will take time to implement these changes following publication of the guidance. "

How to keep up to date

- Knowledge Hub – Families First Partnership Group
- Regional Groups (RIIAs)
- Data to Insight – Newsletter/Open House
- NVEST – National Voice for Excellence in Safeguarding Tech. A group which meets regularly to discuss the role of case management systems and tech in safeguarding.