



# PORTSMOUTH FAMILIES FIRST NEWSLETTER

**WORKING TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN  
SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**FRIDAY 20TH MARCH 2026 - 3RD EDITION**

This is the third Family First Partnership (FFP) Newsletter and is aimed to update and grow awareness of the positive changes and developments being made in response to local challenges and national reforms.

The Children's and Families Transformation Programme continues to grow and develop across Portsmouth. As we work together to deliver the Families First Partnership reforms, we recognise that partner agencies are at different stages of understanding the full context of these changes. Our shared ambition remains clear: to further develop our system that places relationships, early support and family strengths at the centre of all practice.

The recent Families First Partnership Engagement Event provided an important opportunity for colleagues across the Children's Social Care system to reflect on progress, raise questions and deepen a collective understanding of what the reforms mean in practice.

## **A core theme for the future - enabling family-led approaches**

A key part of our transformation is the commitment to making Family Group Decision Making a central part of how we support families. This approach will help ensure that children's plans are shaped by the people who know them best, promoting shared decision making and strengthening natural networks of support. By embedding this practice across the system, we aim to create more sustainable plans and help children remain safely within their families and wider communities.

Attendees at the engagement event explored how wider family and community networks can offer stability, guidance and a sense of belonging when brought into the process earlier. The reflections highlighted the value of giving families ownership of their plans, ensuring that support aligns with their culture, identity and lived experience.





## Strengthening Practice Across the City

One of the key areas of discussion focused on how we can enhance everyday practice so that more children can remain safely within their families. Participants spoke about the importance of earlier engagement, consistent support and approaches that are rooted in trust, trauma awareness and strong relationships. These themes reflect what families and practitioners have been sharing for some time, including the need for time to build rapport, continuity between services and meaningful coordination.

## Key Themes Emerging from the Event

Several ideas stood out strongly across the discussions. Earlier and preventative support gives families the best chance to make sustained change. Strong, trusting relationships remain the foundation of good practice. Family and community networks offer powerful strengths when involved early and with purpose. Consistent and joined-up working across services helps families feel supported rather than overwhelmed.

## Looking Ahead

The reflections and ideas shared during the event will be drawn together to guide the next phase of the Families First Partnership. More opportunities for colleagues, partners and families to contribute will follow. Our commitment to embedding Family Group Decision Making across the system represents an important step in our shared journey to create a more relational, connected and empowering approach to supporting children and families.

## WHATS NEXT

There are many exciting and interesting developments ahead as we continue to embed the Families First Partnership reforms.

We will be holding engagement events for partners to be involved in collaboratively planning for how we strengthen our partnership working in early support for children and families.

We will be holding a series of engagement events where partners can play an active role in collaboratively shaping how we strengthen our joint working in early support for children and families. These sessions will help us build a more aligned, confident and connected approach across the whole system.



Thank you for your continued support. Together, we're shaping a safer, more supportive future for every child in our city

You can find the previous FFP Newsletter and further information here <https://www.portsmouthscp.org.uk/social-care-reforms-2026/>